

*The Ohio*



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*The Ohio Cardinal* is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

*The Ohio Cardinal* exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio.

*The Ohio Cardinal* invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area of the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied upon request. Unusual species should be documented, and forms to do so are available upon request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

**Seasonal Report Due Dates Please send all reports to:**

Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25  
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25  
Summer (June-July) - August 25  
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25

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### The Ohio Cardinal

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*On the Cover:* **Hermit Thrush** with young - Clear Creek Metro Park, Hocking Co., 23 June 2001. Photo by John Watts.

### Summer 2001 Overview

by Bill Whan

The summer's weather, if not mild, was not exceptional. The bird sightings were, if not bland, then pretty much routine. The most important weather news was probably drought in the state's northeastern quarter, and in bird news there were, on average, fewer departures from normal than is normal. Only one review species was reported in Ohio, a Bewick's wren—but a significant one, as many ornithologists regard our eastern race as near extinction. We did have some fairly interesting nesting records, at least in the aggregate, but nothing to crow about, and there were few notable late departures or early arrivals, or numbers of birds either alarmingly small or stunningly large.

If the above summary sounds wishy-washy, blame it on the summer of 2001. Having declared it an uneventful, even dull, summer from the overview's high-altitude perspective, it's worth taking a closer look. The numbers and diversity of wading birds seemed down somewhat. Their odd persistence at Pipe Creek WA in Sandusky gave us an unusually large total of duck species for the season, though numbers elsewhere seemed pretty much within normal limits. There were some raptor reports of interest, but overall they seemed as expected in numbers and distribution.

Migrant shorebirds return early, so birders look forward to them in July. Inland reservoirs lacked the requisite water levels, and diked wetlands were just as inhospitable, though a few places open to natural Lake Erie levels—such as Conneaut Harbor, the Crane Creek estuary at Ottawa NWR, the upper Huron river, and the Cedar Point Chaussee side of Sheldon Marsh—naturally attracted birds. As usual, there were several places this year—Paulding County's sewage lagoons, Medusa Marsh, and Pipe Creek WA—where construction or maintenance activities provided temporary accidental habitat for these birds.

A number of nesting passerines showed up beyond—but not outrageously so, given their distribution in recent years—their published range maps, exploiting islands of habitat in remoter areas. It's always worth comparing today's nesting records with the Breeding Bird Atlas maps of fifteen or more years ago; fifteen years is a blink of an eye in the natural history of birds, but can be quite significant in the history of human observations. One sad part of that history is that we so seldom bother to verify nesting status; we had at least 16 summering harriers for example, but aren't sure if any nested this year. Some erratic species—dickcissels for example—were less evident this summer, while others—sedge wrens, and Bell's vireos—seemed more easily found than usual. Loggerhead shrikes continued their sad decline.

Some possible trends, admittedly only dimly discernible now, seem to involve Ohio's western Lake Erie shore, especially the marshes that dominate the landscape there. Are we seeing fewer of the scarcer waders there—little blue herons, cattle egrets, snowy egrets—than we used to? Are certain tern species, such as blacks and Caspians, being seen more often farther inland? Shouldn't we have been surprised to find three of four of this summer's laughing gulls and six of eight of this spring's far from the Lake, as well as seven of 10 of this and last year's spring Franklin's gulls? Years of efforts by the BSBO resulted recently in designation of the marshes as part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, but now that Metzger and