

The Ohio



CARDINAL™

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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

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

Please send all reports to:

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On the Cover: Brown-headed Nuthatch - South Russell, Geauga County, 21 November 2001. Photo by Warren Gilbert.

Autumn 2001 Overview

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The scents of flowers mingle with that of burning leaves, and a few of summer's birds share the skies with waterfowl arriving from the Arctic. Butterflies and juncos, warblers and morning hoarfrost, chanting crickets and snowy owls, all the oddest couples of autumn, seemed particularly evident this year...in December. It is becoming tedious to recite such announcements, but here they are: October was the warmest on record worldwide, November was the second-warmest ever in the U.S., and 2001 seems likely to rate second only to 1998 as the warmest worldwide since records have been kept.

It is tempting to over-estimate the effect of temperatures on bird abundance and distribution. Boreal birds, however, do not come to Ohio because it is too cold up north, any more than southern birds come our way for a break from the heat. But weather warm enough to sustain a food source can delay departure for certain southbound species. Open water in the north and unusually late flushes of insects may prolong migrations. We had a flycatcher—a vermilion one—right into December, a virtual absence of several hardy waterfowl species through November, and August arrivals of forerunner species like red-breasted nuthatches and pine siskins that raised hopes for a winter finch eruption.

We picked chiles out of the editorial garden until the first local hard frost on 12 December. The season's only measurable snow in Cleveland—an inch—fell on 26 October, where November was a hefty 6.2°F above normal—with only four days with temperatures below freezing—and the winds blew from the north on only seven days. Perhaps the most significant event of the season's weather involved high winds, which dominated the scene in the latter half of October. Nearly all the season's negligible snow fell at this time, and strong westerlies may have influenced the period's arrivals of western birds like Franklin's and Sabine's gulls, our only Eurasian wigeon, and big fallouts of migrant sparrows, of which fully 13 species were found at Headlands Beach State Park on the 21st. The weather grew much calmer and warmer after that. As a likely consequence, waterfowl were late and low in numbers this fall. Shorebirds lingered remarkably long in the few habitats allowed to exist; the Crane Creek estuary and Sheldon Marsh, two areas still open to natural fluctuations in the Lake Erie water levels, hosted most of them, and both areas are threatened—the former by government land managers, the latter by a private developer. Although there were some notably early arrivals, passerines from the north seemed to do their passing on a leisurely schedule.

An excellent nine Review Species were documented this fall, among them an astounding three potential first Ohio records. Two other Review Species were widely rumored, but could not be refound, and without documentation to back them up are not included in the Reports. One additional species that would be new to the state list remains in recirculation in the Records Committee. By and large we prefer to spend the money on additional content rather than on color photos, but excellent flycatcher images contributed by Sharon Cummings tempted us to include a vermilion crayon with each copy of *The Ohio Cardinal* so readers could kick it up a notch.