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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.

<b>Seasonal Report Due Dates</b> Winter (Dec.-Feb.)—March 25 Spring (Mar.-May)—June 25 Summer (June-July)—August 25 Autumn (Aug.-Nov.)—December 25	<b>Please send all reports to:</b> <b>Bill Whan</b> 223 E. Tulane Road Columbus, OH 43202 <a href="mailto:billwhan@columbus.rr.com">billwhan@columbus.rr.com</a>
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### Subscriptions

The subscription rate for one year (four issues) is \$25 including membership in the Ohio Ornithological Society. Please send all subscription requests to:

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## The Ohio Cardinal

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**On the Cover:** This male black-necked stilt joined a female in protesting the presence of observers at Big Island Wildlife area, where the pair was strongly suspected of nesting. Photo by Troy Shively 7 June 2004.

## Summer 2004 Overview and Reports

**Bill Whan**

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As someone who solicits and gathers reports of birds, your editor can testify to a noticeable drop-off in information received during each summer season. Perhaps it is because in the world of birds the joyful play of courtship has become the hard work of nest-building and rearing young, the adventure and constant change of migration have shrunk to a tiny territory in an insecure locale, and a familiar cast of old neighbors greets us each day rather than a racy parade of exotic strangers. Local breeders, already familiar from spring, can literally and figuratively fade into the background, growing more silent and furtive, and after nesting many slip away without a farewell, even the times of their inconspicuous departures unnoticed.

Only three Review Species were reported this summer, all of them having been reported during the spring as well: Mississippi kite, black-necked stilt, and loggerhead shrike. All the same there was plenty of excitement, more than usual. In part this was because communications among observers have greatly improved. It is possible today to convey a photographic image of a bird from the field directly to one of several internet sites capable of sharing it publicly in minutes. Nearly everyone now regards interesting news about birds as something to share with everyone. Though they have not disappeared completely, the old in-group and back-channel communications are withering away. More and more resources are available to help beginners learn from more experienced birders as well as from the birds themselves, and this means more reliable reports from the field. A more open democratic atmosphere, rich in learning opportunities, has led to a more complete and accurate record of our bird life.

Rather than rare strays, it was nesting birds—with nesting confirmed, probable, or just strongly suspected—that dominated the news. This is as it should be, for birds who do not reproduce their kind but instead wander the countryside delighting list-keepers are taking themselves out of the survival game. King rails defied accepted doctrine and reproduced in three counties near the center of the state. Herring gulls fledged young down near the Ohio River for the first time. A substantial number of black terns nested in the northwest marshes, and later swept across the state in numbers unrecorded for twenty years. Bell's vireos outdid themselves: often restricted to a pair or two at one familiar location, they appeared in four counties this summer. Blue grosbeaks were all over the map, with records in six counties well north of their accustomed haunts, breeding in four of them. Sedge wrens, often inconspicuous and unpredictable, showed up in at least eleven counties. Black-necked stilts almost certainly nested in Ohio for the first known time, and while this nest was probably destroyed by torrential rains stilts made as many as six appearances in the state, a record. Unprecedented numbers of prothonotary warblers