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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: Bill Whan 223 E. Tulane Road Columbus, OH 43202 billwhan@columbus.rr.com
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On the Cover: An adult lesser black-backed gull in winter plumage, photographed in Cleveland on 5 Mar by John Pogacnik. The yellow legs do not show in this photo, but the heavy dark streaking around the head and the dark mantle, still noticeably lighter than the blacker exposed primaries, indicate this species.

Winter 2004-2005 Overview and Reports

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Spring seemed so long delayed it was easy to forget that winter was warmer than average. Despite memorable storms, of ice or snow depending on the region, what is usually our coldest month was warmer than average by 3.7° in Cincinnati, 2.4° in Columbus, and 1.7° in Cleveland. January was also extraordinarily wet, with precipitation in Columbus 6.42, Cincinnati 3.68, and Cleveland 3.41 inches above normal. Flooding was widespread across the state. Earlier, December had been a bit drier than normal downstate, but was Cleveland's eighth wettest ever, with 4.47 inches of precipitation, and the snowiest in recorded history, with 35.1 inches. Winds there peaked at 62 mph on the 7th. February, though it too was markedly warmer than average (by 3.5° in Cincinnati, 2.0° in Columbus, and 2.5° in Cleveland), was a bit drier than normal, to the relief of many.

A warm wet winter supported stays by waterfowl. We had pretty good numbers of half-hardy species and odd lingerers, and snow and ice cover did not seem to kill many edge-of-range birds like Carolina wrens. Lake Erie did not freeze extensively until well into January, and until that time nearly half the sightings of scarcer gulls came from the Western Basin, whereupon near-shore concentrations of gulls and waterfowl became easy to study farther east well into March.

Ten or fifteen years ago, tundra swans were first confirmed as wintering in the NW Lake Erie marshes, but this year midwinter reports of more than the odd bird or two came from several other locales; sandhill cranes have a similar schedule, and this winter ~60 were seen in January and early February. Huge rafts of common mergansers overshadowed red-breasteds on Lake Erie for a while, and numbers of pintails and redheads leading the northbound hordes were very encouraging. Winter vulture roosts continued to prosper. Merlins kept finding new urban cemeteries for wintering grounds, and one wonders if a pair might nest in time to come. With a handful of exceptions, only large gulls were present mid-January through mid-February, and except for a couple of California gulls rare species went unreported. Winter hummingbirds have come to seem routine, but homeowners girding for hordes of birders coming to see their rufous hummingbirds are still surprised when no one shows up.

This makes all the more valuable the contributions of researchers who document these birds, and folks who keep feeders full and then report hummers. Six warbler species were reported. Over the past eight years, 16 warbler species are on record in winter: orange-crowned, Nashville, yellow, Cape May, black-throated blue, yellow-rumped, yellow-throated, pine, palm, black-and-white, American redstart, ovenbird, northern waterthrush, Louisiana waterthrush, common yellowthroat, and Wilson's.