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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> Bill Whan 223 E. Tulane Road Columbus, OH 43202 <a href="mailto:billwhan@columbus.rr.com">billwhan@columbus.rr.com</a>
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On the Cover: Ohio hosted one of a legion of eastward-wandering western tanagers. Jay Lehman got this photo 9 January in Grandview, Ohio.



## Winter 2006-2007 Overview and Reports

by Bill Whan

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It was a bitter winter season, but a short one. December began with some characteristically low temperatures, but in its second week started giving us well above normal ones. We marveled as unusually warm weather persisted week after week, into mid-January (with more daily highs exceeding 50 degrees F. than not), at which time we finally plunged into winter, with the third-coldest February ever recorded for the United States. Nevertheless, those warm December and January days made this winter---yes, once again---overall the country's warmest on record.

This set the stage for extended stays by the hardier migrants, and we got them. Observers found notably high numbers of geese, swans, and certain duck species. Record late dates were established for Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow, spotted sandpiper, green heron, northern parula, and black-and-white and orange-crowned warblers. To set new late records for so many species in a single season is unprecedented. But such news is the order of the day lately, and it is sad in a way to see careful accumulations of records of birds superseded, and expectations of the "normal" on which we could agree for decades so easily swept aside. At any rate, we also witnessed unusually late stays for Eurasian wigeon, red-throated and common loons, least and American bitterns, sora, American white pelican, sandhill crane, purple sandpiper, white-eyed vireo, Nashville warbler (second-latest), rose-breasted grosbeak, and Baltimore oriole. One might have expected a few swallows, or hardy shorebirds like dunlins, to overstay normal departure dates, but perhaps the colder temperatures of early December were sufficiently discouraging to these highly gregarious migrants.

Overall, there was evidence that some hardier migrants, tempted day by day by the weather to remain longer in Ohio, stayed through a mere month or so of deep cold once periods of daylight lengthened. Not all survived, but quite early displaying by woodcocks showed that many did, as did much larger than normal numbers of wintering large waterfowl. Because winter temperatures were harshest toward the end of the season, so many late stays by southbound migrants were not matched by early appearances of northbound ones. Far from it. It seems that while warming trends are having very noticeable effects on bird occurrences in Ohio in winter, at this point they are mostly affecting the timing and length of stays by southbound migrants, who seem to be hanging around longer and in larger numbers. Effects on more conservative phenomena such as spring arrivals, and especially breeding, seem likely to take longer to appear. Should Breeding Bird Atlas work show a withdrawal of northern nesters (hermit thrushes, Canada and Blackburnian warblers, alder flycatchers, juncos, etc.) from the state there may be cause for more alarm than is occasioned by incremental changes in locales and durations of wintering by migrants. Most predict Ohio will lose many more northern breeders than southern ones we might gain in exchange.

Weather may also have influenced the migratory paths followed by some species. Certainly we saw increased numbers of cackling, snow, and