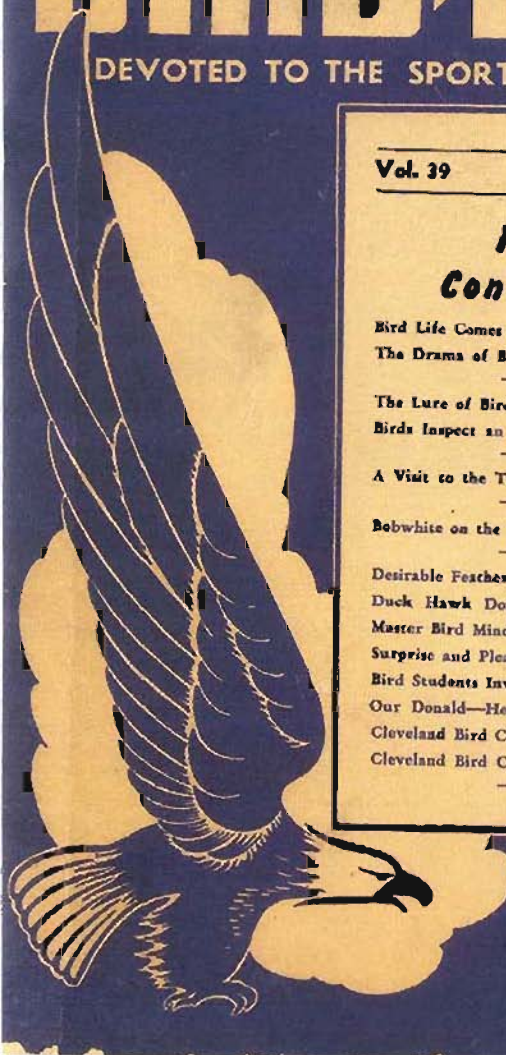


BIRD LIFE

DEVOTED TO THE SPORT OF BIRD STUDY



Vol. 39 May, 1943 No. 1

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Continuing the Bird
Calendar

Founded by Francis
H. Herrick in 1905

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

By *Arthur B. Williams*

Vol. 39

December, 1942, January-February, 1943

No. 1

The Editor of the *Cleveland Bird Calendar*, Dr. Arthur Baldwin Williams, is the Curator of Education and a member of the Board of Managers in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Beginning in 1929 when he was appointed Park Naturalist, he has built up the extensive program of natural history education in the Cleveland Metropolitan Parks until it is the best in any park system in the country. He is the editor of the Museum's 'Explorer,' issued quarterly; and the author of contributions on birds and ecology.

This number of the *Calendar* deals with winter bird populations and presents the always interesting records of winter visitors. As compared with last year, we note the complete absence of Snowy Owl records which were such a spectacular feature of the winter of 1941-42. The section of Ohio covered by this report extends west to Sandusky; south to Oberlin; and east to Ashtabula County.

The detailed information presented here is very largely the result of the enthusiastic field work of the members of the Kirtland Bird Club, an organization affiliated with The Cleveland Museum of Natural History. To W. Earl Godfrey, of the Department of Ornithology of the Museum, the Editor is indebted for much assistance in tabulating the records here presented.

Contributors to this issue of the *Calendar* are:

James Akers	James H. Jenkins	Alice Porter
H. W. Baker	Frank D. Johnson	Margery Ramisch
Florence Baker	Lynds Jones	Mrs. Warner Seely
Al Bohn	J. O. McQuown	Loretta Shafer
B. P. Bole, Jr.	C. B. Margach	Margaret Sherwin
Vera Carrothers	Mrs. Ruby H. Margach	Merit B. Skaggs
Edith Dobbins	George Mealand	Mrs. Marion Skaggs
H. C. Dobbins	Henry B. Merkle	Mrs. S. W. Snook
C. T. Downer	Henry N. Merkle	Frederic Sweney
James Findley	Margarette E. Morse	J. P. Visscher
C. M. Finfrock	Omar Mueller	Harold E. Wallin
Arthur B. Fuller	Ruth C. Newcomer	S. V. Wharram
W. Earl Godfrey	Donald L. Newman	Arthur B. Williams
Mrs. J. T. Hagan	Melville Phillips	
Raymond W. Hill	Margaret Perner	

This list of 43 contributors is most gratifying at this time. Restrictions on

automobile use were reflected directly in the number of trips taken by our observers. In fact the reports received were made mostly close to home territory. It was practically impossible to make observations along the Lake Erie shore. The present editor has never before seen so thin a sheaf of reports. Yet the species list is astonishingly complete and there are many interesting records. As this is the first issue of Volume 39, it is interesting to record the number of species listed for the new year thus far as 86. Last year at this time the number was 93.

Our most active observer during the winter seems to have been S. V. Wharram of Austinburg, who records 37 species as a result of a total of 21 days of observations. We envy him his opportunity to see so many birds, traveling on shoe-leather only. Lynds Jones of Oberlin sends in the next largest species list (32). Among the city dwellers, Raymond W. Hill leads with 11 trips on which he recorded 28 species.

Since the last issue of the *Calendar* two more of our observers have joined the armed forces of our country:

George Bing, now in the United States Army.

Rollin Dike, now in the U. S. Maritime Service.

This makes a total of 12 of our most active observers who have left us for the U. S. Army, Navy, or Maritime Service. For an account of what some of these boys are doing in far places, see the Sunday Feature Section of the Cleveland Plain Dealer for April 18, 1943.

SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

From the standpoint of both plant and animal life, moisture, or the lack of it, plays a leading role in determining living and growing conditions. Since last year was one of exceptional rainfall, it will be interesting to compare last year with this, as the various issues of the *Calendar* appear in 1943. During the period covered by this issue of the *Calendar*, rainfall varied from 2.94 inches in December, which was above the 72-year average for Cleveland, to 2.50 inches in February, which was about normal.

In connection with temperature, as well as with rainfall, it is the extremes that are critical for wild life. The *time* when these extremes occur is especially important. Although last winter was a cold one, no critical extremes of temperature occurred in this region. Below zero temperatures were recorded on only four days, and three of these were in February (lowest record -2°). Days with lower than 10 degrees were only four in December, four in January, and five in February. High records were 52° in December, 57° in January, and 61° in February.

WINTER BIRD POPULATION STUDY

Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Margach have contributed a very careful statistical study

of the winter bird population observed on their 50-acre farm, located on the extreme western edge of Ashtabula County, three miles south of Lake Erie. This, they say, is a typical northern Ohio small fruit and vegetable farm. Observations were made practically continuously for a period of 13 weeks during December, 1942, and January and February, 1943.

In the following tabulation the Editor has omitted the flying ducks and gulls listed in the original report.

The areas in which the various resident species occur are indicated by symbols as follows:

- F. - Farmyard, including buildings, large shade trees, shrubbery, hedges, 3 acres.
 A.- Apple orchard, with trees 15 feet high at maximum, 29 to the acre, free from weeds. 16 acres.
 P.- Peach orchard, with trees about half the size of the apple trees, 60 to the acre. 11 acres.
 W.- Woodlot, a dense mixed second growth of relatively small trees with grape and greenbrier tangles. 10 acres.

The remaining 10 acres are open crop land—treeless and weedless. Birds observed are listed as follows:

Areas	Residents	Weeks Ending											
		December			January								
		6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31			
A	P	W	Red-shouldered Hawk	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
		W	Screech Owl	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
F	A	W	Downy Woodpecker	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
		W	Blue Jay	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
		W	Crow	2	2	2	6	6	6	6	8	8	8
F	A	W	Chickadee	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
		W	Titmouse	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
F		W	White-breasted Nuthatch	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
F	A	W	Brown Creeper	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
F	A		Starling	8	8	8	43	8	8	8	8	8	8
F			English Sparrow	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
		W	Cardinal	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
		P	Goldfinch	1	1	1	1	1	5	3	3	3	3
F	P	W	Tree Sparrow	25	35	50	100	110	50	50	50	50	50
Totals				68	78	93	182	157	101	99	101	102	102

During February the first four birds continued as on January 31; and this was also the case with all but the Crow, which much increased; the Goldfinch which temporarily decreased; and the Tree Sparrow, which decreased to half its January population.

MIGRANTS	Weeks Ending									
	December				January					
	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	
Flicker	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Prairie Horned Lark										1
Redwing	1									
Junco	5	2	2	2	1					
Song Sparrow	2	2								
Totals	9	5	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
VISITORS										
Cooper Hawk		1		1			1			
Bobwhite									15	
Song Sparrow						2	1			
Totals		1		1		2	2	13		
Grand Totals	77	84	96	186	159	104	102	115	103	

In both these groups all the birds were absent during February except two Prairie Horned Larks and two Snow Buntings.

Mr. Margach warns that because the birds of his farm are in no sense confined to it, but range freely over adjoining similar farmland, 'birds per acre' cannot be computed from his table.

The feature that impresses the Editor is the stability of this winter bird aggregation. With some fluctuations in the numbers of Crows, Starlings, Goldfinches, and Tree Sparrows, the picture is that of a stable population.

Mr. Margach considers at some length the economic importance of the various species. Downy Woodpeckers, Brown Creepers, Chickadees, and Tree Sparrows rank high as 'helpers' of the farmer. Nuthatches and Juncos are helpful too, but to a lesser degree. The Red-shouldered Hawk is considered very beneficial from the standpoint of rodent control. English Sparrows are considered a liability because of their consumption of feed grains.

FIELD NOTES

Grebes in Trouble.—Just a year ago the Calendar carried an item headed 'Grebe in a Tub', relating how, on February 18, a live Horned Grebe had been picked up helpless and brought in to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. This year the story was duplicated on February 20. This second grebe was found on the playground of Beehive School on Lee Road near Miles Ave. It was brought to the Museum and later released at the mouth of Rocky River.

On March 8 another helpless Horned Grebe was picked up at East 70th Street and Hough Ave. After rest and recuperation at the Museum it was released in

the small spot of open water at the Illuminating Company's plant on the lake shore. How many more such grebes there were in trouble is only a matter of surmise, but there were probably others.

Now comes a report from C. B. Margach saying that on December 6 he found two Horned Grebes on the beach near Geneva-on-the-Lake. One was dead, the other in poor condition. On December 27 he found another dead grebe on the beach. "Assuming the live bird of December 6 also died (as we are almost certain it would have), three of these birds perished on a stretch of not more than three miles of lake front. This would seem to be a seriously high rate if the autumn migration of this species covered any considerable portion of the lake shore," says Mr. Margach.

Mr. Margach also reports finding a Holboell Grebe on December 6 which "had apparently spent at least two days close to the same spot of beach. Snow had fallen last on December 4, and for a distance of 100 yards the bird had systematically covered (as evidenced by its 'tracks,' if wing-prints can be called tracks) the full width of the beach (50 feet) and even half way up the steep 20-foot bank beyond, apparently in search of either or both food and shelter. Progress had been made apparently almost entirely by the bird's pulling itself along the ground by the use of its wings, as no evidence could be seen in the snow of use of feet."

R. W. Hill also reports finding a Holboell Grebe in trouble on Richmond Beach, December 12. He remarks that it "was evidently oiled, because it was on shore, and when it got into the water it made short dives and then crawled out on the sand again."

Here is one of nature's mysteries. The grebes brought to the Museum showed no trace of oil on their plumage, nor does Mr. Margach's report suggest oil as playing a part in the incident. More likely the grebes were afflicted with some disease such as that which at times has accounted for the death of large numbers of wild ducks.

SPECIES OCCURRENCE RECORDS

Unusual or especially interesting records are marked with an asterisk.

For convenience of study our winter bird population is divided into the following six groups:

1. Migrant species. (Latest dates of these have been extended into December or later.)

Pied-billed Grebe. Dec. 6 (1).

Whistling Swan. Dec. 12 (29).

Canada Goose. Dec. 22 (1).

Oldsquaw. Dec. 27 (1).

Hooded Merganser, Dec. 27 (2).

American Coot. Dec. 6 (2), 27 (1).

Bonaparte Gull. Dec. 6 (15), 12 (2).

Eastern Redwing. Dec 5 (1), Lake Erie shore near Madison (Margach).

**Eastern Cowbird*. Dec. 3 (1), 9 (2), 22 (1). All these records for Austinburg (Wharram). Jan. 12 (1), Independence (Merkle), 19 (2), 27 (2) (Downer).

2. Wintering Ducks and Gulls. (Records very incomplete.)

Mallard. Small numbers reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Black Duck. Dec. 27 (55), Jan. 10 (7), 23 (4).

Gadwall, Jan. 23 (5).

Baldpate. Feb. 25 (3).

American Pintail. Feb. 23 (100), Castalia (Jones). Feb. 24 (2), Independence (Merkle).

Green-winged Teal. Feb. 23 (3), Castalia (Jones).

Redhead, Jan. 9 (1).

Ring-necked Duck. Jan. 23 (4), Feb. 24 (3).

Canvasback. Jan. 10 (1), Feb. 22 (1).

Lesser Scaup Duck. Reported regularly in numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb. Again our most abundant wintering duck.

American Goldeneye. Reported regularly in numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Bufflehead. Dec. 6 (2), 27 (4), Jan. 10 (10), Feb. 22 (1).

American Merganser, Reported regularly in numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Red-breasted Merganser. Reported regularly in numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.

American Herring Gull. Reported regularly, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Ring-billed Gull. Reported regularly, Dec., Jan., Feb. 3

3. Wintering Stragglers. (Migrants present in small numbers.)

**Holboell Grebe*, Dec. 6 (1), Lake front near Madison (Margach).
Dec. 12 (1), Lake front, Richmond Beach (Hill).

Horned Grebe. Dec. 6 (2), 27 (1), Feb. 20 (1).

**Double-crested Cormorant*. Jan. 9 (1), 16 (1), 20 (1), probably the same bird (Hill).

Great Blue Heron. Dec. 5 (2), Jan. 17 (1), Feb. 12 (2).

American Bittern. Dec. 6. (1), Found in field much emaciated, and died soon after, Rocky River (Mrs. S. W. Snook).

**White-winged Scoter*. Dec. 6 (1).

Northern Bald Eagle. Jan. 28 (1), Feb. 18 (1).

Marsh Hawk. Jan. 31 (1), Feb. 6 (1), 16 (1), 22 (1).

**Great Black-backed Gull*. Dec. 6 (1), Feb. 14 (1).

Eastern Mourning Dove. Reported regularly in small numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Northern Flicker. Regularly reported in small numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Eastern Crow. Regularly reported in small numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.; increasing greatly after Feb. 20.

**Brown Thrasher*. One present since fall, feeding on ivy berries; last seen, Jan. 2, when it had exhausted its food supply (Mrs. J. T. Hagan, Landon

Road, Shaker Heights).

Eastern Robin. Regularly reported in small numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb. One at Holden Arboretum all winter regularly seen in company with Downy Woodpeckers, Chickadees, and Tufted Titmice. Four at feeding station, South Euclid, eating suet on coldest day in January (Bole). A 'resident bird' at Berea (Surrarer). Two 'resident birds' at Waite Hill, Willoughby, all winter (Sherwin).

Cedar Waxwing. Dec. 23 (12).

Bronzed Grackle. Feb. 4 (1), Parma (Johnson)

Eastern Purple Finch. Jan. 2 (6).

**White-crowned Sparrow*. One present all winter at feeding station, Landon Rd., Shaker Heights (Mrs. J. T. Hagan).

Mississippi Song Sparrow. Regularly reported in small numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.

4. Winter Visitors. (Species of more northerly range wintering here.)

**Eastern Goshawk*. Feb. 22 (3), all seen together, Austinburg (Wharram).

American Rough-legged Hawk. Jan. 10 (1), 17 (1).

Red-breasted Nuthatch. Dec. 7 (1), 23 (5), 27 (1), Jan 31 (2), Feb. 3 (2), 16 (2), 21 (1), 25 (1).

Brown Creeper. Regularly reported as single records, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Eastern Winter Wren. Feb. 24 (1).

Eastern Golden-crowned Kinglet. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.

American Pipit. Feb. 23 (1).

Common Redpoll. Dec. 3 (5), 18 (80), 19 (1), 23 (10), 26 (2), 31 (3), Jan. 3 (20), 20 (10), Feb. 14 (3).

**White-winged Crossbill*. Jan. 17 (15), North Chagrin (Sweeney).

Slate-colored Junco. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Eastern Tree Sparrow. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.

**Lapland Longspur*. Feb. 26 (3), Austinburg (Wharram).

Snow Bunting. Dec. 27 (5), Jan. 2 (10), 3 (25), 7 (1), 8 (2), 13 (1), 20 (8), Feb. 2 (1), 3 (20), 13 (45).

5. Permanent Residents. (Species present throughout the year.)

Sharp-shinned Hawk. Jan 6 (1), 10 (1), 20 (1), 23 (1), Feb. 24 (1).

Cooper Hawk. Regularly reported single records, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Eastern Red-tailed Hawk. Regularly reported single and double records, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Northern Red-shouldered Hawk. Regularly reported single and double records, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Eastern Sparrow Hawk. Dec. 16 (2), 27 (1). Regularly reported, Jan., Feb.

Eastern Ruffed Grouse. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.

Eastern Bobwhite. Reported in numbers in Dec., sharply decreasing in Jan. and Feb.

Ring-necked Pheasant. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.

- **Rock Dove*. Nesting on house, Cleveland Heights, Jan. 27 (2) (Williams).
Eastern Screech Owl. Dec. 6 (3), 9 (1), 24 (1), 27 (1), Feb. 3 (1), 5 (1), 17 (1), 22 (1).
Great Horned Owl. Dec. 4 (2), Jan. 5 (1), 12 (1), 18 (2), 27 (2), Feb. 11 (1), 17 (2), 21 (1), 26 (1). A pair observed 'courting' in trees and on ground, Holden Arboretum, Jan. 27 (Bole).
Northern Barred Owl, Dec. 7 (1), 27 (2), Jan. 10 (1), 17 (2), 30 (1), Feb. 5 (1).
Northern Pileated Woodpecker. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Red-bellied Woodpecker. Dec. 12 (1), 15 (1), 23 (1), 27 (2), Jan. 10 (1), 27 (2), 31 (3), Feb. 8 (1), 21 (1), 22 (2).
Eastern Hairy Woodpecker, Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Northern Downy Woodpecker. Regularly reported in numbers, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Prairie Horned Lark. Dec. 5 (1), 17 (1), Jan. 23 (5), 28 (10), 31 (5), increasing in Feb.
Northern Blue Jay. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Black-capped Chickadee. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Tufted Titmouse. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
White-breasted Nuthatch. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Carolina Wren. Dec. 27 (2).
Starling. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
English Sparrow. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Eastern Cardinal. Regularly reported, Dec., Jan., Feb.
Eastern Goldfinch. Regularly reported in Dec.; no Jan. records; Feb. 21 (3), 22 (150).

6. The First Spring Migrants.

- Canada Goose*. Two flocks, 13 and 19, reported flying north over Bay Village, Feb. 15 (Baker).
 **Lesser Snow Goose*. Feb 25 (1), Independence (Merkel).
Killdeer. Feb. 22 (1), 23 (1), Oberlin (Jones).
Eastern Robin. Feb. 19 (11), South Euclid (Skaggs); Feb. 23 (12), Madison (Margach).
Eastern Bluebird. Feb. 5 (1), Kirtland Hills (Phillips), Feb. 6 (1), 11 (1), 20 (1), 22 (4), 23 (6).
Eastern Meadowlark. Feb. 20 (1), 22 (2), 23 (3), Oberlin (Jones).
Mississippi Song Sparrow. Feb. 22 (3) Mentor, "in full song and 'on location' " (Fuller).

