

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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NOTES ON THE WEATHER

From U.S. Weather Bureau, Cleveland Airport

June - Sunny with normal temperatures during first half and hot and humid most of the last half, maximum of 95° on the 20th established a new record for that date. On the 8th a tornado struck downtown Cleveland in the evening. Over-all damage was estimated at \$25,000,000. Nine people were killed. This was the most severe of 3 tornados which have occurred within the Cleveland city limits during the last 83 years.

July - Typical summer month with temperatures and precipitation averaging near normal, although a minimum temperature of 47° on the 25th constituted a new low record for that day. A short dry spell prevailed from the 9th to the 18th.

August - Temperatures averaged a little above normal with the closing week unseasonably hot with afternoon temperatures above 90° each day. Maximum temperatures on the last 4 days set new all time records for those dates, while during a preceding cool period a minimum of 48° on the 19th and 20th established new low records for those days. Rainfall above normal for the first 8 days, with an outstanding dry spell persisting after the 9th.

SPECIES OCCURRENCE

Seventeen great blue herons were at Sherwin Pond, Willoughby, July 23; and 30 at Fairport Harbor August 29 (Sherwin, Akers).

American egrets were seen:

June 24(2) Rocky River (Ackermann)
July 20(1) Willoughby (remained two weeks) (Sherwin)
July 26(2) Bedford (Knight)
August 9(1) Aurora Pond (Ackermann)

Vera Carrothers recorded a least bittern June 28 at Sunset Pond, North Chagrin Reservation; while Lucille Mannix saw one August 15 at the "Green Road Swamp" (off Route 224 near Manchester Road).

The Canada geese at North Chagrin failed to raise young this year. There was only one gosling and it was found dead by the park policeman on June 8, after which time the parents were not seen again. There was a bad hail storm on that day, but whether it had anything to do with the death of the young or not is not known. Vera Carrothers reported that on the day before she heard considerable honking from the geese and wondered what was going on.

On August 28 Fred Ackermann saw 29 blue-winged teal flying close in at Clifton Beach.

Another summer date for the lesser scaup is June 18 at Aurora Pond (Ackermann).

Turkey vulture roost in large number. in the spring at Hinckley, supposedly dispersing to nest later on. However, C. H. Knight saw 15 there July 19. Were these non-breeding birds, or is the turkey vulture a gregarious nester here as the black vulture is in the south? Vultures are also seen at the Holden Arboretum regularly, D.S. Dimpsey reporting 12 there July 25.

The broad-winged hawk nested near Chestnut Hills Cemetery, Babbs Run Park, Akron. One young, approximately 10 days old, was seen on June 28. The parents were observed feeding it a frog, a mole and a garter snake at various times (Wiley).

D. S. Dimpsey reported a bald eagle at the Holden Arboretum on July 30.

Sparrow hawks seem to have been unusually scarce this summer.

D. S. Dimpsey recorded a king rail at the Holden Arboretum again during this period - June 17 and 28.

The Florida Gallinule nested at the Green Road Swamp and on June 14 had 8 young (Wiley).

In August James F. Akers noted large flocks of killdeer at Baldwin Lake, Berea. August 22(60), 24(80), 25(150), 26(100), 27(150), 28(185).

Upland plovers were present in Bedford during the summer (Knight), and in a field near White Haven Cemetery until July 13 (Carrothers).

R. W. Hill recorded a willet at White Cite August 12; Jim Akers a knot August 29 at Fairport Harbor; and Donald Newman 2 dowitchers August 9 and 1 August 16 at White City. Western sandpipers were seen more commonly than usual August 25-30 at White City and at Baldwin Lake, Berea (Davies, Akers, Ackermann).

On August 29 Jim Akers saw 250 common terns at Fairport Harbor, where, on the same day, he saw the unusual number of 13 hummingbirds.

Two summer dates for the brown creeper are June 13 at Aurora Pond (Davies) and July 15 at Holden Arboretum (Dimpsey).

A rather late date for the olive-backed thrush is June 9, while a new early fall date for the gray-cheek is August 6 - both records made in Lakewood by Owen Davies.

The ruby-crowned kinglet also has a new early fall date - August 16, Rocky River (Ackermann).

The warbler migration was normal this year, the different species coming in pretty close to their average dates in August. A black-throated blue warbler was seen July 4 about 5 miles south of Painesville (Booth).

Other unusual records are:

Yellow-throated Warbler (Sycamore?) - August 23, in a thicket behind a brush pile in Rocky River Reservation. The bird was attracted by use of an Audubon bird call by Fred J. Ackermann, who is familiar with the species from having observed it in Florida.

Pine Warbler - August 23, September 1, Painesville (Booth).

Connecticut Warbler - August 19, Lakewood (Davies).

Mourning Warbler - August 31, Lakewood (Davies).

Among nesting warblers, the ovenbird was much less numerous this season than usual.

Purple finches were recorded in June, July and August but no nests were found. Carl Hamann comments "The purple finch has been present in our area (Aurora Village) for the past several years. Attempts to find a nest have been unsuccessful. In 1953 a male was first heard singing April 9 and then continuously into July. One male was heard singing August 8 and 9 in a neighbor's tree. Would conclude the bird breeds locally."

A junco was heard singing July 5 at Painesville, and was also heard several other times during the summer (Booth).

The white-throated sparrow was seen July 30(4) at the Holden Arboretum (Dimpsey).

Several records from outside the Cleveland region are:

Yellow-crowned Night Heron - June 3(1), August 18(5) - Sandusky Region (Davies, Ackermann).

Mourning Warbler -. July 17; Chestnut-sided Warbler, - July 21 - both at Camp Iss-see-kes, 5 miles southeast of Vermilion on the Vermilion River (Johnson).

Corrections:

Perry F. Johnson tells us that Jack Smith, rather than himself, should be credited for the bald eagle (May 10) and Kentucky warbler (May 19) reported in our last issue.

The unusual record of 4 piping plovers from the west side shoreline (Huntington Beach) May 17 turned out to be a clerical error. William Mosely says they were semipalmated plovers.

Marjorie Ramisch's correction of her report on the short-billed marsh wren will be found on page 8.

BREEDING BIRD POPULATION STUDIES

1.

Grassland Habitat - Two Ungrazed Fields

Location - Aurora Twp., Portage County, Ohio.

Total Area - Approximately 25 acres. Described in AUDUBON FIELD NOTES, Vol. 6, No. 6, 1952.

Total Hours - Approximately 23. May 4,11,18,22,27,29,31; June 2,14,15,19,25.

Census by Carl F. Hamann.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Territorial Males</u>
Western Henslow's Sparrow	7
Eastern Field sparrow	21/2
Eastern Savannah Sparrow	1
Eastern Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Eastern Meadowlark	1
Mississippi Song Sparrow	1/2
Eastern Vesper Sparrow	<u>1/2</u>
Total Males	131/2
No. Species	7
Density	54 territorial males per 100 acres

Frequent Visitors: Meadowlark,. bobolink, purple martin, barn swallow, bobwhite, red-winged blackbird, catbird using the area for food. Robin, goldfinch, starling, crow, bronzed grackle, mourning dove passed over and back to nearby woodlands

Remarks: A portion of the N.E. corner of the cemetery field was taken out since 1952 in the enlargement of the cemetery. Although nesting in the first field, a pair of marsh hawks is not included as they ranged far afield for food, using the territory as a nesting site only. Birds suspected of nesting in the swampy area of this field, catbird and redwing, are not included. The presence of the marsh hawks may have had some effect on the ground nesting birds, such as the bobolink and meadowlark, but in the case of the Henslow's sparrow this was not so, the being one more pair than in 1952.

Editor's Note: For an account of the marsh hawk nesting noted above, see p.8.

2.

Oak-Hickory ForestLocation - Brecksville Reservation, Cleveland Metropolitan Park District.Total Area - Approximately 50 acres. Described in AUDUBON FIELD NOTES, Vol. 1, No. 6, November 1947.Total Hours - Approximately 20 hours. April 23, May 14,26, June 11,23, July 7.Census by Kathleen S. Hostetler. Assistants: Dorothy Kutler, Mrs. Russell Lewis.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Territorial Males</u>
Redstart	15
Cerulean Warbler	10
Red-eyed Vireo	9
Ovenbird	9
Wood Thrush	8
Acadian Flycatcher	6
Wood Pewee	4
Scarlet Tanager	4
Robin	4
White-breasted Nuthatch	4
Hooded Warbler	3
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	3
Cardinal	2
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	2
Blue Jay	2
Tufted Titmouse	2
Black-capped Chickadee	1
Crested Flycatcher	1
Downy Woodpecker	1
Ruffed Grouse	<u>1</u>
Total Males	91
No. Species	20
Density	162 territorial males per 100 acres

Frequent Visitors: Hairy Woodpecker, Red-eyed Towhee, Yellow-shafted Flicker, Song Sparrow, Catbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Veery, Field Sparrow, Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

3.

Climax Beech-Maple-Hickory Forest

Location - North Chagrin Reservation, Cleveland Metropolitan Park District.

Total Area - Approximately 6 acres. Described in AUDUBON FIELD NOTES, Vol. 1, No. 6, November 1941.

Total Hours - 12 hours. May 4,11,20, June 5,10. Although the number of hours spent on the census is inadequate, it is felt that the results are worth putting on the record due to the number of years the area was studied by Dr. Arthur B. Williams.

Census by Rudolph J. Kula, Harold E. Wallin, Lida H. Whittier.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Territorial Males</u>
Hooded Warbler.	18
Redstart	12
Red-eyed Vireo	11
Wood Thrush	10
Scarlet Tanager	10
Tufted Titmouse	7
Cerulean Warbler	7
Ovenbird	7
Cardinal	6
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	6
Black-throated Green Warbler	4
Black-capped Chickadee	3
Wood Pewee	3
Yellow-throated Vireo	2
Downy Woodpecker	2
Acadian Flycatcher	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	2
Hairy Woodpecker	1
Louisiana Waterthrush	1
Barred Owl	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1
Blue Jay	1
Phoebe	1
Cowbird	<u>Present</u>
	Total Males 122
	No. Species 24
	Density 187 territorial males per 100 acres

Frequent Visitors: Towhee, Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker.

Remarks: The red-eyed vireo and ovenbird were apparently scarcer than usual. The red-bellied woodpecker nesting hole was located and one young bird seen in it June 8 by Vera Carrothers.

NESTING RECORDS

Louisiana Waterthrush - "June 12, 1953, a nest of the Louisiana waterthrush was discovered in Stebbins Gulch. Before the discovery two brief songs were heard in the area. The nest was made of dead leaves, grasses, fine roots and some hair. Being well concealed by ferns under a tree root of mountain maple, it was difficult to see the nest from the opposite bank. It had been placed about four feet above the stream bed, on the bank. Within the nest four eggs were hidden. The female was sitting on the nest and allowed me to approach within a foot before she flew off the nest.

Three nestlings, sooty-black, were in the nest on June 22. Although both parents were feeding, they were very cautious in their approach to the nest. They first appeared to fly aimlessly about the nesting territory, often for as long as ten minutes; then they disappeared quickly into the nest. The birds chipped while making their approach.

On June 29, the nest was empty. In view was only an adult bird, which flew over the nesting site and disappeared. The bird sang a brief song as it flew."

Lucille Mannix

Red-eyed Vireo - "The following brief chronology presents the high points of an unsuccessful nesting which my brother and I observed over a period of 16 days.

May 31. Female working on partly-completed nest located about four feet above the ground at the end of a drooping branch of a basswood tree, which stood in a small opening in dense second-growth woods in Warrensville Heights. Although the basic framework had been formed and the rim was quite firmly woven, there were gaps in the sides of the cup while the bottom was thin and flimsily woven.

June 1. By evening the nest was largely finished, having been constructed, in the usual fashion, of bast and grapevine bark strips with the customary outer adornment consisting of silk fibers from cocoons and the egg cases of spiders as well as matted bits of cleansing tissue.

June 2. At 7:30 P.M. the nest seemed to be completed though one side was exceptionally loosely woven; indeed the entire structure presented a slack and somewhat slovenly appearance.

June 3. 8:10 A.M., one Cowbird egg. The female Red-eye had apparently not finished her work on the nest, however, because during the morning she added some bits of white cocoon fibers and a number of strands of inner bark, depositing the latter over and around the lone egg. In the afternoon she began to incubate.

June 4. By 8:40 A.M. a second Cowbird egg had been deposited against the side of the nest and resting partly on the first egg. The female Red-eye was incubating during the morning and the afternoon but seemingly not steadily.

June 5. First Vireo egg laid June 6. Second Vireo egg laid. June 7. Third Vireo egg laid.

June 10. A third Cowbird egg had been deposited. (Unfortunately, we did not visit the nest on the 8th or 9th, so that I do not know when this egg was laid.)

June 14. Female incubating all six eggs. One of the Vireo eggs, which lay partly beneath a Cowbird egg, was slightly cracked.

June 1. Nest empty. No trace of egg shells or of feathers anywhere in and about the nest site. Predator unknown."

Donald Newman

Marsh Hawk - "On May 4, 1953, I found the nest of a Marsh Hawk on the Johnson Farm, Egglestone Road, Aurora Twp. The female, with several primary feathers of the right wing missing, flushed and revealed two eggs. Nest was a large structure on the ground and composed of various dry grasses and lined with same.

May 11. Nest held 6 eggs, which female was incubating.

May 18. Still 6 eggs, male and female present.

May 27. Same.

June 2. Same. Only female present.

June 15. Nest held 4 downy young, 1 unhatched egg and 1 egg missing. Male and female fussing.

June 25. Female fussing all the time I was in the field. Nest was empty except for one infertile egg. Further examination disclosed 3 fair sized young, all about the same size. They were distributed outside the nest in the shade of tall grasses.

June 27. Young further from nest in tall grass. Young about half grown and tails well developed.

July 7. Female (feathers still missing from wing) flushed, as did one young. Another young was on the ground near the nest and apparently could not fly. Did not find third bird. It might have been somewhere in the grass or had possibly flown away."

Carl Hamann

Short-billed Marsh Wren - "Anent the short-billed marsh wrens previously reported as singing in a wheat field (Cleveland Bird Calendar 49(2):3). subsequent events point out error. First observations were made from the road or from the farmhouse, both spots at least 150 feet distant from the singing perch. (Farm located on Bass Lake Road near Chardon, Ohio).

However, on June 27 a narrow strip about 20 feet wide was cut on the inner side of the hay field, adjoining the wheat field. By walking along this I could ascertain that there were two wrens singing, both in the hayfield.

On July 3-4 a second strip, twice as wide as the first, was cut. During the loading a nest and part of a second were found. The uncut one was made of grasses, as was the fragment. Even with the tossing it had received it retained a globular shape with an opening at one side. Lack of any lining material led me to suppose this was a "practice" nest.

About this time a heavy storm had laid flat a wide swath through the field and it was possible to walk to the spot where the second wren had been heard singing consistently, without damaging the crop further. During the week-end of July.11-12, I marked an area of about ten by five feet and watched the bird. He would climb about, picking at the grass stalks, sing and drop down to the ground. I would be unable to see him until he appeared climbing up another stalk three or four feet away. He never seemed particularly shy, and would stay around for ten minutes or more at a time before flying away.

On July 18 the last of the hay field was cut and this second bird disappeared. However, on July 27 I again heard a wren singing, this time in the pasture some five hundred feet away. Was it the first or the second, or yet another wren? Vera Carrothers had seen others on Sherman Road which dead-ends at one corner of the hayfield. This bird continued to sing for some time, the last time I heard him being August 19."

Marjorie Ramisch

Black Tern - Vermilion, Ohio. "On July 15 I was able to check the marsh at the west edge of Vermilion adjacent to U.S. #6 on the south side. At this date, about 20 black terns were seen, some still feeding young at nests in the marsh and all protesting vigorously my investigation. I would guess that nesting was about finished at this late date in view of the observations made at the same place and reported by another observer in the last Cleveland Bird Calendar (49,(2):3) . In reference to this published report, may I say that the marsh is not caused by dumping of sand, etc., here, but that it is in the process of being filled up by this dumping. One can see considerable progress from year to year in its destruction. The marsh is older than the settlement, and is at present only a remnant of its former size. The Vermilion Lagoons, in part at least, occupy a portion of the original marsh. Topographic maps indicate that 50 years ago it was much more extensive than at present, occupying what is now dry land on both sides of the river within a half mile or so of the lake shore. In a few more years, it will be just a memory."

Perry F. Johnson

Carolina Wren - Camp Iss-See-Kes (located along the Vermilion River about 15 miles directly west of Elyria and about 5 miles southeast of Vermilion, Ohio in Lorain County). "June 24, 1953 -Adults feeding newly-hatched young in nest under Rotary Hall. Nest located under kitchen, directly behind the camp drinking fountain at the same site used successfully by the species in 1951. This year, however, adult birds usually approached nest from far side of hall, which involved a trip of from 15 to 40 feet under the building each time. In 1951 they went in and out on either side of the drinking fountain, usually stopping to scold boys in the vicinity each time they went through the grille in either direction, sometimes from distances of only one or two feet. The young wrens, too, were surprisingly quiet this year, seldom being heard when fed, except by people who happened to be in the kitchen above the nest.

Three young birds left the nest on July 4. On July 23 the adults, probably the same pair, were already feeding a new brood of young in the wall of the toilet house a couple of hundred feet away. The building is constructed of concrete blocks. Holes were made in the blocks in the outer wall to allow passage of water pipes to the wash basins attached there. One of these holes gave entry to a concrete block cavity large enough to hold a nest, and it was here the young were raised. The birds sometimes left the nest, by the hole, when a boy started to wash in the basin directly above. The nest was inaccessible, however, and on August 6 the young left this nest also. I did not see them go, so could not determine the size of the brood.

It is interesting to note that, although bird houses and other such places are available, the wrens invariably seem to choose a nook or cranny somewhere around one of the camp buildings for their nest. They often get into cabins and other buildings, and one was caught in 1952 in a rat trap set for wood mice out in the woods. The trap was one designed to catch the animal alive, so the wren was not injured. Other nest locations have been the hood over the gas tanks used for kitchen cooking, in a cardboard box nearly filled with shredded paper packing left sitting on top of a refrigerator on the back porch of Rotary Hall, and in a small cranny behind a ventilating opening in a building once used for an outdoor toilet. This last nest is the only one I have found at camp which was not successful. Chipmunks, or some other small rodent, ate the eggs."

Perry F. Johnson

THE CHIMNEY SWIFT INHABITANTS OF A SINGLE AIR SHAFT

Ralph W. Dexter
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

For the past two years an account has been published for readers of The Cleveland Bird Calendar on the nesting of a selected pair of Chimney Swifts which were members of a colony nesting in certain air shafts on the buildings of Kent State University (47(2).-9-101 1951; 48(3):8-9. 1952) The present report is concerned with a somewhat different point-of-view - that of describing all of the known inhabitants of a single air shaft during the season of 1953. For that purpose, shaft E1 has been selected from the 85 shafts that were available to Chimney Swifts. Of this total, 33 were occupied at one time or another during the season of 1953 for varying lengths of time. Sixteen were occupied continuously for nesting while the remainder were utilized for roosting at various times.

Chimney Swifts returned to air shaft E1 on May 1, 1953. That evening two roosted side by side for the night on the west wall. Two nights later three previously banded Swifts roosted there - No. 42-188588 (which later nested in G4), 48-164517 (which later nested in H1), and 21-128512 (which later nested in A3). (No.-88 was originally captured for banding from this shaft in 1949, was a visitor there for two years with the mates of E1, and has returned to roost there for a short while in subsequent years before and after nesting in other shafts. No.-17 also had roosted there for brief periods during the past two years.) On May 12 only a single bird roosted in E1 - No. 46-166266. (This bird was banded as a juvenile from E1 in 1951 and was a visitor for a time with the mates in that shaft the following year.) Three nights later this same bird was captured there with its future mate, No. 48-164557, and a visitor, No. 20-188675, which soon left the colony. (The future mate, No.-57, had roosted in E1 for the past three years after nesting was completed in the colony. No.-75 had roosted there briefly the previous year.) At this time the birds were scattered in the air shaft, and did not roost here every night for some time. However, two birds were observed side by side in this shaft nightly beginning with May 24. By the end of a week a nest was made 22.4 feet down on the east wall. Trapping disclosed that No.-66 (male) and No.-57 (female) mentioned above were the mates. Starting with June 3 a visitor joined them to form a threesome. On June 6 another trapping indicated that the visitor was No. 20-188687 which remained as a visitor for the balance of the season. (This bird had been captured for banding at this shaft the previous year but was not raised in that shaft.) The female parent was marked at that time with a white paint mark for identification. On June 12 the female was found incubating the first egg while the male and the visitor roosted just below the nest. Within a week there were 5 eggs on the nest. From these, three juveniles were raised which left the nest the last week of July. On August 2 a total of 24 Swifts roosted in shaft E1. These included the two parents and visitor of E1, the male parent from D1, the male parent from M7, the male (?) parent from R2 (this bird roosted in E1 last year, also), two non-nesting repeats, two returns (one of which had not been seen since it was banded two years earlier), and 14 unbanded juveniles. Four nights later 11 Swifts roosted in E1 - the two parents and the visitor of that shaft, No. 21-128512 which roosted here before nesting in A3 as mentioned above, six of the newly banded juveniles captured four days earlier, and one unbanded juvenile. On August 20 a total of 18 Swifts roosted for the night in E1 - the female parent and visitor of E1, the male parent from E6 (this bird roosted here last year after nesting was completed), the female parent from H1 (the mate of this bird roosted here before

the nesting season began as indicated earlier), the female parent from M7 (the mate of this bird roosted here 18 days ago), a seasonal visitor from P3, two nonnesting repeats, (one of these was one of the returns captured on August 2, and the other had been banded from E1 as a juvenile the previous year but was not raised there), three juveniles recently banded from E1, and seven unbanded juveniles which were then newly banded. Following this date Chimney Swifts were not observed in this shaft again until September 30. At that time four Swifts were found roosting here - the seasonal visitor of E1, the male parent from H5 (this bird was known to roost in E1 twice during the previous year after nesting was completed), a juvenile bird from P3, and an unbanded bird. During the season a total of 44 different Swifts were known to occupy this one shaft - the two parents which nested in E1, two visitors (one of which left before nesting began and one which remained throughout the nesting season), ten breeding birds which roosted here either before or after nesting was undertaken elsewhere, a bird which had been a visitor with another mated pair, five birds which did not nest on the campus, and 24 juveniles. Ten of the 44 had been known to occupy shaft E1 in previous years.