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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS
From U. S. Weather Bureau Reports (Cleveland Hopkins Airport)

March - Continuing a trend begun in mid-February, the temperatures during the first three weeks of March were well above normal, with the exception of a brief cold spell from the 6th through the 8th. During the last week, however, the weather changed abruptly, with some four inches of snow falling on the 26th and the thermometer dropping to a low of 14 on the 28th. For the month as a whole, sunshine was considerably above normal.

April - In the 85-year history of the local weather bureau, this was the warmest April of record. All of the month's rainfall totaling 3.72 inches, nearly an inch above normal, fell between the 13th and the 26th.

May - Not since 1944 have we had so warm a month of May. More memorable, however, was the precipitation on the 24th when a new all-time record for any month was established with a rainfall of 3.02 inches within a two-hour period, while on the same date a new 24-hour precipitation record was set for the month. In the entire month five inches of rain fell, a departure above normal of 2.27 inches.

REVIEW OF THE SEASON

The Sunday Morning Bird Walks, sponsored jointly by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the Cleveland Audubon Society, were conducted this year from April 17, through May 22, at 13 different stations, providing a well-balanced coverage of the Cleveland region with the exception of the Akron lakes on the extreme southern boundary. The total of species recorded on the six Sundays was 166, as compared with 160 in 1954, and 187 in 1953, the highest number in the entire 22-year history of the walks. The largest number of species observed on any one day was 108 on May 15. By comparison, then, James F. Akers achieved a notable triumph when on May 12, working alone on a "century dash", he recorded 103 species in a total of eight different areas ranging from Lake Rockwell to North Rocky River Reservation. Of particular interest is the fact that he reported only 12 species of Warblers, of which eight were locally breeding species.

In the absence within the Cleveland region of any sizable areas of suitable habitat for waterfowl, marsh, and shore birds, we lack sufficient records of these species to enable us to obtain a true picture of their spring migration. Of considerable significance, however, was the sudden upsurge in the numbers of Red-breasted Mergansers reported by Lucille Mannix, who visited the Cleveland lakefront between East 49th and East 72nd Streets regularly several times each week during March and April. On the 23rd of March she observed just 25 Red-breasted Mergansers; on the 25th, 100; on the 26th an estimated 1000 (I); and on the 31st, 100. It seems reasonable to conclude that this sharp but temporary increase was caused by the arrival of a migrating flock from outside the area, and this conclusion is fortified by the fact that the wintering population was so extremely small, possibly not more than a dozen individuals. (See Cleveland BIRD CALENDAR, 51: (1), 1955)

Among the passerine birds there were but few reports of the Bank Swallow, with no records at all for the month of April. On May 10, however, at Mogadore, Stephen Harty saw an estimated 1000 of these Swallows together with a courting flock of Barn Swallows estimated at half that number. Other species for which there was a paucity of records were the Rusty Blackbird, Fox Sparrow, and Lincoln's Sparrow, this last species being represented by a single record of a lone bird observed on May 4.

REVIEW OF THE SEASON (Cont'd.)

There were several notable concentrations of particular species, including a leisurely eastward flight of some 150 Blue Jays in scattered groups at Huntington Beach on the morning of May 15. Also at Huntington Beach, in what seemed to be a migratory movement, was a flock of about 200 Goldfinch on the morning of May 1. A total of 34 Purple Finch were recorded at the Bird Walk at North Rocky River Reservation on May 8.

But the outstanding aspects of the spring season were (1) the tardiness and scarcity of Thrushes and (2) the extraordinary scarcity of Warblers. The Wood and Hermit Thrushes and the Veery were especially late in arriving, the first records for the season being from a week to ten days after the average first date of arrival. There were no March records of the Hermit Thrush, which did not appear in numbers until about April 17, after which the numbers gradually declined so that by May 1, when there is usually a second wave of migrants, not a single bird was reported. Indeed, for the entire month of May there were only three records of the Hermit totaling seven individuals. Similarly, in the case of the Olive-backed Thrush there were no waves, which generally occur late in April and again early in May, and the total of reports on this usually common migrant was far below normal.

Probably the most revealing and telling comment on the phenomenal absence of migrating Warblers was made by that veteran observer Merit B. Skaggs who wrote: "As far as I was concerned this was the poorest season for Warblers in the past 25 years. There was no apparent 'wave'." Of the 20 species of Warblers which occur here only as transients, not a single species was reported in sizable numbers. The Myrtle Warbler, usually our most abundant transient, demonstrates this scarcity as shown in the records from the 13 Bird Walk stations where the following totals were recorded: April 17 (31); April 24 (1); May 1 (2); May 8 (157); May 15 (19); May 24 (2).

The Magnolia Warbler, which is probably the second most numerous transient, was extremely uncommon, and seven on May 8, was the greatest number reported by any one observer. Indeed, seven was the grand total of Magnolias recorded at all 13 Bird Walk stations on May 15! Even scarcer were such usually common migrants as the Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, and Canada Warblers, while rarest of all was the Black-poll Warbler of which there were just two records of a lone bird on May 22, and May 30.

Despite their abnormally reduced numbers, the Warblers as a group were not at all tardy in arriving in our region. A careful tabulation and analysis of the dates of arrival of the 30 species which regularly occur here either as breeding birds or as transients discloses that 24 species arrived ahead of the average first date of arrival shown in "Birds of Cleveland". Two species, the Yellow and Cape May, established new earliest dates of spring arrival.

In summary, then, the evidence drawn from the reports of many observers throughout our region seems to suggest the following conclusions concerning the migration of Warblers into and through the Cleveland area this season: (1) the movement was not retarded but was probably even somewhat advanced, with the vanguard arriving ahead of schedule; (2) the main body of transients appeared in exceptionally small numbers within the accustomed period; (3) from about May 25 to the end of the month there was not the usual delayed passage of stragglers, while in the case of that normally late migrant, the Blackpoll, there appears to have been no stopover in Cleveland whatever.

REVIEW OF THE SEASON (Cont'd.)

For those who wish to annotate their copy of "Birds of Cleveland", the following are the new earliest spring date of arrival for the species named:

Least Flycatcher - April 10 (Swetland)
Olive-sided Flycatcher - May 1 (Shaker Lakes Bird Walk)
Migrant Shrike - March 11 (Akers)
Warbling Vireo - April 21 (Hamann)
Yellow Warbler - April 14 (Booth)
Cape May Warbler - April 24 (Deininger)

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Holboell's Grebe - Reported from the lakefront at East 72nd Street, on March 23, by Lucille Mannix.

Eared Grebe - This western species was observed on April 17, by the bird walkers at Holden Arboretum, where, oddly enough, two of our three previous records for this rare visitor were made: April 22, 1941, and April 24, 1946.

Whistling Swan - At about 4:15 p.m. on April 3, Donaldson Dimpsey saw a flock of from 48 to 55 of these magnificent birds flying over the Holden Arboretum headed toward the northwest.

Harlequin Duck - Apparently having found the lakefront at East 49th Street well suited to its needs, this rarest of visitors, which was first recorded on February 1, remained in that area throughout March and until April 27, when it was last seen by Lucille Mannix, who in her frequent trips along the lakefront noticed that this duck was usually in the company of about six Lesser Scaup Ducks.

Bald Eagle - One reported by Stephen Harty at Mogadore on May 16. Two on May 11, in Lyndhurst. (,See Field Notes)

Duck Hawk - The bird walkers at Huntington Beach saw a lone individual on May 1.

Red Phalarope - From January 1, the date it was first discovered on the lakefront at East 72nd Street, to March 31, when it was last recorded by Lucille Mannix, this rare visitor was regularly observed by many of our contributors. The records on this species disclose that it has been reported at various times in the six months from October through March, but this is the first year in which there have been any records of this bird subsequent to January 1.

Snowy Owl - Vera Carrothers writes that on March 1, on the lakefront at East 72nd Street, she together with Marjorie Ramisch and Susan Storer watched a very dark Snowy Owl which, as it flew from one piece of ice to another just a foot or so above the open water, "buzzed a couple of Black Ducks, one of which dived while the other flew away." She remarks that the Owl seemed merely to be annoying or teasing the ducks in a kind of sportive play rather than with the actual intent of attacking them. Our only other spring record of this Owl comes from Lakewood Park, where on March 4, Owen Davies observed one.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS (Cont'd.)

Short-eared Owl - One, at the Streetsboro tamarack bog on May 12, reported by James F. Akers.

Bewick's Wren - The bird walkers at Holden Arboretum recorded one on April 24; and for the third successive spring, this year on April 21, Perry F. Johnson observed this Wren in the city of Elyria. This species may possibly be extending its range; for, in the six years from 1950 to the present we have seven records for this region including one breeding record, while for the entire 20 years prior to 1950 we have only three records.

Mockingbird - Singing with true springtime fervor, this master of mimicry visited the backyard of Owen Davies, in Lakewood, on May 4, 9, and 11, having remained in the neighborhood for a full week.

American Pipit - In Walton Hills, on May 6, Charles Knight watched a flock comprising an estimated 400 of these slim "wagtails" as they fed along the borders of a road.

Northern Shrike - One of the two birds which frequented the area east of Lander Road between Fairmount and Gates Mills Boulevards during the past winter was still present as late as March 12, when it was last observed by George King. On that same date Allen E. Valentine saw a Northern Shrike at the Holden Arboretum.

Orchard Oriole - Merit Skaggs reports that an adult male remained in the vicinity of his home in Willoughby from May 11 to the 31st.

Summer Tanager - A fully adult male was both seen and heard by the bird walkers at Bedford Metropolitan Park on May 15. In the same area on May 30 and 31, Charles Knight saw an immature male "patched red and green" which sang vigorously and at length during the early morning of both days. This bird is a real rarity in our region, and we have only five previous records, all in the month of May.

Evening Grosbeak - A group of this unpredictable visitor, sometimes numbering as many as one dozen, which had regularly visited a feeding station in the Village of Mentor during the winter months continued to feed there until April 22, as reported by Llewellyn P. Barbour. Other records for this species are as follows: May 7 (4) and May 8 (5), Lakewood Park; May 8 (6), Gates Mills; May 15 (6) and May 22 (1), Huntington Beach.

Pine Grosbeak - Seemingly oblivious to his presence, Allen E. Valentine watched five of these rare visitors at close range for several minutes on March 12, while they fed on the seeds of a tree at the edge of Grouse Pond in the Holden Arboretum.

White-winged Crossbill - The band of Crossbills which was first observed in the Shaker Lakes woods on February 20, remained in that area until March 3, on which date Robert Sullivan counted only six birds although previously there had been as many as ten. Another report of this species comes from David Mickel who, on March 13, studied two males and two females for about 20 minutes as they pried out the seeds in the cones of a row of Scotch pines on the grounds of Western Reserve Academy in Hudson.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - At Lakewood Park on May 22, Owen Davies discovered this bird, which was well marked with bright buffy face patches and distinct white stripings on the back.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS (Cont'd.)

Snow Bunting - In the late afternoon of May 2, a lone Bunting came to drink at the bird bath of Mrs. Irwin Jacobsen, in Fairview Park Village, and remained in her backyard for about five minutes affording her an opportunity to make a positive identification. This is a new latest spring record, the previous last date being April 2, 1949.

FIELD NOTES

Wood Ducks Courting. On April 19, at 7:15 a.m., I was near the Trailside Museum in the North Chagrin Reservation when I heard a low, continuous scolding note. After several minutes I saw a male Wood Duck high up in a Moses Cleaveland beech tree. He was on a dead horizontal limb, silhouetted against the sky 50 or 60 feet up. I watched him for ten minutes; preening, arching his neck, and making this queer little noise. As I started to leave, I discovered the female on a dead upright stub a few feet away in the center of the tree. She and the tree were so nearly the same color I had not seen her. She, too, was bowing. Several times during this display the drake stretched his neck out toward her while at the same time making a louder hissing sound.

VERA CARROTHERS

Whistling Swans at Rocky River. From Friday evening, March 25, through noon on Sunday, March 27, the Cleveland area was smothered under a "spring blizzard". Nine inches of snow fell during that time. Although roads in the Rocky River valley were impassable earlier, it had cleared enough by Sunday afternoon to make a brief field trip feasible. It was still cold and windy, but clear.

I stopped along a portion of the river approximately half a mile above the Brookpark Bridge, where the river broadens into a wide, slow-moving stretch within which a small island is located. On the downriver end of this island completely out of the water stood a pair of Whistling Swans. I was able to approach within 50 to 75 yards of them before they walked slowly into the water and sailed off downriver and out of sight around a bend.

I can only feel that their occurrence in the Rocky River valley is something of a rarity and that it was the severity of the storm that temporarily "grounded" them.

ALLEN E. VALENTINE

Attempted Nesting of Broad-winged Hawk. From April 23 through May 24, Leo Deininger and I watched a pair of Broad-winged Hawks which attempted to nest in that portion of the Shaker Lakes area known as the Middle Woods, lying between the so-called Lily Pond on the west and Horseshoe Lake to the east. On April 23, only one bird was seen, but on April 26, a pair of Broad-wings was observed just inside the border of the woods. From that time on we saw either one or both birds almost every day until incubation began on May 5, after which the male was recorded on only four days, the last time on May 21, when with the female off the nest both birds were calling from separate portions of the woods.

The nest was located at a height of about 60 feet in the center crotch of a red oak tree which stands some 200 feet in from the edge of the woods. Composed of a great mass of dead twigs and small branches, this nest, which was at least a foot deep, was several years old. The Broad-winged Hawk simply appropriated it but did not appear to add much,

FIELD NOTES (Cont'd.)

if anything, to it, and we never saw her carrying any nesting material. She was on the nest each day from May 5, through May 24, after which date we did not observe either of this pair of Hawks again. On only two occasions did we see the male in the immediate vicinity of the nest: On the 13th while the female was incubating, he flew silently into the woods to perch in a tree adjacent to the nest site; on the following day he alighted on a limb of the red oak in which the nest was located and remained for several minutes as his mate continued to incubate.

ROBERT SULLIVAN

Northern Bald Eagle. At about 4:30 p.m. on May 11, Louis Gaeta was airing his female Golden Eagle, "Jezebel", at the intersection of Ford and Mayfield Roads, in Lyndhurst, when she suddenly began to scream in a manner he had never known before. Soon there came answering screams from high in the sky, possibly a thousand feet or more, and through his binoculars Gaeta was amazed to discover two Bald Eagles, which had evidently heard and were now responding to the cries of his captive bird; for all three Eagles kept up a wild outcry which made the air fairly ring.

Within a minute or two, one of the Bald Eagles, apparently the female judging from her larger size, circled down to within perhaps 200 feet of the earth to examine more closely the source of the cries which had first attracted her. She was a magnificent bird, in full adult plumage, the white head and tail feathers lustrous in the afternoon sunlight. Meanwhile the other Bald Eagle continued its flight in a westerly direction and was soon joined by its larger companion. The entire episode lasted less than five minutes, but they were moments of rare and exciting beauty.

DLN

Downy Woodpecker Battles the Wind. During the severe wind and snow storm on March 27, I watched a Downy Woodpecker as it attempted to feed in a tree near the farmhouse on Bass Lake Road in Chardon. Having flown to the lee side of the tree, it worked its way up the trunk to a more exposed position where the wind whipped its feathers about in all directions. I wondered how the bird kept his place as I had to brace myself against the force of the wind. Evidently he found it precarious, for he began to hitch himself backward down the tree. When the wind seemed to lessen for a moment, the bird moved upward. After five minutes of this up and down shifting, he half flew, half blew to the ground 50 feet away to pick at the suet on a big bone left for the dogs. There, protected by a near-by shed, he found the food that the fierce buffeting of the wind prevented him from extracting from the bark of the tree.

MARJORIE RAMISCH

Spring Migration of Chickadees? Although we usually think of the Black-capped Chickadee as a non-migratory or permanent resident species, there seems to be increasing evidence that this bird shifts from one area to another within its range in what may or may not be a true migratory movement. In the autumn of 1954, for example, many Chickadees passed through our Cleveland region, being particularly noticeable in the heart of the city. (See Cleveland BIRD CALENDAR, 50: (4), 1955)

During this spring I observed what may have been a reverse of last autumn's shifting of

FIELD NOTES (Cont'd.)

population. Beginning with April 6, I first saw a Chickadee at mid-morning on the Mall; a short time later a second bird on the County Courthouse grounds; and still later, at noon, two birds flying along St. Clair Avenue at Ontario Street. On April 12, at 8 a.m. I noticed a lone Chickadee flying away from the trees on the grounds of St. John's College, at East 12th and Superior. Again at St. John's College, on April 18, at 5 p.m. I heard the lispings call notes of the Black-cap and I looked up just in time to see a band of six birds rising steeply to clear the rooftops of the buildings to the east. Finally, on April 19, I saw the last of these transient birds when at 9:15 a.m. I discovered three of them in the plane trees on the Mall, where one of them created a truly springtime mood by repeating several times its gentle, wistful "phee-a-bee" song.

In each of the six separate instances that I observed these Chickadees, they were moving either due east or in an easterly direction. There have been no other reports of a movement of this species through the Cleveland region this spring. It is interesting to find, however, that in their account of the birds of Point Pelee (Wilson BULLETIN, 20: 107129, 1908), Taverner and Swales remark: "Our experience with the species (Black-capped Chickadee) at Detroit leads us to believe that it is more migrational than is generally supposed. They are common through the winter, but about the first of April the great bulk of them depart, leaving but a few scattered summer residents behind."

DONALD L. NEWMAN

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FOOD OF COMMON BIRDS - VI

Ralph W. Dexter
Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

During the year 1954, 20 dead birds were brought to our laboratory for stomach analysis. Four contained nothing (American Bittern, Purple Martin, Towhee and Song Sparrow). Also, 33 owl pellets were analyzed. Results are given below. Acknowledgment is made to those who kindly contributed specimens for the study and to Dr. C. H. Hobbs who identified the seeds reported here. The previous report in this series was published in the Cleveland BIRD CALENDAR 50 (1): 6-7. 1954.

Mallard - Found dead at Lake Mogadore, April 29, 1954. Contents: mass of sand containing an abundance of seeds of water plants.

Sparrow Hawk - Found dead on K. S. U. campus, March 8, 1954. Contents: fur of a small mammal and insect fragments.

Ruffed Grouse - Found dead in Kent, November 1, 1953. Contents: 1 acorn and 2 berries.

Killdeer - Found dead at Salem, October 31, 1954. Contents: 2 spiders, 1 leaf hopper, 1 ground beetle, other beetle fragments.

Mourning Dove - Found dead in Cuyahoga Falls, March, 1954. Contents: 15 kernels of field corn.

Barn Owl - 32 pellets collected May 28, 1954, from a silo at Hartville. An average of

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FOOD OF COMMON BIRDS - VI (Cont'd.)

3.2 skulls was found per pellet. Contents: field mouse (*Microtus pennsylvanicus*) 73; short-tailed shrew (*Blarina brevicauda*) 19; white-footed deer mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) 7; rat bones 3; bird skulls 2.

Flicker - Found dead at Ashtabula, April 18, 1954. Contents: large mass of ants and their pupae.

Downy Woodpecker - Found dead near Tallmadge, April 12, 1954. Contents: 12 caterpillars, fragments of insects, and 10 small seeds.

White-breasted Nuthatch - Found dead on K. S. U. campus, October 12, 1954. Contents: Fragments of insects and fragments of plant tissue.

Robin - Found dead at Kent, October 17, 1954. Contents: 3 wild cherries, 1 harvest spider, 1 ant, 1 caterpillar.

Cedar Waxwing - Found dead at Twin Lakes, October 5, 1954. Contents: 2 fruits of wild cherry (one contained a grub).

Yellow Warbler - (1). Found dead at Aurora, May 12, 1954. Contents: insect fragments (including beetles), 1 grass seed (panic grass or crab grass?), 1 unidentified seed. (2). Found dead at Kent, May 20, 1954. Contents: fragments of Coleoptera and Diptera.

Cape May Warbler - Found dead at Hartville, September 9, 1954. Contents: 1 millipede, 2 caterpillars, many fragments of Coleoptera and Diptera.

Snow Bunting - (2) Killed at Mosquito Reservoir, October 23, 1954. Contents: 1 weevil, insect fragments, many seeds of pigweed?, and a grass (panic grass? or foxtail?).

Cardinal - Found dead near Kent, December 24, 1954. Contents: 10 kernels of corn, 1 dried fruit, many small seeds.