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THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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Editor

Donald L. Newman

Associate Editor

Lucille Maly

CONTRIBUTORS

Fred J. Ackermann
Bruce Bartrug
B. P. Bole, Jr.
Kay F. Booth
J. E. Bush, Jr.
Vera Carrothers
Leo Deininger
Dave DeSante
C. T. Downer
Annette B. Flanigan
Adela Gaede

Carl F. Hamann
Neil Henderson
Roy and Jean Hudson
Robert Hyde
Perry F. Johnson
William & Nancy Klamm
Charles H. Knight
Vic Koppelberger
Rudy Kula
Hilda Lebold
Lucille Maly

Charles Margolis
Donald L. Newman
Margaret Perner
Bertram & Margaret Raynes
Paul H. Savage
Margaret H. Sherwin
Jean A. Staiger
T. F. Ulrich
Gale Wiley

SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

From U.S. Weather Bureau Reports (Cleveland Hopkins Airport)

- September - Continuing the trend of the summer, precipitation, which was well scattered throughout the month, was about one-half inch above normal. Average temperature of 64.9° was slightly below normal.
- October - Ideally autumnal. Total rainfall, most of which occurred on the 25th through 27th, was considerably below normal, while temperatures averaged slightly above normal. There were heavy frosts on the mornings of the 2nd and 19th. Sunshine hours totaled 56%.
- November - Cloudy and rainy, though for the most part quite mild, particularly during the middle ten days. First measurable snow fell on the 27th. In the next three days temperatures dropped sharply, to a low of 6° on the 30th; some six inches of snow fell on the 28th.

All records, observations, and comments should be sent to Donald L. Newman,
14174 Superior Road, Cleveland 18, Ohio.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

A large army of disappointed duck hunters will testify to the fact that this autumn saw one of the poorest flights of waterfowl in many years. This general impression is confirmed by the species occurrence records from the Cleveland region as well as by the comprehensive statewide reports received by the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Migration of Canada Geese was reported only between October 8th and 12th and only from the westerly portion of the region. Late in the afternoon of October 8 a flock of 50 appeared over North Royalton flying south and then abruptly heading east. A cold front accompanied by westerly winds passed through northern Ohio on October 10 and 11 bringing with it a small movement of Canada Geese, for two V's of 48 and 26 birds each were seen over Clague Park on the 11th and a flock of 60 in the Rocky River Valley on the 12th. A single bird at Lake Rockwell on November 9 was the sole record for that month. Even scarcer was the Whistling Swan, for which in the entire autumn there was just one record of a solitary bird at Cloverdale Lake near Painesville on October 12 (Booth). In contrast, the autumn of 1957 produced quite sizable flights of both Whistling Swans and Canada Geese on October 27-28 and again on November 10-11.

The dabbling ducks, as a group, were reported in smaller numbers than in recent years. For the Pintail there were just two records consisting of five birds on October 15 and four on the 19th, whereas in the autumn of 1957 there was a total of 5 records. Wood Duck, too, were reported in lesser numbers, and there were but half as many records as in 1957: 13 to 26.

Along the lakefront at Cleveland the diving ducks, with the possible exception of the Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead, were considerably less abundant than they were last autumn and in the several previous years. There were just three records for the Canvasback and one record for the Redhead. Even the number of Scaup ducks was much reduced, while the Ruddy Duck was notably scarce. In 1957, for example, the greatest number of Ruddies recorded along the Cleveland lakefront was 1,600 on November 10, whereas this autumn the high was a mere 113 on November 27. Simultaneously with the coming of frigid weather accompanied by heavy snowfall during the last three days of November, the lakefront duck population increased somewhat, however.

In November all three species of Scoters were observed on Lake Erie, including a flock of 12 Common Scoters flying west in the vicinity of Lakeshore Hotel on November 22 (Klamm). This is an unusually large number for this uncommon species, which is ordinarily reported in isolated ones and twos.

In contrast to the seemingly diminished numbers of ducks along the lakefront at Cleveland, observers at Lake Rockwell reported a great abundance of waterfowl on that inland lake. American Widgeon were the most numerous of the eight species of ducks seen there on October 12, when many Pied-billed Grebes, Coot, and three Double-crested Cormorants were also recorded (Wiley). On November 2, "one of the largest flocks ever observed there" included 1,000 or more American Widgeon, more than 300 Ring-necked Ducks, 75 to 100 Gadwalls, and both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal (Staiger).

Again this autumn as in the autumn of the three previous years, the numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls along the lakefront have followed a quite remarkable pattern. This gull has occurred throughout September in varying numbers. In October it has all but disappeared, and then in November it has reoccurred in considerable abundance. We do not know whether this same pattern of occurrence has been ex-

hibited elsewhere on the Great Lakes, and it would certainly be unwise to draw any general conclusion from the limited data derived from our mere 60 miles of shoreline. The following data are revealing, however, particularly when the year 1954 is compared to the four subsequent years. (The figure in the parentheses below is the date of occurrence of the maximum numbers of gulls reported.)

OCCURRENCE OF BONAPARTE'S GULL ALONG THE LAKEFRONT

	<u>September</u>		<u>October</u>		<u>November</u>	
	<u>Number of Records</u>	<u>Maximum Number</u>	<u>Number of Records</u>	<u>Maximum Number</u>	<u>Number of Records</u>	<u>Maximum Number</u>
1954	15	400(9)	10	1000(10)	9	50(11)
1955	3	450(16)	None	---	14	5000(19)
1956	7	200(15)	8	20(14)	8	350(25)
1957	13	1600(21)	1	2(27)	18	2500(24)
1958	8	1500(20)	1	110(26)	16	1160(22)

Migrating Nighthawks were commonly reported, though in ever decreasing numbers, through September 24, and there were records of single birds at Akron on October 3, and in the Rocky River Valley on October 7, which are notably late dates of occurrence.

Swainson's Thrush, which is always a common migrant, seemed to be even more abundant this autumn. At Villa Angela Academy on the shore of Lake Erie they were flitting about everywhere in the trees and shrubs on September 4 and 5 (Bartrug). For the region as a whole, however, this thrush was most numerously reported on September 13 and 14, particularly in the Rocky River Valley, though it continued to be observed commonly to the end of September. Quite abundant, too, was the Gray-checked Thrush, and in the period from September 11 to the 28th there were 15 records totaling 24 birds as compared with 8 records of 11 birds in the same period of 1957.

In terms of either number of records or numbers of birds, the Kinglets - both Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned - were decidedly less abundant. During October, when the migration of these two species is at its height, there were just 26 records of the Golden-crowned as compared with 50 records for the same month of 1957. Even more striking was the decrease in the numbers of Ruby-crowned Kinglets, for which in October of this year there were nine records totaling 53 birds as contrasted with 52 records of 483 birds in October 1957. Also, the scanty migration of Ruby-crowns this year was confined almost entirely between October 12th and 30th; last year this species occurred in good numbers throughout the month of October.

The Water Pipit was reported more often and in much larger flocks than last autumn. Among the 18 records was a flock of 70 birds at Burke Lakefront Airport on October 17 (Carrothers), and on November 9 a band of "more than one hundred busily feeding in a field from which potatoes had been dug" (Staiger).

Following a violent rainstorm accompanied by north and northwest winds on September 4, some seven species of warblers appeared the next day in the yard of an observer in Aurora where they remained all day feeding on insects (Hamann). More widespread migratory movement of warblers and other small passerines was reported on September 7, 13, and 21, though these were weekend dates when of course field observers were most active. It does appear, however, that there was a considerable movement of Empidonax flycatchers, Red-eyed Vireos, and many

species of warblers through the west side of Cleveland on September 13 and 31. On the 21st, in particular, there was "superb warbler activity" at Perkins Beach, where well over one hundred birds were observed - "their wide distribution from treetops to ground level in the shrubbery, combined with their unceasing restlessness, making a total count impossible" (Klamm). Also on that date warblers were abundant in Lakewood Park and in the Rocky River Valley, and in those localities together with Perkins Beach eleven species were recorded - among them large numbers of Bay-breasted and Wilson's Warblers (Klamm).

A cool air mass brought rain to the Cleveland area on September 17, and at 6:45 a.m. the call notes of small passerines dotted the dark, water-filled sky over Cleveland Heights. Later on that date the voices of small birds were heard on the Mall as well as elsewhere in downtown Cleveland, but, excepting two warblers, these transients remained so high and moved on so quickly they could not be identified. With the arrival of a cold front on September 26, a truly large flight of thrushes, warblers, and White-throated Sparrows appeared in downtown Cleveland. At 8:00 a.m. the rows of planetrees on the Mall and the small trees and bushes on the grounds of the Board of Education were alive with these birds, of which the White-throats were the most abundant. When these migrants left the treetops and flew over the buildings nearby, they headed in an easterly direction (Newman).

Taking the autumn season as a whole, the numbers of warblers reported were considerably reduced from other years. The Myrtle Warbler especially was less numerous. There were just three September records for this species, while in October there were just 16 records on 12 days as compared to 61 records for 25 days in October 1957; nor were any large flocks reported. Also less numerous were the Black-throated Green, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Hooded, and Wilson's Warblers. The Bay-breasted was not recorded at all in October.

Possibly because of the mildness of the autumn weather, a number of birds remained in the Cleveland region beyond their normal time of departure, as is suggested by the five new latest fall dates of occurrence reported in this issue. Other birds late in departing were several Indigo Buntings in the Rocky River Reservation, where four were seen on September 27, two on October 5, and one on October 12 - all in the brush pile area (Klamm). At least three Yellowthroats lingered into November. One of these was a nondescript immature or female which for two weeks or more skulked through the beds of tattered cannas at the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the Cleveland Public Square. It was last seen there on November 7, but it is quite probable it was this same bird which was hopping about nearby on the Mall on November 11.

In the CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR year now concluded, that is, December 1, 1957 to November 30, 1958, 238 species were reported. This is ten less than were reported in the previous 12-month period. There were no records for the Dunlin and for the Parula Warbler. The lack of reports for the Dunlin is perhaps accounted for by the absence in our region of suitable habitat where this normally quite common migrant might stop to feed. In the case of the Parula Warbler, however, it appears that this species, which is never common, has become exceedingly scarce as a migrant through the region in the last few years.

For annotation in the "Birds of the Cleveland Region" are the following new latest fall dates of occurrence:

Common Snipe (2) - November 27, Cuyahoga County Airport (Henderson)
Short-billed Marsh Wren (1) - October 25, Burke Lakefront Airport (Klamm)
Loggerhead Shrike (1) - November 9, near Kent (Knight)
Blackpoll Warbler (2) - October 29, Rocky River Reservation (Hudson)
Yellowthroat (1) - November 16, North Chagrin Reservation (Newman)

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Brant - The second November record and just the fourth regional record is of a bird on Lake Erie off Gordon Park on November 15 (Klamm) and on the morning of November 16 (Carrothers). It was seen by many other observers, too, who noted that as it bobbed up and down it seemed to be feeding on something (algae?) attached to the rocks of the old and partly submerged breakwall; occasionally it climbed atop these rocks to rest and preen.

Blue Goose - From October 12, which is a new earliest fall date of occurrence, to November 9, an adult remained on the Sherwin Farm in Waite Hill, mingling with the large flock of semi-wild Canada Geese which are usually to be found there (Sherwin). There were no other reports of this species.

Rough-legged Hawk - A bird in the melanistic phase hovered and swooped for ten minutes or more over a field adjoining King Memorial Highway near Chardon on November 26 (Kula).

Bald Eagle - On September 1, an immature eagle was discovered feeding upon a woodchuck at the side of a road in Kirtland Township, Lake County (Bole, Jr.).

Peregrine Falcon - Perched quite motionless in the top of a dead elm tree in the Rocky River Reservation on September 3, an adult falcon afforded a hidden observer an excellent opportunity to study it. In the same area on September 24, but about a half mile distant, the same or a second bird was seen perched in another dead elm (Ackermann).

Golden Plover - Not often does this fall migrant occur in as large flocks as were observed at Burke Lakefront Airport on September 13 and 14, when 15 and 22 birds, respectively, were counted (Klamm).

Whimbrel - Possibly the single bird seen at the Burke Lakefront Airport on August 23 remained for the rest of the month, for one was there again on September 1, and like the earlier individual was feeding in the coarse grass along the runways (Klamm).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - In the company of nearly two dozen Golden Plover (see above) as well as about one dozen "peep" sandpipers, four Buff-breasted Sandpipers on September 14 ranged up and down the long grass strips bordering the runways at Burke Lakefront Airport. Several of these rare migrants apparently lingered there, for three were present on September 18 and one on the 21st (Klamm).

Hudsonian Godwit - For about five minutes at noon on September 18, this bird, which was unaccompanied by any other shorebirds, was observed flying quite low over Burke Lakefront Airport. Gradually it rose higher, flew out over Lake Erie, circled about and returned over land, then turned and again flew over the lake where it was soon lost to sight (Maly). A cold front had arrived at Cleveland in the early morning hours of the 18th, and the day was marked by high, gusty northwest winds (speeds of 39 to 46 miles per hour were recorded at 8:00 a.m. at the Coastguard [Coast Guard] Station). Thus it is quite probable this godwit was blown off its normal migratory course, for only once before has this species been reported from the Cleveland region in this century: one at Lake Dorothy near Barberton on September 4 and 5, 1951.

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker - At 7:15 a.m. on November 13, this woodpecker (a female) was discovered scaling bark from a dead elm tree which stands within 25 feet of a house in Waite Hill. During the next six days she was seen at the tree each day except for the 16th. She was observed again on November 25,

when at noon "the back of the bird gleamed like black satin in the sun", and in good light the three toes were seen for the first time. This woodpecker seemingly adhered to a rather regular feeding schedule because on each of four days she made two visits to the elm tree: in the early morning (at about 8:15 on three of those days) and again in the afternoon between 4:00 and 5:00. On November 18, which was a completely sunless day, she appeared only in the afternoon - at about 3:15 - while on the 19th she made just one visit at 4:00 p.m. The feeding periods were never less than half an hour and sometimes lasted a full hour. Upon her arrival at the elm tree "she generally made her call a few times and then settled down to work and very seldom called after that" (Flanigan). This is the first November record of occurrence, at least in the present century, and one of a very few records in the entire history of the region.

Mockingbird - The record of this accidental migrant on September 2 at Villa Angela Academy in Cleveland is one of but a few regional records for the month of September (Bartrug). In Elyria on October 8 and 9, a Mockingbird was observed in the general vicinity where one was seen early in the spring of 1958 (Johnson).

Loggerhead Shrike - Previous to 1958 there had been only five autumn reports of this species in the Cleveland region. This autumn, however, one was observed on October 19 at Burke Lakefront Airport, where it was being chased by a flock of Redwinged Blackbirds (Carrothers); and one was also reported near Kent on November 9, which is a new latest fall date of occurrence (Knight).

Kentucky Warbler - During the last 45 years this warbler has been reported from the Cleveland region on 16 occasions - all of them during the month of May with the exception of a single June record. Consequently, the following records are (or appear to be) the first for the autumn: one bird on September 7 in the underbrush on a hillside near Everett, Summit County (DeSante), and two birds together at the brush pile in the Rocky River Reservation on the morning of October 17 (Ackermann).

Connecticut Warbler - The retiring, ground-feeding habits of this species cause it to escape observation, and only rarely is more than one bird seen at a time. Yet on October 12 in the Rocky River Reservation four birds were feeding in the low weeds near the brush pile, and the same or possibly other birds were observed in the garden area nearby (Klamm).

Western Meadowlark - For a period of four weeks beginning July 6, 1958, a bird of this species was heard fairly often at Burke Lakefront Airport, but then seemed to have disappeared. At about noon on September 21, however, a single burst of song announced the presence of this meadowlark in precisely the same area where the original bird was accustomed to sing. "It is quite possible that the Western Meadowlark could have been there continuously, but unnoticed, from August 3 (when last reported) to September 21 because that is approximately the period when the meadowlarks do not sing" (Henderson). In any event, this is the first autumn record for the region and just the sixth record in all.

From a Neighboring Locality:

Wilson's Phalarope - A single bird was sighted on September 12 and one was seen again on September 27 feeding in the shallow pools along the extensive mud flat at Walnut Beach, Ashtabula, where one of these rare migrants had lingered from August 20 through August 22, 1958 (Savage).

FIELD NOTES

Flight of Mergansers Along Lakefront. At about 10:00 a.m. on November 8, four of us (including Albert Sauer and Edna Black) were looking over the cliff along Lake Erie near our home in Bay Village. We were watching a female Common Scoter feeding near some Common Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, and Red-breasted Mergansers when we noticed a flock of birds approaching from the west. The first ones flew low, and the mergansers took off with them. The four of us checked numbers and agreed that there were 1,100 mergansers in the flight. Then one flock after another passed by for the next half hour, during which time we must have seen not less than 5,500 birds. We could distinguish Red-breasted Mergansers but could not be certain whether other species were among them. They all flew at the same speed and in the same pattern. Later probably half of them flew back west at a greater height and about a mile out over the lake. - ROY and JEAN HUDSON

Migration of Common Terns. The morning of September 7 was quite cool and partly cloudy. A fierce northwest wind whipped along the shoreline of Lake Erie at Cleveland although a short distance inland the wind was quite mild. Beginning at 9:25 a.m., as I watched from Burke Lakefront Airport, flocks of Common Terns, calling intermittently, moved east following the shoreline but keeping over land rather than over the water. They flew at a height of 1,500 to 2,000 feet and seemed to mass together briefly when they reached the mouth of the Cuyahoga River where the shoreline angles off from a northwesterly to a more east-west direction. They then spread out in a broader front as they proceeded east. During the 15 minutes this migration continued (for it was over by 9:40 a.m.), six separate flocks of terns passed by - the largest consisting of about 250 birds, the smallest of only 40 birds. In all I counted approximately 640. These were the only Common Terns reported from the Cleveland lakefront between September 1 and September 13. - DONALD L. NEWMAN

Late Nesting of Carolina Wren. On August 13, 1958, a Carolina Wren was observed collecting moss and leaves for a nest under construction in a flower pot fastened to the door post of a house in Gates Mills. The nest, which was well made, was placed against the door post and on the soil in the flower pot directly between two geranium plants. Both the male and female participated in the building of the nest which was completed on August 20. Four days later it contained four eggs. The female (presumably) was incubating on September 3 and continued to do so until about September 12, on which date the pair was unusually active. Neither bird was seen or heard the following day, and on September 14 it was apparent the nest, still containing four eggs, had been abandoned. This is the latest nesting record I can find for the Carolina Wren in this region. - C. T. DOWNER

Violent Flight Activity of Redwings. For about ten minutes shortly after 8:00 a.m. on November 8, I watched some 400 Redwinged Blackbirds maneuvering in and out of the small marsh bordering Burke Lakefront Airport. The entire flock would rise swiftly into the air, then break into several groups - about a third flying off in one direction, another third in another direction, with the other third taking a still different line of flight or sometimes dropping suddenly back into the marsh. But the departing birds did not go far and quickly poured back into the marsh, only to repeat their seemingly frantic maneuvers a moment later. Despite the intensity of their activity the Redwings were not particularly vocal. I do not know how long this mad rush in and out of the marsh continued, but at 10:00 a.m. when William and Nancy Klamm visited the airport they found not a single Redwing there; nor were any seen the next day or on the following weekend. It would seem, then, that the behavior I witnessed was simply a prelude to migration, and the many explosive departures from the marsh were just false starts (or warm-up flights) before the migratory flight actually began. - VERA CARROTHERS

Partial Albino Among Transient Crow Flock. A transient flock of about 70 Crows stopped at Cuyahoga County Airport on October 12, and among them was one with clear white primaries. If it had not been with normal Crows, this partial albino would have had me scrambling for the back pages of Peterson. The only distinction in behavior I could detect in a few minutes' observation was that the albino seemed always to be near the rear of the flock, which was constantly shifting around in the sky. Similar large flocks had circled the airport on September 28 and October 5, but they did not come close and I noticed no white-winged bird among them. It was interesting to observe that the local population of Crows apparently held aloof from the transients. The normal number of Crows was present and going about their usual business on each occasion, and these few scattered birds seemed oblivious of the large flocks. - NEAL HENDERSON

Vireo Dines on Caterpillar. At my home in Pepper Pike Village on September 6, I observed a Red-eyed Vireo in a nearby tree and noticed that it had evidently just captured a huge green caterpillar some two to three inches long. The vireo balanced the caterpillar in its bill, studied it attentively, and then draped it over a twig. For fully 90 seconds more it continued to examine the insect - flitting wildly all about it, plucking at it, adjusting it, replacing it. Finally, the bird again picked it up, flew with it to a smaller limb, and wedged the caterpillar into a crack. With its prey firmly secured, the vireo then proceeded to devour it in segments. - BERTRAM RAYNES



BIRDS OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY AIRPORT

by
Neil Henderson

The Cuyahoga County Airport in Richmond Heights offers at present some of the richest and most varied birding of all the accessible places in our region, in spite of the fact that there are no permanent lakes or ponds there. Although expansion of the airfield may soon wipe out much of the present woodland, it is likely that the area will remain as interesting if it continues to be surrounded by the buffer zone of pasture, old orchard, and wet woodland, which is unattractive for residential development because of the proximity of the airport itself.

Since April 1956 I and the few other observers who go there have found at least 140 species. Summer residents number more than 60 species. Yet for me the appeal of the place is not so much the numbers as the particular constellations of species hard to find in our urbanized region though perhaps once typical of it.

On the airfield in the summer are the Upland Plover, Horned Lark, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and (1958) Henslow's Sparrow. In the edge region around the airfield are Woodcock, Traill's Flycatcher, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Swamp Sparrow. In the woods we have Acadian Flycatcher, Veery, Yellow-throated Vireo, Cerulean Warbler, Scarlet Tanager. In the woods too, but more elusive, are the Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, and Hairy Woodpecker. Lapland Longspurs, Water Pipits, and Common Snipe are very regular migrants. I venture that this tract offers the best chance in our entire region for finding these three species. It is also one of the few places in the Cleveland region where the extremely rare Smith's Longspur has been observed.

The following list includes all of the summer resident species I have found with reasonable regularity at the Cuyahoga County Airport since April 1956:

Mallard	Barn Swallow	Yellowthroat
Red-shouldered Hawk	Purple Martin	Yellow-breasted Chat
Ring-necked Pheasant	Blue Jay	American Redstart
Killdeer	Common Crow	House Sparrow
American Woodcock	Black-capped Chickadee	Bobolink
Upland Plover	Tufted Titmouse	Eastern Meadowlark
Spotted Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Redwinged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	House Wren	Common Grackle
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Catbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Chimney Swift	Brown Thrasher	Scarlet Tanager
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	Robin	Cardinal
Yellow-sh. Flicker	Wood Thrush	Indigo Bunting
Pileated Woodpecker	Veery	American Goldfinch
Hairy Woodpecker	Starling	Rufous-sided Towhee
Downy Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Vireo	Savannah Sparrow
Eastern Kingbird	Red-eyed Vireo	Grasshopper Sparrow
Crested Flycatcher	Warbling Vireo	Henslow's Sparrow
Acadian Flycatcher	Blue-winged Warbler	Field Sparrow
Traill's Flycatcher	Yellow Warbler	Swamp Sparrow
Eastern Wood Pewee	Cerulean Warbler	Song Sparrow
Horned Lark	Ovenbird	