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THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

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

- March — Temperature averaged about normal, with no extremes. Precipitation, though below normal, was well distributed throughout the month. Heavy snow fell on the 11th and 12th, particularly in the eastern suburbs.
- April — Both temperature and precipitation were considerably above normal, though no records were set. Most of the rain fell during the last six days. Snowfall was nil.
- May — Temperature averaged more than 5° above normal. Total rainfall was nearly 2 inches above normal. Record highs of 92° on the 6th and 91 ° on the 20th were established, and a record low of 34° on the 16th.

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* The editor is grateful for the assistance given by Bertram Raynes who is taking the place of Associate Editor Lucille Maly during her absence from the city.

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COMMENT ON THE SEASON

(We are again indebted to William and Nancy Klamm for permitting us to have access to their carefully detailed field records and notes, from which we have drawn extensively in writing the following comment on the season. Unless otherwise indicated, all of the occurrence data cited below are attributable to these two exceptionally able observers. - Ed.)

The spring season might best be characterized by the term "normal", which is to say that it was not distinguished by any spectacular flights of migrants nor by the marked absence or notable abundance of a particular class or species of bird. Mild weather which prevailed in the Cleveland region during April and May was part of a generally temperate weather picture that extended through the southern states. Consequently, migratory movements were more like gentle swells than like great, surging waves; for the birds did not dam up to the south of us while awaiting favorable conditions for the resumption of their northbound passage.

This quite orderly flow of migrants was well demonstrated by the records for the some 80 passerine species that occur in the region either as transients or summer residents. With but few exceptions each species arrived on schedule, only an occasional "early" bird was reported, and among the transients almost no stragglers were observed at the end of May.

During the month of March the south shore of Lake Erie was the route of several migratory flights. As early as March 7, which was a cloudy day with a brisk wind from out of the west, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls flowed west along the Cleveland lakefront most of the day. On March 15, separate, though at time synchronous, flights of hawks, Killdeer, Crows, Robins, Starlings, and Icteridae traveled east while fierce winds raged out of the west and southwest. (For a description of this migration, see the Klamm's account in the Field Notes section of this issue.) At Lorain, on March 19, Redwinged Blackbirds streamed west "along the Lake Erie Shore, the movement extending inland about half a city block. The flight was steady from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. For the next half hour there was just an occasional small group of about 25 birds. In the total movement there were an estimated several thousand or more" (Lebold). Waterfowl were on the wing on March 21, during both the morning and afternoon, when at the Cleveland lakefront bands of American Widgeon and Pintail as well as Herring and Ring-billed Gulls flew west against the wind.

On the morning of April 5, an eastward movement of hawks and of Flickers was observed at Lakewood Park and at Perkins Beach. In addition to some two dozen Sharp-shinned Hawks, there were 4 Cooper's, 5 Red-tailed, and 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, 7 Turkey Vultures, and 1 Osprey. These last two species flew past the high bluff at Perkins Beach at just about eye-level with the observers. On that same morning hawks were drifting by the Terminal Tower in downtown Cleveland, their occurrence there suggesting the possibility of a flight line from the bluff at Perkins Beach to the Tower and then easterly along the Portage Escarpment (For an account of this particular hawk migration, see the article by Henderson and Margolis in this issue.)

Peak numbers of several species of waterfowl were reported on April 18 from the Cleveland lakefront. These included more than 1,000 Lesser Scaup, some 1,400 Ruddy Ducks, and nearly 1,100 Bonaparte's Gulls. Especially noteworthy were the Ruddies, which had been exceptionally scarce during the winter and early spring. The highest count for this species either before or after April 18 was a mere 28 birds, which fact seems to suggest that these 1,400 ducks (in two large flocks) were truly transients that had stopped to rest and feed on their flight west. Caspian Terns were also moving west on April 18,

and a total of 68 was counted that day along the Cleveland lakefront, which is the highest count in many years.

A warm front advancing into the Cleveland region from the southwest brought with it on the morning of April 18 an influx of Juncos and of Vesper, Field, and Savannah Sparrows into a portion of Forest Hill Park, Cleveland Heights, where an early-morning census was made daily from April 13 to May 25 (Newman). Another warm front on May 2 brought a flight of Chipping, Savannah, and White-throated Sparrows into Forest Hill Park, and a similar gathering of sparrows, particularly White-throated, was observed in Lakewood Park on the morning of that same day.

Eastbound flights of Blue Jays following the lakeline were noted only during the first ten days of May, and the number of birds involved was seemingly much smaller than in May 1958 when a quite spectacular migration extended over almost the entire month. This year migrant Jays were first seen on May 2, at Lakewood Park, where some 240 were counted in a period of about one hour. On the following day, 275 were recorded there, while at Huntington Beach to the west an estimated 150 were reported from the Sunday Morning Bird Walk and at the Black Brook Bird Walk to the east an estimated 500 were seen. Again at Lakewood Park, on May 9, Blue Jays were moving east but in greatly reduced numbers, and this was the last date they were observed in migration.

From April 24 to 28, hundreds of American Goldfinch were seen daily at Barberton (Ulrich), and at Nimisila Lake on April 29, several hundred were observed in a grove of tamarack trees (Staiger). On May 2, at Lakewood Park, Goldfinch were migrating east until about 10:30 a.m. when a cold air mass moved in from the northeast and seemed to halt their passage. But on the following day the eastward movement was again under way, though in somewhat reduced numbers. A week later, on May 9, at Lakewood Park well over 150 birds were observed migrating.

A review of the occurrence records for individual species reveals no reports whatever for the Whistling Swan, and just a single record of the Rusty Blackbird — three birds on March 17. The Common Loon, for which there was only one record in the spring of 1958, was seen more often this spring, there being nine records from March 30 to May 2, including 12 birds at Mogadore Reservoir on April 27 (DeSante). For the Parula Warbler, which has been reported only rarely in recent years, there were four records, each of a single bird. Three of the reports came from the Rocky River Reservation on May 12, 15, and 19 (Ackermann), and one came from Elyria on May 8 (P. Johnson).

With the addition of the Western Grebe to the list of birds occurring in the Cleveland region (See Noteworthy Records section in this issue), a total of 336 species and subspecies has been reported since the time of the first surveys in 1796.

For annotation in the "Birds of the Cleveland Region" are the following new earliest spring dates of occurrence:

Common Egret (1) - April 3, Cloverdale Lake, south of Painesville (Booth)
Brown Thrasher (1) - March 14, Pepper Pike Village (Raynes)
Black-throated Blue Warbler (1) - April 14 and 15, Brecksville (Nausbaum)

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-necked Grebe - From March 17 to the 20th two birds -- one of them in almost full breeding plumage -- were on Long Lake near Akron (DeSante and Wiley). A single bird was seen at Lake Rockwell on March 30 (DeSante), while on nearby Pippin Lake one grebe was observed from March 29 to April 13, during which time "its rufous-colored neck became brighter and more red" (Staiger).

Western Grebe - Two birds seen on March 30 and 31 and again on April 4 and 5, at Pippin Lake, adjoining Lake Rockwell, constitute the first report of this species in the history of the Cleveland region (Wiley and DeSante). They stayed together, swimming gracefully, diving often, and remaining under water for a surprisingly long time. Although this species has not previously been recorded in our region, it has been observed a number of times in the Youngstown area.

Golden Eagle - When this bird in immature plumage appeared at Hanging Rock Farm, Lake County, on May 3, it swooped low over the pond and then mounted into the sky, going west. But as it did so it turned and passed over the chicken yard, where it was attacked by a colony of Purple Martins (Bole, Jr.).

Bald Eagle - At Chippewa Lake on April 4, an immature eagle "flew over the lake holding a fish in its talons, eating it while in flight" (Koppelberger). A second record for the season is of a bird that appeared along the Grand River south of Painesville on May 31 (Booth).

King Rail - Not recorded in the Cleveland region since the summer of 1954, a pair was discovered in a swamp off of Route 532, near Akron, on May 26. They were still present at the end of the month and sometimes "fed on the lawn next to the swamp just like chickens" (Wiley et al).

Yellow Rail - This rarely-recorded, sparrow-sized inhabitant of grassy marshes was flushed from a sedge meadow at Holden Arboretum on May 31, when it was glimpsed momentarily as it ran from sedge clump to sedge clump (Bole, Jr.). Of the some half dozen records of this species in the history of the Cleveland region, the last previous record is of a bird seen and heard near the mouth of the Chagrin River on June 25, and again on July 5, 1944.

Wilson's Phalarope - On May 24, at Burke Lakefront Airport a richly-colored female stood out conspicuously from among a group of Spotted Sandpipers with which it was feeding along the edge of the small marsh adjoining the airport (Lister). This is just the second spring record for the region.

Barn Owl - A bird which may have become an involuntary captive was discovered on March 17 in the shed of a lumber company in Painesville (Booth). Although this species is considered a not uncommon permanent resident, it is rarely reported and this is the first record since the spring of 1957.

Long-Eared Owl - For several hours on the afternoon of April 15, this owl sat close to the trunk of one of a group of spruce trees on the grounds of a home in Rocky River. Eventually, though, the great din of an excited band of Blue Jays and Common Grackles caused the bird to fly to the bare limb of a white ash tree, where it sat quietly about 15 feet above the ground, turning its head from front to rear so as to view its annoyers as well as those who were observing it from below (Smith).

Saw-whet Owl - This little owl was discovered on the afternoon of April 30 sitting on a garage door, sheltered by an overhanging roof, in the vicinity of East 116th Street and Euclid Avenue. Later it flew to a nearby tree, remaining there for some time, but by nightfall the owl had departed and was not seen again (Carrothers et al).

Western Kingbird - At Holden Arboretum early in the afternoon of May 11, this accidental migrant was studied for some 30 minutes as it sallied out over an open meadow to snap up insects and then returned to perch on a barbed wire fence. Its song, which it uttered quite often, "was similar in quality to that of the Eastern Kingbird but seemed softer and more musical, with an occasional sharper call — *whit*" (D. Johnson). Only twice before has this species been reported in the region.

Mockingbird - Of the four reports of this stray visitor, three records were of single birds seen only once: at Solon, April 1 (Pinkava); at the Lower Shaker Lake, April 19 (Deininger); at Lakewood Park, May 2 (Klamm). The fourth record concerns a bird which was observed on and off from April 7 to April 22 in a nursery in Bedford, where it sometimes sang loud and clear and at great length. On May 25 and 26, this (or another) Mockingbird was seen there again but it was not singing (Luedy).

White-eyed Vireo - In Huntington Reservation on the morning of May 10, this vireo moved about briskly in the branches of a thorn apple tree, yet remained utterly silent (Garrett and Rea).

Worm-eating Warbler - At about 8:00 a.m. on May 17, this accidental migrant flitted about for several minutes or more in the bushes and trees near the shelter house at the Strawberry Lane entrance of North Chagrin Reservation. It was associated with Chestnut-sided and other warblers that were feeding in the understory (Raynes). The most recent prior record is May 11, 1956.

Brewster's Warbler - This hybrid was one of many warblers — nine species in all — that maneuvered about in a large cottonwood tree in Chestnut Hills Cemetery, Cuyahoga Falls, on May 3. Its song was somewhat like that of the Golden-winged Warbler (Wiley). The bird was still present early on the following morning along with numerous other warblers (DeSante).

Prairie Warbler - Customarily a frequenter of small trees and shrubs, a solitary bird fed for some time in a mass of low shrubs in Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Cuyahoga Falls, on April 26 (Staiger).

Audubon's Warbler - In the company of Blackpoll Warblers, this common warbler of the west (but an extreme rarity in our region) foraged about in a group of apple trees at Hanging Rock Farm, Lake County, shortly before dusk on May 31. It was a well-marked male (Bole, Jr.)

Western Meadowlark -At Burke Lakefront Airport, where at least one bird was present from early in July (if not before) until late in September 1958, two birds were identified on April 19 (Klamm). Thereafter one or two were reported from the Airport by several observers to the end of May. (For a description of the courtship of this particular pair, see the Klamm's account in the Field Notes section of this issue.)

Evening Grosbeak - Dr. R. C. McKay noted the return of a flock at his residence in Brecksville on April 26. The largest count of about 35 was reported on May 1. Four males were observed at one time, but the flock was predominantly made up of females (Dexter).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - A rare migrant at any time, and particularly rare in the spring, one of these shy and elusive birds was seen on May 27 at Burke Lakefront Airport (Lister).

Harris's Sparrow - From about 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on March 16, this western bird spent much of its time foraging around in a brush pile at the edge of a

clearing in a woods near Hambden, Geauga County. Quite frequently, however, the bird would fly to a house nearby to pick up kernels of corn lying on the ground beneath a feeding tray and then would return to the brush pile (Harm). It is of interest to note that on the day before this sparrow appeared, excessively strong southwesterly winds prevailed; and it is quite possible the bird was blown far out of its normal migration route. (At Cleveland Hopkins Airport a high of 70 miles per hour was registered, and the average wind velocity on March 15 was 30.6 m.p.h.) In any event, this is just the sixth record of occurrence and is the first March record in the history of the region.

Smith's Longspur - On April 11, at Cuyahoga County Airport, Richmond Heights, two birds were studied as they scurried through the coarse turf (Henderson). Prior to 1956 there had been only three records of this species. Since then it has been observed at the Airport in three out of the last four years, indicating that it is probably not as rare in our region as we had believed.

From Neighboring Localities:

White-fronted Goose - Two of these birds, which normally migrate to the west of the Mississippi River, were observed at Mosquito Creek Reservoir on March 26 (Duane Ferris *fide* Savage).

Bewick's Wren - Especially notable is the occurrence of a bird at a feeding station in Conneaut on March 2, which is an extraordinarily early date for this species of more southerly latitudes (J. Paul Perkins *fide* Savage). For the Cleveland region the earliest date is April 8, 1934..

FIELD NOTES

Migrants Move East Along Lake Erie. Immediately upon our arrival at the high bluff overlooking Lake Erie at Perkins Beach shortly before 10:00 a.m. on March 15, we found that a land bird migration was in progress. For the next three and one-half hours, from a vantage point which gave us a fairly long view out over the water and of unobstructed terrain along the shoreline, we identified and counted the various species of birds traveling east, which was the unvarying direction of their flight. Temperatures during the morning were in the high fifties, and strong, gusty west and southwest winds prevailed. A shower of five minutes duration occurred at 10:50 and a violent rain squall at 11:55 terminated most of the small bird flight until nearly 1:00 p.m., when it started again for a while in diminished numbers.

Counts of each species were made at short intervals and were extended to rates per hour. The average rates in turn were used to estimate the numbers for three periods: from 10 to 11 a.m., 11 to 12 Noon, and 12 to 1:30 p.m, at which time observation was discontinued. The Crow being conspicuous and easily counted was tallied bird by bird from 11 o'clock on. The following tabulation is based upon sampling counts (with the exception of the Crow) and indicates the approximate number of birds that passed by during each of the three periods shown:

Species	10:00 — 11:00	11:00 — 12:00	12:00 — 1:30	Total
Common Crow	225	279	76	580
Common Grackle	150	100	50	300
Redwinged Blackbird	75	50	25	150
Meadowlark	75	50	25	150
Brown-headed Cowbird	60	50	30	140
Starling	600	400	100	1100

Other eastbound migrants recorded were these: 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 8 Red-shouldered Hawks, 3 Marsh Hawks, 11 Sparrow Hawks, 22 Killdeer, 100 Robins, 190 Snow Buntings. The buteos and the Marsh Hawks appeared between 11:00 and 1:30. There were four or five flocks of Snow Buntings consisting of 20 to 50 birds, and the entire flight lasted but a short while. Of the 13 species of migrants we observed, only the Meadowlarks (the poorest fliers) stopped regularly on the bluff to rest. — WILLIAM and NANCY KLAMM

Common Terns Migrating. On the foggy morning of May 17, at Burke Lakefront Airport, I watched from the north roadway as successive flights of Common Terns moved east along the lake. The first group, which appeared at 9:30 a.m., were calling as they came up over the breakwall at East 9th Street and then moved on east slowly enough so that I could actually count the 58 birds comprising the flight. Some of the later groups were partly counted and partly estimated. Although the first group flew in low over the roadway, subsequent bands tended to fly a little higher and a little farther out, until the last group was beyond the breakwall and could be seen only with binoculars. I could still hear them, however. Passage of the first six groups occurred between 9:30 and 9:37 a.m., in numbers ranging from about 50 to 200 birds. There was then a five minute break during which no terns were seen, followed by three more flights to 9:46 a.m. At that time the migration apparently ceased, for I saw no more Common Terns the rest of the morning. In the 16 minutes this migration was in progress, I observed approximately 750 individuals. — VERA CARROTHERS

Courting of Pileated Woodpeckers. About ten o'clock on the morning of April 19, I heard the call of the Pileated Woodpecker close by our house in Waite Hill. Soon I located one bird on a catalpa tree about 30 feet away and another on an apple tree only 15 feet from the house. As I watched, one (female) settled down to work on a fallen log about 100 feet away while the other (male) flew to an apple tree in the backyard. After half an hour or so, the male joined the female at the fallen log, where he walked about on the ground very close to her. They then began a curious ritual consisting of repeatedly touching their bills together -- first one side and then the other. Next one bird would open its bill, take the bill of the other, hold it for a fleeting second, and release it. Immediately the other woodpecker would repeat this performance. This went on for several minutes until finally both birds settled down to feed together on the log and to walk around on the ground. Later they worked jointly on several apple trees as well as other trees. They remained in the backyard until shortly after 11:30 a.m., when a car entering the driveway disturbed them and they flew away. — ANNETTE B. FLANIGAN

Courtship of Western Meadowlark. As we watched a pair of Horned Larks feeding their fledgling young at Burke Lakefront Airport on the afternoon of April 19, we detected from far down the runway to the east the faint but distinctive song of the Western Meadowlark. Later we found a solitary Meadowlark feeding in the grass at the east end of the runway. For a time the bird did not sing but only uttered an occasional call note. After a while, however, it sang twice and so confirmed our identification.

Eventually this Meadowlark flew about 150 feet down the taxi strip, alighting on the grassy edge where another Meadowlark appeared whose presence we had not been aware of. Both birds then began a quite dramatic performance. They assumed a bittern-like posture — the neck stretched out, with the bill and head pointing skyward, but the tail spread wide and flicking. From this position they would pop straight up into the air to a distance of two to four feet and then drop straight down to the ground. The wings appeared to quiver and flick while held at the sides, but we could not discern whether they actually served to propel the bird into the air. The original bird stood with his (?) back to the other and would jump two or three times. Then the other bird (female?) would do the same. Unfortunately, this display was interrupted by an

incoming airplane and was not resumed, for the birds flew away separately and started feeding independently again.

Since we have been unable to discover a published account of the courtship of the Western Meadowlark, we have no basis for comparing our observations with those of observers within this species' usual breeding range. In many respects, however, the performance we witnessed was similar to the courtship display of the Eastern Meadowlark as described in Bent's "Life Histories of North American Blackbirds, ...". - WILLIAM and NANCY KLAMM

Occurrence of the Western Race of the White-crowned Sparrow. Out of nine White-crowned Sparrows that I banded this spring, two were of the western race, *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*, formerly known as Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. These two birds were banded on May 10 and 11 at my home in Willoughby. This year I identified one of these sparrows even before I banded it, as the bird came in to feed on the ground outside our kitchen window. At a distance of about 15 feet the eye stripes were noticeably different from that of the other White-crowns. White-crowned Sparrows were fairly plentiful this spring and the migration took only 13 days to pass through our area. May 7 was the first date I saw them, May 19 was the last date. The birds sang quite frequently in our garden. - M. B. SKAGGS (So far as is known, this veteran bird-bander is responsible for all of the records — about ten — of the occurrence of the western race of the White-crowned Sparrow in the Cleveland region. - Ed.)

Singing of Lapland Longspurs. At Cuyahoga County Airport, Richmond Heights, on March 21, a flock of 30 Lapland Longspurs, in changing plumage, gave an unusual song performance instead of their customary whistle-and-rattle routine. Both while on the ground and in the air the flock warbled almost steadily, sounding like a collection of Bobolinks that had been trained not to rasp. The chorus was particularly musical as the Longspurs milled overhead.
- NEIL HENDERSON

Crows Rank High as Feeding Station Guests. Of all the avian guests which visit us at our home in Aurora, I think our favorites are our family of Crows. We live on the edge of a wooded ravine, and they live on the edge at the other side — at the border of our woods. They raise their young there — driving us to distraction for a few weeks with their continual, hoarse, off-key baby Crow call — and bring them to our big wooden feeder set up between trees. The family stays together all summer and fall, walking around our yard and pond in company with our few Muscovy ducks.

The Crows will attack the racoons which are often at our feeders in the daytime, even at noon, and also the Red-shouldered Hawks, but they team up with the latter in dive bombing our Great Horned Owl if they catch him out in daylight. They will take bread the racoons and opossums have not eaten and bury it in our front field — first breaking up the bread, then carrying the individual bits to different spots, and finally pulling up grass to cover each cached piece. Sometimes we get leftover biscuits from restaurants and let them dry until they are like rocks. At that time it is not unusual to see six or seven biscuits floating in the creek where the Crows have carried them to soften them up. They test them out every so often and eventually carry them away.

The entire family of Crows (usually five or six) leaves about the 4th of November but when February 10, rolls around, the advance scout is at our feeder; and a few days later the entire family is back. This year only three returned, but they seem to have picked up an orphan because later a fourth bird joined the group. Comes nesting time, the youngsters take off for parts unknown and the oldsters nest in the same old place. - JOYCE DUNNEBACK

HAWK-WATCHING FROM THE TERMINAL TOWER

by

Neil Henderson and Charles Margolis

During a period of ninety minutes at mid-day on April 5, 1959, we observed at least 19 hawks pass over Terminal Tower in the heart of downtown Cleveland. Included in this migratory parade were 8 Red-tailed Hawks, 5 Red-shouldered Hawks, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 1 Cooper's Hawk, another accipiter, 1 Marsh Hawk, and a possible Osprey. In most cases our identifications of the buteos were tentative.

Our vantage point was the glassed-in observation room on the 42nd floor of the Tower, somewhat less than 600 feet above the street. Most of the hawks passed high over the Tower, perhaps as high as the 1,000-foot level. The two Peregrines were at eye level, however, close enough for us to see clearly the broad face-mark. There was some tendency for the hawks to pass on the south side of the Tower, and we feel that we may have missed birds by not covering this view as consistently as we did the western.

Except for a single Red-shoulder flying south over the Cuyahoga River at about 500 feet, all of the hawks sailed by fast and in the same net direction, which was slightly north of east. They were thus aided by the strong southwesterly wind, but in order to maintain their easterly course they must have fought the wind slightly sideways. In several cases the birds were clearly oriented southeast as though bucking an unwanted northerly drift.

The passage of these birds in an easterly direction on a southwest wind suggests a partial answer to a question raised by William Klamm concerning the lakefront migratory land-bird processions which he has often observed at Perkins Beach in the spring. (See also A. E. Valentine, *Cleveland BIRD CALENDAR*, August 1958, p. 14) From Perkins Beach, according to Klamm, the bulk of these migrants disappear in an easterly direction instead of following the shoreline along Edgewater Park. One of us (Henderson) proposed that the Portage Escarpment would be a logical inland route along which the migrants might continue. Terminal Tower seemed a likely check-point between the lakefront cliffs and the escarpment. We have as yet little evidence for a flyway along the escarpment, but there is no doubt that Terminal Tower lies on a hawk flyway at least under some conditions. Probably it is a continuation of the Lakewood-Perkins Beach lakeshore route.

In any event, we do not regard hawk-watching from the Tower as an unpredictable, one-in-a-million chance. In fact, it seems a reasonable proposition that processions of hawks should be observable there several times each spring. If we may be permitted to generalize from ninety minutes of experience, some of the probable prerequisites are a steady, strong south or southwest wind and an abundance of clear sky. We detected no hawks at all during the period when the cloud cover thickened.