

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

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

- June - Precipitation was normal, and sunshine was abundant. Average temperature of 65.0° was 4.4° below normal. New record lows were set on the 16th, 17th, 22nd, 26th, and 27th.
- July - Frequent showers during the last half of the month helped produce total rainfall of 4.30 inches, 1.26 inches above normal. Temperature averaging 71.3° was 2.4° below normal. A reading of 43.0° on the 9th set a new low for July.
- August - Rather cloudy. Temperature averaged near normal, and there were no readings of 90° or above. Except for a deluge on the 21st, precipitation was light and well distributed through the month.

All records, observations, and comments should be sent to
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COMMENT ON THE SEASON

Late Transients. A considerable variety of late transient passerines was reported in the first week of June. For the Swainson's Thrush there were five records to June 4, including four birds on that date. Among the warblers the following species occurred exceptionally late: 1 Tennessee, June 1, 2, and 7; single Chestnut-sided in separate localities, June 4; 1 Bay-breasted, June 2 and 8; 3 Blackpoll, June 3; 1 Mourning, June 2, 3, and 5; 2 Canada, June 4.

Gulls and Terns. Along the Cleveland Lakefront. "The usual immature and non-breeding gulls, mostly Ring-billed, were present along the lakefront at Cleveland throughout the summer. Bonaparte's Gulls returned to Edgewater Park on July 2, and rapidly increased from about 50 to approximately 1,000 by July 28. Both Ring-billed and Herring Gulls began returning in large numbers in early August. The Black and the Common Tern were periodically numerous on and after July 29" (Klamm). No Black Terns nested at Burke Lakefront Airport where there had been a breeding colony in each of the previous three years. Perhaps the earth-moving activity going on nearby or some subtle change in the character of the remaining patch of marsh caused the terns to find it unsuitable for nesting.

Early Flight of Swallows. On the morning of July 16, small bands of Bank Swallows and of Barn Swallows, too, flew west along the Cleveland lake-front. At intervals of ten to twenty minutes, flights of from 15 to 60 birds passed by, the Bank Swallows representing some 80% of the total of about 450 birds which were noted (Klamm).

Beginnings of Fall Migration. As early as July 8, migrating shorebirds had appeared on the Cleveland lakefront. At Burke Airport on that date were one Pectoral and six Semipalmated Sandpipers as well as an extraordinary gathering of 80 or more adult Spotted Sandpipers largely confined to one small area at the shoreline (Klamm). By July 16, eight species of migrating shorebirds were observed in the Greater Cleveland area -- five Short-billed Dowitchers among them. Numbers of sandpipers and plovers continued to increase thereafter both at White City and at Burke Lakefront Airport, where on July 22, two Willet were present (Klamm). At White City on August 6, dozens of "peeps" were feeding along the muddy edges of the lagoon while nearby were six early-arriving Ruddy Turnstones and ten Sanderlings (Rickard). "Shorebirds seemed to reach their peak on August 26 at Nimisila Reservoir" (DeSante).

First movement of Nighthawks was reported from Warrensville Heights on the evening of August 23, when 21 birds were counted as they crisscrossed over a large open field (Surman, Jr.). On August 29, a group of 35 Nighthawks appeared over Solon, coming from the north and "disappearing to the south as they gained altitude while circling" (Knight).

Warblers in migration were first recorded on August 23 and 24. At Shaker Lakes on the 23rd, 3 Chestnut-aided, 8 Bay-breasted, and

2 Blackpoll Warblers were observed, as well as one male Golden-winged Warbler, which species rarely occurs here in the summer or fall (Knight). In Warrensville Heights tour Blackburnian Warblers appeared on the 23rd (Surman, Jr.). During the final few days of August, Empidonax flycatchers began to appear in numbers.

New Occurrence Records For annotation in "Birds of the Cleveland Region" are the following new dates of occurrence:

New Latest Spring Date -

Ruddy Turnstone (6) - June 3, Headlands State Park (Martin)
Mourning Warbler (1) - June 5, Forest Hill Park (King)

New Earliest Fall Date

Semipalmated Sandpiper (6) - July 8, Burke Lakefront Airport (Klamm)
Red-breasted Nuthatch (1) - August 13, Lower Shaker Lake (Newman)
Tennessee Warbler (1) - August 16, Waite Hill (Flanigan)
White-crowned Sparrow (1) - August 20, Lakewood Park (Klamm)

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

American Widgeon - In a woodland pond at the western edge of Lorain, a solitary female, in association with several pairs of Wood Ducks, was present through most of June, being last observed on the 24th (Johnson). There is no previous June record of occurrence in the history of the Cleveland region.

Ring-necked Duck -The first summer record for the region is of an adult male on Lake Erie just off the shoreline at Burke Lakefront Airport on July 22 (Klamm).

Bald Eagle - Early in the afternoon of June 6, a bird appeared over Cleveland Heights "flying nearly due west and at a very considerable altitude although recognizable with the naked eye" (Walters). This is the first summer record since July 1957.

Osprey -At about 6:00 p.m. on June 25, at Everett, Summit County, a bird moving north-northeast sailed over at a height of no more than 100 to 150 feet (DeSante).

Upland Plover -A flock of 28 birds was feeding on grassy expanse at Cleveland Hopkins Airport on August 26 (Klamm). This species is seldom observed after mid-July, and a migratory flock such as this has rarely been reported.

White-rumped Sandpiper - Burke Lakefront Airport was the site of the first June and the first July records in the history of the region: three birds were feeding there on June 16 (Carrothers), and one was there on July 1 (Klamm). In August, at White City, a single bird -- in association with other "peeps" -- was recorded from the 13th through the 15th (Rickard, Schwab, Carrothers).

Dunlin -The latest June dates of occurrence in the history of the region are of a solitary individual observed at Burke Lakefront Airport on June 16 and 18 (Carrothers).

Stilt Sandpiper - At Nimisila Reservoir on August 26 and 27, a lone bird “in transition plumage, the chestnut of its head still plainly showing” was seen “feeding by itself, always in the same spot, belly deep in water” (DeSante).

Little Gull -The first summer record in the history of the region, and only the fifth record in all, is of a bird at White City on August 13 (Schwab and Rickard) and August 14 (Carrothers and King). On both occasions it was in the company of Bonaparte’s Gulls.

Solitary Vireo - In the Tinkers Creek Gorge section of the Bedford Reservation, where this species has occurred previously, a singing bird was studied for 40 minutes on June 10 (Knight).

Chestnut-sided Warbler - (1) A singing male was present until June 19, in a scrub-growth area on Sherman Road, Geauga County (Carrothers). (2) On July 20 in the Bedford Reservation, a singing bird was recorded (Knight).

Western Meadowlark - (1) The lone bird which was first recorded at Warrensville Farms on May 15, was last observed there on June 19, and it sang regularly throughout that period (Knight). (2) The several birds which appeared at Burke Lakefront Airport this spring apparently remained through June 4. Thereafter one bird was noted until August 19, when three were observed (Klamm). No positive evidence of nesting activity was reported.

Yellow-headed Blackbird - In precisely the same marsh area at Burke Lakefront Airport where a male was present from May 22 to July 3, 1960, a male appeared again on June 3. The nesting Red-winged Blackbirds, particularly the females, attacked him unmercifully, however, and he was eventually driven out of this portion of the marsh. On June 1, he occupied a separate part of the marsh containing fewer Redwings but was not observed thereafter (Klamm *et al.*).

Red Crossbill -The small flock which occurred irregularly in Cascade Park, Elyria, during April and May seemingly remained until early June; for ten birds were seen there on June 2, which is a new latest spring date of occurrence (Johnson).

Addendum: (Spring 1961)

Summer Tanager - On May 26, 1961, a male bird was watched for about five minutes as it fed among the lower branches of a small cluster of pine trees located on golf course # 1 in the Rocky River Reservation (Roswurm). Only once before has this species been reported in our region west of the Cuyahoga River.

NESTING OBSERVATIONS

Great Blue Herons. On June 20, Eleanore Hudgeon and I visited the nesting site of a colony of Great Blue Herons located about two and one-half miles east of Route 306 and one-half mile south of Route 322 in Geauga County. The chalky white cover on the forest floor indicated that the heronry occupied about one-half acre. It was located in 12 to 15 huge American beech trees which stood out from the extensive surrounding second-growth forest. The trees were in full leaf, so it was not possible even to estimate the number of nests. However, Morris Drucker, who accompanied us and who owns the land, said "there seemed to be hundreds (?) of birds and the ground was almost covered with eggs shells" when he had been there early in May. We could see a few of the nests, one of which contained three young and another just one young. These nestlings were more than half grown. - VERA CARROTHERS

Marsh Hawk. - In the southwest corner of Aurora Township on May 12, 1961 I discovered the nest of a Marsh Hawk on the ground among some reeds. It contained one egg, the female flushing from the nest when I approached. On May 24, the nest held four eggs, and they were still there on June 6 and 13. I was unable to visit the site again until July 5, when I found no birds in the vicinity nor could I find the nest. Enough time had elapsed, however, for the young to have been reared and to have left the nest. - CARL F. HAMANN

Storm Damage to Nesting Chimney Swifts. For many successive years the Chimney Swift has nested in the ventilating air shafts in the older buildings on the campus of Kent State University. Occasionally a nest falls from the wall before nesting is completed, especially following a heavy rain. Thus, in the 1961 season, a nest in air shaft S1, placed 33.8 feet down from the top and containing one egg and two newly hatched nestlings, fell during a heavy rain on June 29. The nestlings perished. Again, on July 9, the nest 26.5 feet down in shaft V1 was found to be missing, but three nestlings survived the fall and were cared for by the parent birds. Following a heavy rain on July 16, two nests fell from the wall. One, 10.7 feet down in shaft A5, contained four newly hatched nestlings, none of which survived; another, 28.2 feet down in shaft U1, containing three nestlings already feathered out, also fell but all three survived.

The greatest devastation from a single storm observed by this writer occurred during the torrential rain of July 19 when about three inches of rain fell during six hours. Six nests of Chimney Swifts were washed off the walls. In shaft D1 no harm was done because the young had fledged just two days earlier. This nest was 36.4 feet down. However, several nestlings were destroyed in each case when the nest fell from the wall in the following shafts (distance nest placed from the top given in parentheses): air shaft E6 (17.7); G4 (13.8); L3 (8.8); P3 (23.3); and R2 (39.t). Similar accounts for earlier years will be found in The Auk (69: 289-293. 1952; 77: 352-354. 1960). RALPH W, DEXTER, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

Wood Pewee. On August 29, near the edge of a woods in the Aurora Sanctuary of Cleveland Audubon Society, I came upon a Wood Pewee which was calling "Pee-eeh" continuously. I have found that the female of this species complains in this manner when there are young in the nest or there are newly fledged young. While she remained among the branches of an oak tree, I searched the ends of the nearby branches and soon discovered a nest placed on a branch 20 feet from the ground and about the same distance from the trunk. The nest contained one nestling which appeared almost ready to leave. This is a rather late nesting for this species. - CARL F. HAMANN

Bank Swallows. Again this year at Hach Sanctuary of Cleveland Audubon Society, Bank Swallows nested in the face of the east cliff overlooking the Chagrin River. One colony occupied about 40 holes, and another occupied 130 or more holes. On May 14, I watched the smaller colony as they were digging the holes. A flock would all swoop in at once, work for a few minutes, and then leave in small detachments. After a few minutes a large group would return, the number of birds varying from 15 to 35. I wondered if the entire group of holes was being dug communally? I saw three birds at one hole at one time. They seemed to be kicking out the dirt with their feet. Later on, by setting up my telescope across the river, I was able to watch the feeding of the young at the entrance to the holes. By July 6, all of the swallows had departed. - VERA CARROTHERS

Brown Creeper Family. Several times late in the spring of 1961, particularly on April 30, May 6, and May 7, we heard a male Brown Creeper singing vigorously in the Rocky River Reservation in the wooded area between the Trailside Museum and the Mastic Picnic Grounds. He was last heard on May 7, but on May 20, we observed a silent bird in the same area.

Then on June 24, in the Rocky River Reservation, but at a point about one and one-half miles north of the original observation site, we found a single Brown Creeper carrying food as if to young birds in the nest. The Creeper moved so quickly from tree to tree that pursuit was impossible. On the following day, however, we encountered in the same area an entire family of Brown Creepers consisting of the parents and three fledglings, the latter distinguished by their stubby tails and a considerable amount of down feathers. Although both parent birds collected food for the young, in most instances just one of the parents actually placed the food in the mouths of the demanding fledglings. The one adult acted as a supplier to the other, in a kind of production-line system. Consequently, the young had a tendency to follow the food-giving rather than the food-gathering parent.

We did not discover this family of Creepers again until July 9, by which time the young had acquired full-length tails. They were differentiated from the adults chiefly by the amount of white in the plumage and a trace of downiness on the sides. Despite their size they were still dependent in part upon their parents for food and trailed after them uttering a chorus of begging cries. When one of the adults caught a large moth, it did not immediately give

it to one of the fledglings but instead first worked the moth over, beating it violently against the bark of exposed roots at the base of a large tree. Clouds of scales or dust from the wings of the moth were shaken loose in this operation but we were not certain whether this was merely an attempt to kill the moth without letting go of it at anytime or whether it was a food preparatory procedure or possibly an attempt at removing the wings.

Finally, on July 15, we observed just a solitary adult Brown Creeper, which quickly disappeared in the dense woods. Although we visited the area regularly each week for the rest of the summer, this was the last we saw of this family of Creepers. - WILLIAM and NANCY KLAMM (This is only the third breeding record in the history of the Cleveland region. Both previous records are from the vicinity of Aurora. - Ed.)

FIELD NOTES

Swallows Roosting in Marsh. Every night from about July 26 to August 22 some 5,000 swallows came to roost in the marshes at Nimisila Reservoir. From late July to about August 10, the majority were Tree and Bank Swallows, but in the latter part of August, 75% were Barn Swallows and 15% Tree Swallows, with a scattering of Bank and Rough-winged. The Purple Martins always seemed to stay by themselves and never joined the others in the cattail roost. All five species were still present on August 29. - DAVID DESANTE

Singing Birds in the Bedford Reservation. On June 3, and again on June 10, I heard Whip-poor-wills calling at dawn in the Bedford Reservation of the Cleveland Metropolitan Park system. In the Great Gorge along Tinkers Creek, Veeries sang regularly until late July. I had more difficulty locating Magnolia and Canada Warblers in the Reservation than I did in the summer of 1960. However, in July one pair of Magnolia and two pairs of Canada Warblers were noted. The Canada Warblers were often heard singing in June and early July, after which they ceased. One Magnolia Warbler was singing on July 20. I found no nests or young. - CHARLES H. KNIGHT

From Lake and Geauga Counties (The following are excerpts from extended notes submitted B. P. Bole, Jr., based upon observations made at his Hanging Rock Farm in Lake County as well as at nearby Holden Arboretum and Stebbin's Gulch. Unfortunately, this material was not received in time for inclusion in the main portion of the BIRD CALENDAR. - Ed.)

Long-eared Owl: two adults and three young birds daily visitors to my chicken yard.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: bred in some numbers on our farm. Blackburnian Warbler: in Stebbin's Gulch, the commonest breeding warbler this year; about a dozen territories.
Magnolia Warbler: throughout hemlocks in our region is the common breeding warbler.
Slate-colored Junco: four territories in Stebbin's Gulch.