



CLEVELAND REGION

The Cleveland Bird Calendar

*Published by*

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History

and

The Kirtland Bird Club

# THE CLEVELAND REGION

The Circle Has A Radius of 30 Miles Based on Cleveland Public Square

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Beaver Creek               | 30 Lake Rockwell             |
| 2 North Amherst              | 31 White City                |
| 3 Lorain                     | 32 Euclid Creek Reservation  |
| 4 Black River                | 33 Chagrin River             |
| 5 Elyria                     | 34 Willoughby                |
| 6 LaGrange                   | Waite Hill                   |
| 7 Avon-on-the-Lake           | 35 Sherwin Pond              |
| 8 Clague Park                | 36 Gildersleeve              |
| 9 Clifton Park               | 37 North Chagrin Reservation |
| 10 Rocky River               | 38 Gates Mills               |
| 11 Cleveland Hopkins Airport | 39 South Chagrin Reservation |
| 12 Medina                    | 40 Aurora Lake               |
| 13 Hinckley Reservation      | 41 Aurora Sanctuary          |
| 14 Edgewater Park            | 42 Mantua                    |
| Perkins Beach                | 43 Mentor Headlands          |
| 15 Terminal Tower            | 44 Mentor Marsh              |
| 16 Cleveland Public Square   | 45 Black Brook               |
| Cuyahoga River               | Headlands State Park         |
| 17 Brecksville Reservation   | 46 Fairport Harbor           |
| 18 Akron                     | 47 Painesville               |
| Cuyahoga Falls               | 48 Grand River               |
| 19 Akron Lakes               | 49 Little Mountain           |
| 20 Gordon. Park              | Holden Arboretum             |
| Illuminating Co. plant       | 50 Corning Lake              |
| 21 Doan Brook                | 51 Stebbin's Gulch           |
| 22 Natural Science Museum    | 52 Chardon                   |
| Wade Park                    | 53 Burton                    |
| 23 Baldwin Reservoir         | 54 Punderson Lake            |
| 24 Shaker Lakes              | 55 Fern Lake                 |
| 25 Lake View Cemetery        | 56 LaDue Reservoir           |
| 26 Forest Hill Park          | 57 Spencer Wildlife Area     |
| 27 Bedford Reservation       |                              |
| 28 Hudson                    |                              |
| 29 Kent                      |                              |



CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN  
PARK SYSTEM



PORTAGE ESCARPMENT  
(800-foot Contour Line)

# THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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## SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

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

September - Temperature averaging 63.5° was normal, and there was no period of extremely high or low readings. Rainfall totaling 0.74 inches, all of which occurred from the 18th to the 27th, made this the driest September since 1908.

October - With new record lows on the 6th, 7th, 23rd, and 24th and an all-time early autumn low of 25° on the 11th, temperature averaged 49.2°, or 3.6° below normal. Precipitation of 1.78 inches, well scattered through the month, was 0.64 inches below normal.

November - Total precipitation of 0.92 inches made this the driest November since 1924. Light snow fell over most of the region on the 20th and 21st. It was warm during the first half and moderately cold during the last half of the month.

All records, observation, and comments should be mailed to Donald L. Newman, 14174 Superior Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44118.

## COMMENT ON TEE SEASON

At first impression this autumn seemed rather humdrum and uneventful despite a few outstanding noteworthy records of occurrence. Yet a more careful look at the records and a more thoughtful consideration of the comments of observers revealed that there were a number of significant movements of migrants, including a spectacular nighttime flight of Whistling Swans and Canada Geese, which, however, escaped the attention of most observers. A review of the more meaningful aspects of the season is contained in the following paragraphs.

Loons and Horned Grebes in Good Number. Along the lakefront at Cleveland the first Common Loons and Horned Grebes appeared on October 25, with numbers increasing thereafter, reaching a peak on November 8, and then declining over the next few weeks. Since the Loon has been disturbingly scarce in the region in recent years, a westbound flight of about 40 birds off Huntington Bench on November 8 was particularly notable (Siebert).

Massive Flight of Swans and Geese. A cold front which originated in the prairie provinces of Canada moved into the upper Mississippi valley on November 16 and then proceeded in an easterly course across the lakes states, so that it reached the Cleveland region on the night of the 16th. This cold air mass apparently triggered a massive flight of Whistling Swans and Canada Geese and, presumably, other geese and ducks as well. In Cleveland Heights a flock of geese was first heard at 9:45 p.m. on November 16, and four flights of swans and/or geese were heard between 12:45 a.m. and 4:40 a.m. on November 17 - (Newman). At Waite Hill six flights of swans were heard on the night of November 16-17, and five flights totaling 279 birds were seen there during the day of the 17th (Sherwin).

A second and much broader cold front sweeping out of Canada moved across northern Ohio on November 18, and small flights of swans and geese continued to pass through for the next several days. A flock of 38 Canada Geese which had spent the night of the 17th on Bass Lake departed on the morning of the 18th (Ramisch). Two flocks of swans -- 44 birds in all -- passed over Waite Hill on November 20 (Sherwin), and a flock of about 75 swans was observed traveling south east over Kirtland Hills Village on November 22 (Bole, Jr.).

Although the major eastward movement of Whistling Swans was concentrated in the period November 16-22, some flights had occurred much earlier -- changing weather patterns involving cold fronts seeming to be the causative factor. On October 11 a band of 50 swans was seen over Gates Mills (Ann Little fide Sherwin). A "large flock was heard in the night" of October 26 over Waite Hill, and in that same locale 30 birds were reported at Sherwin Farm on November 6 (Sherwin).

Dabbling Ducks: Abundance of Widgeon. The inland ponds and lakes held fair numbers of the dabbling ducks, though the Blue-winged Teal seemed to be quite scarce. By far the most abundant of the dabblers recorded was the American Widgeon, of which an estimated 500 were

reported at Lake Rockwell on October 18, some 900 at Lake Rockwell and Mogadore Reservoir on October 24, and more than 1,000 at these two lakes on November 18 (Hjelmquist).

Diving Ducks at Cleveland. Along the lakefront at Cleveland the first appreciable number of Scaup ducks was observed on November 7, when about 400 were recorded (Siebert). On that date, too, several hundred Red-breasted Mergansers were first reported (Klamm). The population of these and of the other diving ducks rose thereafter, attaining a maximum by the weekend of November 21-22. However, the total number then did not exceed 2,000 birds, of which the Scaup and the Red-breasted Merganser constituted a large majority.

In November all three species of Scoters were recorded, including eleven White-winged on the 8th, three Surf on the 1st, and one group of a dozen Common (an exceptionally large number) on the 26th (Klamm). Seven Oldsquaw were observed on November 24 (Rooks). Small rafts of Ruddy Ducks were scattered along the lakefront on November 22, when the maximum number -- a scant 300 -- was tallied (Klamm). By November 29 only about two dozen were present. It is interesting to note that the greatest number of Ruddy Ducks reported this autumn occurred inland on LaDue Reservoir where an estimated 500 were seen on November 6 (Carrothers).

Shorebirds Abundant. Low water levels resulting from the continuing deficit of rain created favorable conditions for shorebirds at White City, Mentor Marsh, and other areas. All of the species which commonly migrate through the region occurred in good numbers.

Gulls on Cleveland Lakefront. Both the Herring and the Ring-billed Gull apparently reached their maximum number on the Cleveland lakefront about October 24-25, when some 1,600 of the former and 9,500 of the latter were observed. The greatest number of Bonaparte's Gulls reported -- about 3,400 birds -- occurred November 21-22 (Klamm).

Nighthawks in Migration. On the evening of September 3 an estimated 1,500 Common Nighthawks were "leisurely drifting in an easterly direction" close to the lake shore between Perkins Beach and Burke Lakefront Airport (Stasko). Elsewhere in the region on subsequent evenings to September 9, small flocks of a dozen or so were observed, though on the 7th about 50 Nighthawks were seen over Elyria (Johnson) and on the 8th more than 100 passed over Cuyahoga Falls (Hjelmquist).

An exceptional record because of the time element is the sighting of approximately 40 Nighthawks feeding over Middleburg Heights at 7:00 a.m. on September 4; it was warm and clear (Barber).

Westward Passage of Swifts. For several hours or more on the afternoon of September 27, Chimney Swifts -- in groups of five to 20 -- streamed west along the Lake Erie shoreline, the bulk of the birds passing low over the water. This movement which was first noted at Lakewood Park was also observed at five other lakeline vantage points to the west. At the fifth location, the Rocky River sewage plant,

the Swifts moved away from the shoreline and proceeded inland over a westerly or southwesterly course. Farther inland at Clague Park, which is about one and one-half miles from Lake Erie, the Swifts were following that same course of flight. Over the city of Lakewood, too, Swifts were feeding and drifting west to southwest in continuous small groups, sometimes congregating temporarily in impressive numbers (Klamm). Although Chimney Swifts have been observed migrating east along the lakeline in the spring this is the first report of lake-line migration in the autumn.

Bluebirds on Increases? Several sizable flocks of Eastern Bluebirds were reported, suggesting that this species has recovered somewhat from the decimating effect of the severe cold and snow which reached into the southern states in the winter of 1957-58. A contributor in LaGrange Township, Lorain County, stated that his observations "and the reports of others in the area seem to indicate a resurgence of Bluebirds." A flock of seven occurred regularly at his home from mid-September to November 1, and on October 10 he counted 25 Bluebirds, which was an all-time high (Morse). At Waite Hill a band of a dozen was observed on September 25, October 1 and 2 (Flanigan), and a dozen were counted at Holden Arboretum on October 11 (Collins).

Of great interest, too, because it has been reported so rarely in the autumn, is a migratory flight of 24 Bluebirds, calling softly, which appeared out of the northeast at 11:15 a.m. on September 1, and passed over the Bass Lake area in Geauga County (Ramisch).

Transient Blackbirds. Shortly before 8:00 a.m. on October 10, an estimated 10,000 Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles "swirled and flew over Waite Hill, traveling from east to west, and then disappeared to the southwest. Within a minute two other flocks, each of several thousand birds, came from the east and settled in the treetops before taking off in the direction of the first flock. The entire movement took from 15 to 20 minutes" (Flanigan). From October 25 to 27 at Hanging Rock Farm in Lake County, the "entire landscape was blackened with icterids", as some 5,000 Common Grackles, about 200 Rusty Blackbirds, and an inestimable quantity (50,000? 100,000?) of Red-winged Blackbirds congregated there (Bole, Jr.).

Passerine Migration Generally. A large and sustained migration of passerine birds occurred during September and well into the first half of October. Although the flow of migrants was quite steady, there were of course peak periods for certain species and families. In the case of the warblers the heaviest September movements, as determined by daily observations at Waite Hill, were on 9-10, 16-17, 22, and 25. This last date produced the maximum number and the greatest variety of warblers -- 15 species -- recorded there (Flanigan). A broad cold front which had moved out of the upper lakes region and through northern Ohio on the 24th apparently stimulated this major movement.

Outstanding among the flow of birds was the number of Tennessee Warblers. which is always a fairly common migrant. but which was

exceptionally numerous over an extended period: about September 5 to October 4. For example, at North Chagrin Reservation on September 10 at mid-afternoon, an estimated 75 to 100 Tennessees were seen within five minutes (Rooks). On September 17 at Waite Hill the ratio of Tennessee Warblers to any other species was four to one, and on the 22nd they were "pouring through" (Flanigan). Notable, too, because they are so rarely identified in the autumn were the six or more Pine Warblers recorded at Clague Park on September 27 along with ten other species of warblers (Klamm).

In the first third of October, westerly end northwesterly winds brought cold air masses into the region on the 4th and on the 9th and 10th. These conditions presumably quickened and intensified the flow of migrants; for from October 3 to 12; great numbers of Hermit Thrushes, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Myrtle Warblers, Slate-colored Juncos, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows arrived. On the 10th a wave of Myrtle Warblers -- "hundreds of birds -- passed through the Chagrin River valley (Skaggs); and in the valley area, at Waite Hill, on the 11th, 12th, and 14th there was an "unusually big flow" of White-crowned Sparrows (Flanigan). Actually this movement was already underway on October 1, as evidenced by the "invasion" of Golden-crowned Kinglets observed at 7:45 a.m. that day near the lake shore in Bay Village (Cook), while on the morning of October 2, Golden-crowns were moving through the planetrees on the Mall in downtown Cleveland (Newman).

Yearly Summary. In the BIRD CALENDAR year now ended, that is, from December 1, 1963 to November 30, 1964, 273 species and subspecies were recorded, as compared with 260 in the previous year. In addition, an unidentified species of Jaeger was seen and, also, the hybrid Brewster's Warbler. There was no record of the Double-crested Cormorant, King Rail, or Forster's Tern.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Yellow-crowned Night Heron - An immature bird was recorded on September 27 and on October 3 and 4 in Rocky River Reservation (Stasko).

Yellow Rail - For about five minutes on the afternoon of October 2, this bird of wet meadows and marshes was observed at a distance of some 20 feet as it climbed about in a bush in Buttonbush Bog at Holden Arboretum and then flew to a clump of smartweed and sweetflag, where it was soon lost to view (McKelvey). This is the first autumn record since 1943 and the third autumn record in the history of the region.

Whimbrel - Two birds were foraging in the short grass and weeds at Burke Lakefront Airport on September 13, and one bird was there on September 26 (Klamm).

Knot - From September 30 to October 10 a single individual -- sometimes in the company of Dunlin and Semipalmated Sandpipers -- tarried at White City (Carrothers et al). This is the first October record for the region.

White-rumped Sandpiper - Among the many sandpipers feeding along the edges of the lagoon at White City on September 5 were two of this species (Klamm) and one was present on September 6 and 7 (Kitson and Klamm).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - At White City one bird was seen on September 24 (Carrothers and Collins); and at Burke Lakefront Airport one was feeding in the grassy marginal areas on September 26 and three were there on October 3 (Klamm), which is the first October record in the present century.

Hudsonian Godwit - From October 15 to 24 this singular stray remained at Harman's Beach in Lorain, where it was studied by many observers (Wallen et al). There are only two other regional reports in the 20th century, each of a single bird: September 4 and 5, 1951 and September 18, 1958. It is interesting to note that this species, which normally follows the Atlantic flyway and rarely occurs inland in the autumn, was also observed at the following locations in the eastern Great Lakes area Presque Isle, Pennsylvania, October 3; Conneaut, Ohio, October 6 to 16; Fort Erie, Ontario, October 28 and 30. (See the Field Notes section in this issue for Wallen's account of the feeding and behavior habits of this Godwit.)

American Avocet - The bird which was observed initially on August 23 at White City remained there to September 5 (Carrothers et al), thus establishing a first autumn and a first summer record, as well as being the first confirmed occurrence in the history of the region.

Northern Phalarope - A single individual was reported from White City on September 16 (Kitson) and on October 6 and 13 (Carrothers).

Jaeger (sp.?) - At mid-morning on November 22 at White City an immature Jaeger was sighted flying west about eight to ten feet above the water and some 25 feet beyond the breakwall. In the brief time it was under observation a specific identification could not be made, but the characteristics that could be distinguished strongly suggested that the bird was a Parasitic Jaeger (Raynes).

Franklin's Gull - Seemingly more numerous than in previous autumns, one or two birds were observed quite regularly at White City from September 19 (Flanigan and Sherwin) to November 21, with a maximum of four recorded there on October 11 (Siebert). In addition, single birds were identified off the mouth of Rocky River on October 17 and 26 (Stasko), and at the Municipal Light Plant on November 21 (Siebert).

Little Gull - On November 22 in the harbor at Lorain an adult bird was identified among the thousands of Bonaparte's and other gulls congregated there (Klamm); and on that same date an adult was sighted at White City (Siebert and Surman).

Snowy Owl - At LaDue Reservoir one bird was seen regularly from November 8 to 12 (English), and one was sighted on the outer breakwall at Edgewater Park on November 26, 28, and 29 (Klamm).

Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker - For some five minutes on November 30, a female moved from tree to tree in the backyard of a residence in Lake Lucerne and then departed (English).

Mockingbird - One was seen at Mentor Headlands on October 25 (Booth), and one appeared at a residence near Chardon on November 25 (Kula).

Prairie Warbler - At Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Cuyahoga Falls, one bird was present on September 15 and 16, on both of which days Magnolia, Myrtle, and Blackpoll Warblers were passing through (Hjelmquist).

Harris' Sparrow - An immature occurred at a residence in Lorain on October 27 and 28, where it sometimes fed in the company of House Sparrows despite the latter's attempt to drive it away (Dolbear).

From a Neighboring Locality:

Green-tailed Towhee - One bird was trapped on September 24 at the bird banding station operated by Marcella and Howard Meahl in Austinburg Township, Ashtabula County. It was carefully examined by a number of persons, and before being released it was photographed (Savage). So far as can be determined this is the first record for Ohio.

#### FIELD NOTES

Behavior of Hudsonian Godwit at Lorain. During the stay of the Hudsonian Godwit at Harmon's Beach in Lorain from October 15 to 24, I studied it carefully on seven occasions and thus learned something of its feeding habits and behavior. Generally it was present at the early and late hours of the day, though it sometimes disappeared at midday.

Whenever the wind blows from the north quarter, the mudflats on the eastern part of the beach are covered by a few inches of water. It was there that the Godwit usually fed. It probed rapidly, sinking its bill so deeply that part of its head was submerged. Upon locating something edible, the bird would raise its head and rapidly open and close its mandibles until it had swallowed whatever it had seized. My son and I dug in the feeding area and finally found several slate gray segmented worms, pointed at both ends, measuring between three-quarters to one inch long. They were not plentiful but perhaps a "specialist" could find them more easily than we could. Since there did not seem to be anything else edible in the mud, I assume the Godwit was eating these worms. On the surface there was an abundance of small snails with fragile shells, but the bird ignored them.

The Godwit did not mix with the other birds on the beach - Killdeer, Semipalmated Plover, and Sanderlings. On one occasion it was attempting to feed in an area where a number of Ring-billed Gulls were standing. As it approached one Gull and then another, it raised its wings, stuck out its neck and bill, and lunged a few steps toward the Gull. In each case the Gull got out of the way. Once I saw the bird swim across a narrow stretch of deep water. It was silent at

all times I observed it, even when it was flushed.

On October 23 the wind blew from the south, and the following day there was little wind at all, so that the mudflats were quite dry. On the morning of the 24th I watched the Godwit trying to probe in the more sandy area of the beach, but it appeared that it was unable to insert more than half the length of its bill and it made only an occasional jab. Thus I believe that the Godwit left on the 24th because the changed condition of the beach made it difficult to find sufficient food. - WILLIAM P. WALLLEN

Sparrow Hawk Harasses Creeper. At White City on October 13 I observed a male Sparrow Hawk as it began to harass a Brown Creeper which was working its way up a telephone pole. From the top of another pole the Hawk swept down at the Creeper, struck at it with outstretched talons but missed as the Creeper eluded its attacker by darting into the air and landing on the opposite side of the pole. The Hawk then flew around the pole and repeatedly attempted to snatch at the Creeper, which escaped each time by springing away from the pole to alight on the opposite side. When the Creeper flew to a nearby tree, the Hawk followed and made several more unsuccessful attacks. Finally, the Hawk gave up and left the area. - RICHARD COLLINS

Nighthawk Spends Day on Tree Limb. On the morning of September 3 at our home in Willoughby, my husband and I discovered a Common Nighthawk perched along a horizontal branch of a large dead elm tree. It stayed there all day -- in the morning facing east, in the afternoon facing west. Occasionally it would sidle along the branch for several inches, moving somewhat like a Mourning Dove. Sometimes, too, it would stretch, preen, and rock from side to side. At about 4:30 p.m., when I returned from an errand, the bird was still in the same place, and I watched from time to time as it fluffed its feathers, moved its wings, and then settled down again. At 5:25 p.m. it looked up alertly and suddenly took off. As it circled a few times, it was joined by another Nighthawk and off they flew to the northeast over the Chagrin River valley. - GRETТА PALLISTER

Flickers Roost in Barn. Beginning about May 26, 1964 at our home in Waite Hill, a Yellow-shafted Flicker roosted all night in the barn by clinging to the edge of one of the louvres at the roof top. One bird continued to be present every night until June 12, when a second Flicker spent the night on the louvre at the other end of the barn. Both birds roosted in the barn each night for the rest of June and presumably during July also, though I was not able to inspect the barn every night in that month. Throughout August and September they came to the barn regularly each evening, but were not observed there after September 30. - ANNETTE B. FLANIGAN

Autumn Pairing of Bluebirds? On the morning of November 26, which was a warm, mild day, I discovered a male and a female Eastern Bluebird examining the various nesting boxes which are located among the lilac plantings at Holden Arboretum. They continued their examinations for a period of 15 to 20 minutes, the male all the while singing.

as though it were April. At one time the male displayed his wings by holding them almost completely open and on a level with his body as he ran along the length of a limb in front of the female. Then they went back to examining the nesting boxes. Upon my return to the Arboretum three days later, when the weather had turned cold, I did not observe either Bluebird. - RICHARD COLLINS

Blackbird Roost in Lorain County. On several week ends in October, for an hour or so before sunset, I observed a great flood of blackbirds streaming over the city of Lorain from the west and southwest as they moved in the direction of the Black River. Not until November 8 did I find the roosting site of these birds, which was located in a dense, nearly impenetrable stand of hawthorns on the border of Lorain and Sheffield Lake along state route 611. At that time, and later, too, the Starling was by far the predominant species, with relatively small numbers of Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds comprising the rest of the gathering. At no time did I see any Red-winged Blackbirds or Robins, which sometimes are attracted to such a roost. When I next visited the area on November 26, most of the Grackles had left.

On November 29, however, the roost was still very active. From 4:30 p.m. until the last bird was settled at 5:10 p.m., there was much milling about of the flock, many false settlings, and sudden takeoffs. Thus it was extremely difficult to assess numbers, especially since many small flocks of Cowbirds came streaking in low and dropped into the hawthorn bushes without first circling. Nevertheless, I believe there were from 60,000 to 100,000 birds in the roost on that particular date: about 5,000 Cowbirds, 1,000 Grackles, and the rest Starlings. - MICHAEL STASKO