



*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)

December - Some four inches of snow fell on the 2nd and 3rd but little thereafter, particularly during the last half when there was frequent rain. Generally moderate temperatures prevailed, averaging 32.2°, and the final ten days were unusually warm.

January - Mild with but a trace of snow on the ground through the 12th. From the 13th through the 19th very cold, two days having a low of zero, and snowfall totaled 10.9 inches. Mild again to the 27th, then very cold and some light snow to the end of the month.

February - Continued cold through the first four days, with a total of 4.5 inches of snow; then moderate temperatures and little snow through the 17th, followed by some snowfall on seven of the final 11 days, with average daily temperatures ranging from 13° to 38°.

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

If we were to describe this winter's avifauna in terms of color qualities, we would have to say they consisted largely of browns and blacks in contrast to the yellow and gray and the smoldering red of the winter of 1963-64. The browns and blacks refer to the many Rough-legged Hawks which occurred this winter while the brighter colors of the previous winter refer to the Evening Grosbeaks and Red Crossbills which were so numerous that season and so lacking in the present winter. In the paragraphs which follow we will discuss the abundance of the hawks as well as other significant features of a season which, though interesting, was not marked with spectacular highlights.

Wintering Dabbling Ducks. A considerable variety of dabbling ducks stayed in the region beyond their normal departure time, and some few spent the winter here. At LaDue Reservoir 16 Gadwall were present on December 6 (Carrothers). Three Pintail were seen in the Akron area on January 11 (Hjelmquist) and three at Lorain on February 14 (Dolbear). At the Upper Shaker Lake on January 1, one American Widgeon was with a flock of 70 Mallards, which commonly occur there (Deininger). Two Green-winged Teal and one Blue-winged Teal were observed in flight over the Cuyahoga River valley south of Peninsula on January 2 (Knight). At the small pond in Clague Park, a Shoveler was recorded on January 23 (Klamm), one Green-winged Teal was seen on January 6, and two were there regularly from January 10 to the end of February (Cook et al). In Elyria at Cascade Park, where food was provided, one or two Green-winged Teal, together with the customary Mallard and Black Ducks, were reported from January 4 through February (Johnson).

Diving Ducks Not Abundant. During the first half of December the population of diving ducks along the Cleveland lakefront reached its highest level, though the total number was not large. Most abundant in that period were the Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, and Red-breasted Merganser. For the ever-diminishing Ruddy Duck the maximum count was a mere 72 on December 13. During the rest of the winter the population, which fluctuated according to the ice conditions, was small, with the Scaup predominant and the Common Goldeneye next in numbers.

In the harbor at Lorain few ducks were recorded until about mid-February, when on the 13th some 2,600 Scaup (Klamm) and an estimated 1,000 Canvasback (Stasko) were observed, and on the 16th about 500 Redhead (Johnson). Several hundred of the Canvasback remained the rest of the month.

Invasion of Rough-legged Hawks. Easily the outstanding feature of this winter was the extraordinary number of Rough-legged Hawks which invaded the region. Although one bird was reported from as far south as Bath, the vast majority occurred within about ten miles of the Lake Erie shore. In the eastern portion of the region they were seen most commonly in open country along Interstate Route 2 and State Route 306 from Willoughby to Painesville. At least seven were found along Route 2 on December 13 (Raynes).

In the western portion of the region the Rough-legged Hawk was concentrated in the open fields and woodlots which characterize much of the area from the western edge of Cuyahoga County to the eastern borders of the city of Lorain and north to Avon Lake. A careful survey of a portion of this area on December 26 produced a count of 21 hawks -- "as many as six at one time in several locations" -- of which "about one-third were dark or near-dark phase birds" (Johnson). A count covering a somewhat larger section of this Cuyahoga-Lorain County area tallied 34 hawks on January 3, including "one group of 14 which rose high into the air and dispersed" (Klamm). This concentration of Rough-legged Hawks remained quite constant through the winter as is shown by counts of 29 birds on February 14, and 27 on February 28 (Klamm).

Killdeer and Snipe Stay On. Having found suitable feeding sites and being favored by generally moderate temperatures and no protracted periods of snow, a number of Killdeer and Common Snipe remained in the region well beyond their normal time for departure. At White City two Killdeer were present quite regularly to January 12 (Collins and Raynes), and three were seen at Beach Cliff Park on January 3 (Stasko). Other December occurrences, each of a single bird, were at Willowick, Akron, and Lorain. Nine Common Snipe were counted at LaDue Reservoir on December 1 (Carrothers); one was found in Rocky River Reservation on December 5 (Klamm); and near Oberlin along Plum Creek, whose waters are kept open by the outflow from an upstream sewage treatment plant, one bird was feeding on December 20 and 24 (Morse).

Multitude of Gulls Gathers at Lorain. Again this winter as in the previous four, vast numbers of Ring-billed Gulls, and other species, too, gathered in the harbor at Lorain during most of December and January while the water was open. The tally taken on the Bird Count conducted by the Elyria Audubon Society on December 27 revealed an estimated 3,500 Herring, 76,000 Ring-billed, and 9,800 Bonaparte's Gulls in the general harbor area. The population of Bonaparte's Gulls declined thereafter until the final record of a single bird on January 17 (Lebold). But the numbers of Herring and of Ring-billed Gulls seemed to increase, for on January 24 the harbor contained an estimated 10,000 of the former and 100,000 of the latter (Klamm). Ice over much of the harbor at the end of January and continuing through February drastically reduced the size of the gull assemblage; and the maximum reported in February were an estimated 1,000 Herring and 2,000 Ring-billed on the 20th (Johnson).

Limited Occurrence of Black-backed Gulls. The occurrence of the Great Black-backed Gull in any sizable number seemed to be restricted to a period of about three weeks. In December there were six records of single birds, and one record in the first half of January. Then on January 17, five birds were observed at Lorain and six at Gordon Park (Klamm). At Lorain on January 24, seven were counted (Dolbear), and at Eastlake on January 31, fifteen were seen (Raynes). Final record for the winter was of three birds at Clifton Beach on February 7 (Siebert).

Minor Invasion of Snowy Owls. Although at least seven Snowy Owls were reported, this number as well as the pattern of distribution does not seem to justify terming their occurrence here a major invasion. Certainly, this winter does not compare with the winter of 1949-50 when an estimated 100 birds occurred. With the exception of one owl at LaDue Reservoir on December 2 and 4 (English) and one in Warrensville Heights on February 3 and 6 (E. Newman and Knight), all of the records came from along or close to the Lake Erie shoreline and ranged from Lorain to White City.

Robins Winter in Good Numbers. In December a small scattering of Robins was reported although at North Chagrin Reservation "a large body of Robins was observed on December 10 feeding in wild grapevine tangles" within the beech-maple forest, where from 20 to 30 birds remained all winter (Rooks). Beginning about mid-January a greater number of Robins was reported from various parts of the region. A band of 32 was seen at Holden Arboretum on January 17 (Hammond), about 50 near Painesville on January 28 (Booth), and some 150 in Brecksville Reservation on January 31 (Knight). In the vicinity of Grafton "appreciable numbers of Robins moved into the area about the first week of February", with a flock of 42 and of 25 being reported there on February 7 and a flock of 90 on February 14 (Morse).

Bluebird Not Uncommon in Eastern Portion. The Eastern Bluebird, too, occurred in fairly good numbers, though it appeared to be confined almost entirely to the eastern portion of the region. Eighteen were tallied at Waite Hill on December 16, seven on January 3, four on February 11, and one pair thereafter (Flanigan). In North Chagrin Reservation a half dozen were present from mid-December to mid-February (Rooks). Two to four birds were seen at Cuyahoga County Airport from December 12 to February 6 (Kitson). In the vicinity of Bath, 15 Bluebirds were observed on December 16 and eight on February 2 (Hjelmquist).

Cardinal Population Declining? Several contributors commented on the seeming decline in the number of Cardinals. From Grafton one contributor reported that his records "and the comments of others indicate a decrease in numbers of Cardinals this winter over past years. It is interesting to note that the maximum number at my feeder at any one time was eight this winter compared with 22 last winter" (Morse). At a feeding station in Lyndhurst, Cardinals appeared "in greatly reduced numbers" (Snider), and the naturalist at the Trail-side Museum in North Chagrin Reservation noted that "our Cardinal population appears down" (Rooks). Still another contributor, living in West Geauga, commented that "last winter and two winters ago I counted as many as 20 Cardinals at one time at our feeders. This winter I counted a maximum of only eight" (Kremm).

Confirmation of this decline in the Cardinal population is found in the annual Christmas Bird Counts conducted by the Cuyahoga Falls Audubon Society, the Elyria Audubon Society, and The Kirtland Bird Club on the East Side of Cleveland. The following tabulation illustrates the extent of this decrease:

	Christmas <u>1963</u>	Christmas <u>1964</u>
Cuyahoga Falls	329	198
Elyria	254	91
Cleveland (East)	270	220

Since all three Christmas counts show occasional sharp fluctuations over the years in the size of the Cardinal population (in 1956 only 85 Cardinals were tallied on the Cuyahoga Falls Count), it would be unwise as well as premature to conclude that the diminished population this winter truly indicates a trend.

Northern Finches Absent. With the exception of two reports of the Evening Grosbeak (see Noteworthy Records section which follows) none of the "northern" finches was observed. The Pine Siskin was scarce and was only reported on four separate dates in January and February from just three areas -- the largest flock consisting of 15 birds at Warrensville Farms on February 28 (Knight). American Goldfinches were reported less often and in much smaller number than in the winter of 1963-64.

One impressive consequence of the absence of Evening Grosbeaks is found in a comparison of the quantity of bird feed supplied at the Trailside Museum in North Chagrin Reservation this winter and in the winter of 1963-64 when this species was so abundant. In the present winter 200 pounds of cracked corn and mixed feed and 150 pounds of sunflower seeds were supplied, whereas in the prior winter the figures were 2,000 pounds and 600 pounds, respectively (Rooks).

Towhees Abundant in Eastern Portion. From year to year there is usually a great fluctuation in the wintering population of the Rufous-sided Towhee. When it is quite abundant, as it was this winter, it occurs almost entirely in the eastern portion of the region, notably in the deep ravines at North Chagrin Reservation and elsewhere in the Chagrin River watershed. This winter the Towhee population in the Reservation was "up nearly 100%" (Rooks). High counts there for each month were 18 on December 27, 12 on January 20 and 31, and ten on February 27; the males outnumbering the females by at least three to one.

Additional evidence of the relative size of the Towhee population comes from the Christmas counts conducted on Cleveland's East Side, which embraces a portion of the Chagrin River valley, and from the Cuyahoga Falls area. At Cleveland 31 Towhees were tallied this Christmas as against just one bird in 1963, while at Cuyahoga Falls the count was 16 this Christmas and two in 1963.

Early Spring Migrants Appear. As February drew to an end, signs of the changing seasons and of the beginnings of migration were evident. Canada Geese were heard over Holden Arboretum on February 26, but the ponds were frozen and so the birds settled on the Chagrin River at Willoughby (Paul Martin fide Kitson). On the 27th the Common and the Red-breasted Merganser reappeared on the Cleveland lakefront, when 180 of the former and 38 of the latter were observed in a small

fissure in the ice (Klamm). A Killdeer was seen at Warrensville Farms on the 28th (Knight). Robins grew more numerous as the month advanced and were quite common after the 25th.

Some Horned Larks appeared early in February, but the major influx occurred on and after the 25th, at which time several large flocks of Snow Buntings were reported also. At Mentor on the 25th a flock of 70 Horned Larks was seen together with about 30 Snow Buntings (Fais), and on the 26th an estimated 120 Horned Larks were recorded near Willoughby (Pallister). Two Lapland Longspurs were among a flock of Horned Larks observed at Mentor on the 26th (Flanigan). Many migrating Horned Larks were noted in Lorain County on February 28, while at least nine birds were already on territory there as shown by their "tail-fanning, head-bowing, and approach maneuvers" (Klamm).

On the final day of February, four Yellow-shafted Flickers were reported, Crows were numerous, and Song Sparrows had arrived in good numbers. Notable, too, that day in the fields in the eastern portion of Lorain County were the many blackbirds, including more than 500 Rusties and over 1,000 each of Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and Brown-headed Cowbirds (Klamm).

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-throated Loon - At Summit Lake in Akron one bird was present from February 3 through 6 (Hjelmquist). This is the first February record in this century and is the only record since November 1961.

Red-necked Grebe - On February 27 and 28 a single bird "was fishing in the warmed water" flowing into Lake Erie from the Illuminating Company's generating plant at Eastlake (Carrothers et al).

White-fronted Goose - An adult and two immatures were observed on December 27 in a grain field just west of Lorain and a few hundred yards south of the lake shore. During most of the 30 minutes they were studied, "two were feeding while the other seemed to stand guard, with its head held high" (Dolbear). The next day three additional observers saw these birds in the same location (fide Dolbear). This is the first December occurrence in the history of the region and is just the second record in the past 15 years.

Common Eider - The single bird which occurred at Clifton Beach during the last ten days of November was there on December 1 (Carrothers), and two were there on December 3 (Stasko).

Bald Eagle - From a lakeside residence in Lorain on the morning of January 18, an adult bird was observed at intervals for an hour or more as it stood on the offshore ice. When it was next seen, it was "flying out from shore with a live duck in its talons." The Eagle alighted on the ice where it remained for about five minutes, after which it flew away and was not seen again (Dolbear). [Unfortunately, the observer's domestic duties prevented her from watching the Eagle at the moment of departure, and thus she does not know what happened to the duck. - Ed.]



Purple Sandpiper - A small muddy pool surrounded by shore ice at Rocky River Park was the feeding area for one bird which was recorded on December 14, 19, and 20 (Stasko).

Red Phalarope - Occupying the same muddy pool as a Purple Sandpiper (see above), this phalarope apparently remained at Rocky River Park for about one week, December 13-20 (Stasko).

Glaucous Gull - (1) Two adults and two immatures were identified among the many thousands of gulls gathered in the harbor at Lorain on January 17 (Klamm and Siebert), and four birds were seen there again on January 30 (Siebert). The final record was of one "second-year bird" on February 3 (Lebold). (2) Along the Cleveland lakefront one bird was recorded at Gordon Park on January 30, February 23, and February 25 (Klamm, Snider, Stokes), and one was seen at Edgewater Park on February 21 (Peskin).

Iceland Gull - One immature was distinguished among the vast flock of gulls at Lorain harbor on January 17 (Klamm and Siebert).

Little Gull - At Clifton Beach on December 5 and January 9, one bird was feeding on the wing in the company of Bonaparte's Gulls (Klamm).

Mockingbird - Single birds were reported from three localities: in a creek bottom in Mayfield, December 9 (Rooks); at a residence in Mentor, December 11 (Fais); and on February 25 in University Heights, where the bird sat on a chimney top for some five minutes before departing (Divoky, Jr.).

Hermit Thrush - Five records, each of a single bird, mark the first time that more than one bird has been reported in any winter in the past 15 years: at Elmhurst Park Cemetery in Avon, December 6 (Siebert); in Waite Hill, December 27 (Flanigan); in East Cleveland, January 13 (Rooks); in North Chagrin Reservation, January 17 (Rooks); at Holden Arboretum, January 24 (Hammond).

Orange-crowned Warbler - A single bird was studied carefully at a distance of about 30 feet on December 24 as it flitted about in some low willows growing along Plum Creek near Oberlin (Morse). This is the first winter record in the history of the region.

Evening Grosbeak - (1) A solitary individual was seen in Waite Hill on December 27 (Flanigan). (2) In North Chagrin Reservation on February 13, three birds were discovered in a wild grapevine which still bore some fruit, and the next day five birds, including three adult males, were seen in the same area (Rooks).

House Finch - In the crab apple orchard at Holden Arboretum, which this species frequented in the winter of 1963-64, two brightly-colored males were observed on February 28 (Hammond).

Oregon Junco - There were three records, each of a single bird: (1) on December 26 and January 24 at Holden Arboretum, where on both dates it was in the company of Slate-colored Juncos either foraging

about in brush or seeking food under a feeder (Hammond); (2) from December 7 to February 10 in North Chagrin Reservation (see Rooks' account in the Field Notes section which follows); (3) at a residence in Willoughby Hills from December 20 through February 27; probably an immature male, for "when first observed in December the bird was dull in plumage, but as the winter progressed the plumage became brighter." Its "towhee-like flanks" contrasted greatly with those of the Slate-colored Juncos, with which it fed, though it did not spend much time with them otherwise (Skaggs).

Addendum (Spring 1964):

Fulvous Tree Duck - On a small pond located about two miles west of Amherst, a solitary bird was observed for some 20 minutes on April 13, 1964 as it leisurely swam back and forth in a shallow area while feeding on pond vegetation (Dolbear). This is the first record for the Cleveland region. The Fulvous Tree Duck was not known to have occurred anywhere in Ohio prior to the autumn of 1962 when eight birds were identified and three were shot on October 20 in public hunting areas in Ottawa County.

#### FIELD NOTES

Wind Buffets Mallards. At Sunset Pond in North Chagrin Reservation on the morning of February 12, with a strong wind from the south false spring was in the air. Eight Mallards, seemingly paired off, were on the pond, and there was much bobbing of heads and chasing of the hens by the drakes.

As I stood at the southeast corner of the pond, a pair of Mallards which had risen from the far northwest portion flew toward me and prepared to land by swinging into the wind. When these birds came past me, they were flying at least 40 miles per hour, aided by the wind which was blowing at least 25 miles per hour. Apparently a gust of wind caught them just at a critical moment of their turn. For the hen shot right into the thirty-foot high saplings at the end of the pond, crashing down through the branches and smacking the ground with a resounding thump. The drake barely missed the treetops, continued on, and was not seen again. I hurried to the spot where the hen had fallen, but a five-minute search turned up no clue as to what had happened to her. I assume she was unhurt and that she ran back to the water. - RICHARD COLLINS

Cowbirds Appear Again at Feeder. For the fifth consecutive winter Brown-headed Cowbirds came daily to the feeding station at my home in Lorain. This winter a few started coming in November. By December 3, there were 35 present, on December 18, 50 were counted, and on February 1, about 75 appeared. The daily average was around 50, with more present when the weather was very cold. Usually about one fourth were females. - HILDA A. LEBOLD

Junco Flock Contains One Oregon and Two Hybrids. Among the flock of some 40 Slate-colored Juncos which came regularly to the feeding area at the Trailside Museum in North Chagrin Reservation this winter, three birds were distinctly different from the rest. One, which was first seen on December 7, 1964, and last observed on February 10, 1965, was clearly an Oregon Junco. The other two, a male and a female, were seemingly hybrids -- possibly offspring of the mating of an Oregon or "pink-sided" Junco and a Slate-colored Junco.

From a distance of 25 to 30 feet the Oregon Junco could be picked out of a group of birds feeding on the ground. His bright mahogany stood out at all times and at great distance. The head and chest of the Oregon were a much deeper black than in any of the Slate-colored Juncos, which were dusky gray and black. The Oregon was a jet black, and the bib disappeared into a creamy white breast. This separation of hood, both above and below, together with the intensity of the brown and black coloring were the outstanding identifying characteristics.

The two hybrid Juncos were distinguished by their vivid pink sides and off-color grays and browns, which set them apart from the other Juncos and from the Oregon Junco, too. The male especially was a decided, yet not a rich, mahogany brown. Its hood did not compare with that of the Oregon Junco. The female was less pink than the male, and her brown was a buffy shade. There is so much variation in the color of the bill of Juncos that this is a poor identifying character. However, the bill of the Oregon Junco and of the two "pink-sided" birds was chalk white in contrast with the yellow cream-white of the others. Despite the difference in the coloring of their plumage, the two hybrids could not be safely separated from the Slate-colored Juncos in poor light.

From the standpoint of behavior the Oregon Junco was distinguished from the other Juncos in two ways. The most noticeable difference was the hostility which the other Juncos, including the hybrids, displayed toward him whenever a temporary ground feeding territory was established. Consequently, much of the time he fed by himself on the ground on the far side of the narrow ravine adjoining the Trailside Museum. Only during the last two weeks of his stay did he manage to join the others beneath the feeder. But this was not a lasting truce, for he was always chased away by some one of the Juncos before the feeding period was over.

The second behavioral characteristic which made the Oregon stand out from the other Juncos was his "shyness". When frightened from the feeder, he would fly off deep into the Canada hemlocks to stay for as long as half an hour. Occasionally he would not return until the next day if frightened the evening before. In contrast, the Slate-colored Juncos when frightened would only fly a short distance and would return almost immediately.

Many bird students had an opportunity to observe the Oregon Junco during its long stay in the vicinity of the Trailside Museum. I was interested to note that those who had observed this species

in its native habitat had no trouble in picking out the bird or making an identification. Those who had not observed it previously usually had mixed feelings and declined either to agree or disagree with the identification. - JAMES D. ROOKS, trailside naturalist, North Chagrin Reservation.