



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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THE WEATHER

- June - Days on which temperatures averaged cooler than normal passed mostly in the first and third weeks, but over-all the month turned out to be 1.6 degrees warmer than normal with sunshine prevailing 68 per cent of the time possible. Measurable precipitation occurred on ten days in all. Distribution was uneven, rain falling on only two days during the first 15 days and on eight days during the last 15. The total reached 3.48 inches, which was 0.36 inches in excess of normal.
- July - Precipitation was often very transient and hit-skip over the region and ranged from passing drizzle to torrential cloudbursts. Measurable rain fell on 18 well-distributed days but amounted to less than 0.1 inch on nine of these days. On the 10th and 11th of the month the central and eastern sections of the local area experienced high winds and torrential rains with heavy flooding, while the western sections eased by with 1.95 inches on those two days. Precipitation was measured at the National Weather Service as 3.48 inches for the month, a scant 0.03: inch excess. Temperatures averaged out 0.5 degree warmer than normal.
- August - Temperatures averaged 1.4 degrees cooler than normal, as only 11 days of above normal-temperatures occurred and these were largely concentrated in the period from the 20th through the 28th. Measurable precipitation fell on ten days and totaled 3.50 inches, an excess of 0.5 inch. This was distributed in three periods, coming during the 6th to 8th, 12th to 15th, and 26th to 28th.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

If contributors' reports give an accurate picture, the 1976 summer season will not be recalled as a memorable one for birders in the Cleveland Region. Although some individual species were somewhat above expected numbers, no family was up markedly. Tallies of a number of summer residents were disappointingly low. Most nesting species could be characterized as normal or merely inconclusive.

Most favorable showing for any group was wood warblers in August. However, this upsurge may prove in the fall records to have been merely a case of early movement in the southward migration, not an increase in total numbers. Noteworthy records for the season were mainly of common migrants that lingered in the spring or arrived uncommonly early in August or of those species which, though rare, are nevertheless sighted at least annually. No real surprises were reported.

Canada Geese Multiply. Nestings of Canada Geese were noted at a dozen or more locations, with reason to believe that there were others that went unreported. Largest concentrations were at Holden Arboretum and Sherwin Pond, but it appears that almost any expanse of water larger than a mud puddle is capable of supporting a family.

While less adaptable than the Canada Geese, Wood Ducks also appear to be nesting in satisfactory numbers annually. At the least, it can be concluded that they were not reduced from previous years. Other summer resident ducks were about as expected.

Hawks Not Unusual. Summer sightings of hawks were not in any way out of the ordinary. Reports of Red-tailed Hawks were about normal. Red-shouldered Hawks were uncommon, but contributors did not seem to be birding extensively in the likely habitats. American Kestrels were fairly common and widespread. There were several Broad-wing reports.

Shorebird Migration Generally Poor. Perhaps because of habitat changes at White City, generally the hottest spot in the region, the fall shorebird migration was on the whole disappointing. Of the commoner migrant species only the Black-bellied Plovers and Lesser Yellowlegs were reported with normal frequency. Semipalmated Plovers were considerably reduced. Pectoral and Least Sandpipers were scarce in the reports. Semipalmated Sandpipers and Sanderlings appeared down. Few of the rare vagrants which have been wandering in in recent years were seen.

Nighthawks, Swifts As Expected. The beginning of the August movement of Common Nighthawks was routine as to both time

and numbers. Chimney Swifts, too, showed no abnormal pattern during the season, holding fairly steady throughout.

Reports of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were about as expected. The upwards-of-60 sightings of Belted Kingfishers were close to the average of recent years.

Woodpecker Reports Slump. Although it may have been no more than a shift in contributors' birding habits, both Red-bellied and Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported less than usual. Pileated Woodpeckers, though, were not down in numbers. Common Flickers and Downy Woodpeckers showed no evidence of decline, and the data on Hairy Woodpeckers were inconclusive.

Outlook Unfavorable on Flycatchers. Reports of Eastern Kingbirds were quite low in comparison to recent years. Great Crested Flycatchers were also down. Eastern Phoebes, however, hit the average of the five previous years. Fall migration of Empidonax flycatchers was off to a slow start in August. Eastern Wood Pewees were not notably abundant.

Red-breasted Nuthatches Stream In. From August 19 on there was a notable influx of Red-breasted Nuthatches, rather early for these birds to appear. Except for eight birds in Rocky River Reservation, August 29 (Stasko), all reports were of single specimens.

House Wrens apparently maintained their normal population. Carolina Wren sightings, though, were below the levels of 1974 and 1975, suggesting a possible cyclic decline. However, the situation did not seem to be serious.

No Thrush Increase Visible. Wood Thrushes were reasonably common throughout the summer, and Veeries were identified as nesting. Nevertheless, neither species seemed to be more numerous than usual and may even have been less. Although Swainson's Thrushes showed more than the normal spillover into June from the spring migration, fall arrivals did not deviate significantly from the expected.

Holden Arboretum's Project Bluebird reported 59 chicks fledged, "enough to maintain our bluebird population" (Eakin). This rate of survival, though, was only achieved with strenuous efforts in monitoring nest boxes. Elsewhere, Eastern Bluebirds were seen rather infrequently.

Waxwings Increase in August. Cedar Waxwings, absent from the contributors' reports in March, staged one of their sudden upswings in August, with populations well above immediately preceding years. It may be theorized that the influx coincided with hatchings of insects that would attract flocks of these wanderers.

Warblers Arrive Early. The fall migration of wood warblers started in force on or before August 23, somewhat earlier than usual. No common migrant species was noticeably down in August; not yet clear, however, is whether this represented a population increase or simply an early movement. Particularly numerous in comparison to previous years were Tennessee, Magnolia, Bay-breasted, and Blackpoll Warblers.

Less encouraging were reports of the common nesting species. Of these only the Blue-winged was above normal. Reports were noticeably lower in midsummer on Ovenbirds, Hooded Warblers, and American Redstarts. Again, a possible explanation could be inactivity in the appropriate areas by the contributors.

Fewer Orioles, Tanagers Seen. Both Northern Orioles and Scarlet Tanagers, two conspicuous species often reported individually by persons not prowling the woods and thickets, were below normal in the summer records. Few Northern Orioles were tallied in July, while Scarlet Tanagers virtually disappeared in August.

Some Fringillids Down. The over-all pattern for finches and sparrows was much like that of other species--some at normal levels, some definitely lower, and few or none showing an increase. Among those apparently doing satisfactory were Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, American Goldfinches, and Chipping Sparrows. Cardinals and Song Sparrows are so common and widespread during summer that comparisons are impractical.

Indigo Buntings were below expectations and especially scarce in August. Nesting Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows were sighted, but the usually more common Savannah Sparrow was scarce. Even more disturbing was the continued decline in the reports of Rufous-sided Towhees, which have apparently undergone a real reduction in population in the region. More careful study of this species appears to be warranted.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Great Egret - Two were in a retaining basin by Lakeland Freeway near East 305th Street on July 25, and one was observed there on August 1 (Hoffman). Up to three and perhaps four were in the vicinity of Becker Pond in Mentor Marsh from August 15 into the fall season (Walker, et al.).

Lesser Scaup - An out-of-season male was at White City from at least July 10 to 21 (Hoffman, Klamm). Such vagrants are presumed to be nonbreeding males, which molt early and depart the breeding grounds ahead of schedule.

Bufflehead - On June 11 an out-of-season female, presumably

a laggard spring migrant. was swimming on the pond at Forest Hill Park, where it was studied for approximately 15 minutes (Pesch).

Ruddy Duck - A lone male was seen on the Cuyahoga River south of Brecksville Metropark, June 14 (Knight).

Osprey - All principal field marks were clearly visible on one flying east along the lake past Sims Park, Euclid, on June 6 (Corbin). Another was sighted over the western part of Mentor Marsh, August 15 (Walker). Summer sightings of this species, while still rare, appear to be increasing.

American Coot - Two families were observed in the Pekin Road marsh, June 22; one consisted of an adult with five young and the other of two adults with four young. The young "seemed to be an odd mixture of sizes and plumages ranging from grayish-white to nearly black" (Pesch). Although there have been several summer sightings in the past, this appears to be the first verified case of successful nesting of this species in the Cleveland Region. The marsh itself is largely a recent creation by resident beavers.

Piping Plover - At Burke Lakefront Airport one was studied at a distance of 50 yards on August 26 (Hoffman).

Ruddy Turnstone - A flock of 10 at Burke Lakefront Airport on July 7, following a heavy rain, marked a new earliest fall date; the following day 22 were counted at the same location (LePage).

Willet - Notable among several summer reports were a group of "at least 50" birds within the impoundment behind the Municipal Light Plant at East 55th Street (Hoffman). One was at White City on the unusual date of June 5 (Hoffman).

Greater Yellowlegs - One was with other shorebirds at White City on the markedly early date of July 10 (Klamm).

Red Knot - Only reports of this rare species, which had been increasingly numerous in recent years, were of a single bird at White City on August 25 and 26, both times in the evening (Hannikman).

Stilt Sandpiper - A lone bird that still retained some belly striping from the breeding plumage was on the mudflat at White City, August 28 (Klamm).

Laughing Gull - An adult was found on the breakwall at White City in the company of Ring-billed Gulls, July 10 (Hoffman).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher - One was seen at Mentor Marsh on the unusually early date of August 15 (Stasko).

Olive-sided Flycatcher - Latest reported of an uncommonly high number of spring migrants was in the Rocky River Reservation on the very late date of June 6 (Stasko).

Short-billed Marsh Wrens - Multiple sightings that suggested nestings were made at two widely separated locations. Five singing birds were found in a wet field of sedge grass with a few cattails near Avon, July 25; subsequent trips failed to locate any wrens except one on August 8 (Stasko). Four specimens were found by Sherman Road near County Line Road in Geauga County, August 8 (Besser), where a single bird had been seen on July 24 (Peskin). These are the first summer records in the region since 1970.

Mockingbird - One was reported throughout the season near East Erie Avenue, Lorain (fide Johnson). Single observations were made of a specimen at Geauga Lake, June 13, and of another near Stow, July 18 (Fricker).

Swainson's Thrush - An extremely young bird was netted and banded in Waite Hill, August 2. "The gape was still yellow and 'curly,' and it was still growing primaries; it could not have been long out of the nest" (Flanigan).

Loggerhead Shrike - On August 29 two were perched on the fence surrounding the retaining basin near Lakeland Freeway and East 305th Street; one was feeding on a grasshopper impaled on a wire prong atop the fence (Hoffman). Although the species was once an uncommon summer resident in the Cleveland Region, this is only the third sighting in more than 25 years of anything other than single birds. It is also unusually late in the season for the species, suggesting that these were migrants which wandered in on the way southward.

White-eyed Vireo - At least two specimens were sighted in June, although there was no confirmation of either remaining to nest. One was in Rocky River Reservation on the 6th (Stasko), and the other in Black River Reservation on the 23rd, where it has also been in previous summers (Johnson). This species has been increasingly frequent in spring and summer reports but has not been known to nest here.

Golden-winged Warbler - A singing bird was located in an area of thornapple thickets in the French Creek Reservation of Lorain Metropolitan Parks on June 3, 5, and 17 (Frank Hlebcar, fide Johnson). A Golden-winged "singing as if it was on territory" had been seen in the same location in June of 1974; Blue-winged Warblers are found there regularly, and Brewster's Warblers have also been reported there by several observers (Johnson). Williams (Birds of the Cleveland Region) classed the Golden-winged as a "possible rare summer resident, although no nesting has been documented."

Lawrence's Warbler - One was caught in a mistnet very close to a Blue-winged Warbler in Waite Hill, August 19; it was banded and photographed (Flanigan).

Tennessee Warbler - A hatching-year female was netted and banded in Waite Hill, August 1 (Flanigan). This is a new earliest fall date, 12 days earlier than the previous.

Pine Warbler - A young male not yet in adult plumage was studied for three minutes as it fed and also aggressively pursued American Robins and Mourning Doves at Sims Park on June 17 (Corbin). Although the Cleveland Region is within the breeding range of this species, this is the first June record in CBC files.

Mourning Warbler - A singing bird was seen in Kuhlman Woods near East 140th Street on the unusually late date of June 5 (Hannikman).

Canada Warbler - On June 13 a singing male, thought to have been a tardy migrant, was in Kuhlman Woods, an unlikely place for the species to remain for nesting (Hannikman).

Evening Grosbeak - A pair remained until June 5 at a feeding station in Brecksville where a small flock had been present during the spring (John Yanko, fide Dexter). Two were also present at a feeder in Kirtland Hills on June 1 (Bole). The June 5 date is a new latest spring date.

Red Crossbill - A flock of 20-30 of both sexes fed busily on the green cones of a spruce close to a residence in the southeastern part of Mentor, June 9, remaining for at least two hours during the early evening (Jones). A pair were seen eating mulberries in the company of American Goldfinches and Cedar Waxwings in Kirtland Hills, June 7, and two adults and a young were in the same general area on July 30 (Bole). Habitat near the Kirtland Hills site would be suitable for breeding, and the species has been there in previous summers.

Lincoln's Sparrow - A well-marked specimen was busily preening at the edge of a thicket in Sims Park on the uncommonly late date of June 1 (Corbin).

FIELD NOTES

COMMON GALLINULES NEST IN WAITE HILL. Two Common Gallinules appeared on the pond here in Waite Hill on June 30 and were very vocal and noisy. By plumage they could be identified as a male and female. They could be heard daily but were very secretive. Thus, it was not until early August that I was confident of where their nest was located or even was sure that there was a nest. On August 2 I observed one of

the birds, after much preening and stretching, climb up into a dense rose tangle completely surrounded by water and settle down as though on a nest. I could see a dark mass, evidently the nest, about one foot above the waterline.

From then on almost daily I observed the pair, generally early in the morning, and was able to see that they had quite regular habits. The female would leave the nest after making low, short calls. The male would join her briefly and then would take over the brooding on the nest. Sometimes she would climb gently down from the nest using the branches of the rosebush; other times she would fly out and land in the water with a loud splash. He would climb up into the nest and would turn and settle himself; the scarlet frontal shield could be seen flashing among the green.

Their feeding area was very limited, and they kept almost exclusively to the pond edge. As they were hopping from log to log, the Wood Ducks and Mallards gave way, sliding into the water at their approach without much show of aggression by the gallinules. When the female left the nest in early morning, she would feed avidly, and I judged she had been brooding all night. According to literature, she does the brooding at night, although the male assists in the daytime.

The routine altered on August 5. The male was not in sight when I arrived at 9:15 a.m. The female made the usual short calls and came down from the nest, but the male still did not appear. After pecking about three bites from the water, she disappeared into the larger tangle that adjoined the pond edge. She remained in there about ten minutes, then reappeared and began to feed, following the usual feeding route. When I left at 9:45, she was still feeding, and the male had not appeared. I wondered if the male had newly hatched chicks back in the cover. Forbush says, "Some of the young hatch much earlier than others."

The next few days there was no significant development. On August 10 I observed the two adults feeding near the nest at 10:15 a.m. The female went to the nest, climbed to the edge, then immediately dropped down into the water and retreated five or six feet. She repeated this action about three times in the space of a minute. I concluded she was trying to entice young from the nest. The male approached the nest and went through the same routine twice. Then there was nervous activity by both birds until finally the male climbed into the nest. Much stirring around was to be seen, but he remained at the nest. I left at 10:45.

At 3:00 p.m. I returned to see both adults feeding near the nest with the male tending three chicks. He was attentive and took food to them which they eagerly accepted. The

female appeared to be busy feeding herself. The red color on the face and head of the chicks was very conspicuous, and in addition each chick showed red wingbars. No mention of wingbars was found in the literature, and such a mark is not shown in any illustration I have.

On August 11 both adults were feeding the chicks attentively, the male being especially solicitous. Both adults made frequent hurried trips to the nest as though in response to a call, but nothing developed before I left at 10:30 a.m.

On the 12th I arrived at 8:45 a.m. to see the female feeding one chick. Five minutes later the male dropped down from the nest into the water followed in seconds, by three chicks. One after another they dropped into the water and paddled swiftly after the male. When they joined up with the female and single chick they divided up, two chicks staying close to each parent. From then on they remained divided in that way.

The male seemed a more devoted parent, paying closer attention to his two chicks than did the female with hers. On the 18th the temperature was low, and he brooded all four chicks at 8:45 a.m., as the sun had not yet reached their feeding area. He was again brooding the chicks on the 19th at 8:30 a.m. When the female approached with food, he raised up, and the chicks rushed to her. On the 21st the male climbed into vines by the pond edge to obtain the red fruits of the bittersweet nightshade, which he took to the chicks.

By September 9 the red wingbars had disappeared from the plumage of the gallinule chicks, but the red on the face was still present. In fact, it was more colorful than the red on the faces of the parents, which by now had dimmed considerably. The sex of the adults could no longer be distinguished accurately unless the two were together. It appeared that only two chicks had survived, as that was the number I was seeing. One was much larger than the other, either because of significantly different growth rate or because there had been a disparity in their hatching dates, which my observations seemed to indicate was possible.

It became increasingly difficult to make observations, as the gallinules covered increasingly more territory. I cannot be certain of the number of chicks that survived, but it appeared to be only two. They still retained strong color on their bills with the tip turning yellow as late as September 22. The bills and frontal shields of the parents were completely colorless at this time.

This is the first nesting of gallinules in the 20 years

that I have been observing the pond. In fact, even brief appearances by them have been rare.

As a sidelight of the extensive observation of the gallinules, I was also able to see the actions of the other pond residents. On three occasions I noted Wood Ducks feeding in a manner never before seen by me here. Limbs of a wild cherry hung over the water, heavy with fruit. One day about 12 Wood Ducks were jumping up, their bodies completely out of the water, to reach the cherries. They kept at it as long as I watched. The other two times I saw them feeding on the cherries, only a couple of the Wood Ducks were jumping from the water; however, several others moved slowly back and forth and appeared to be on the verge of attempting it. - ANNETTE B. FLANIGAN

MARTINS CONGREGATE EARLY. By June 15 several hundred Purple Martins were assembling on the wires near the area in Akron where they have been roosting in late summer the past few years. (See CBC 71:3.) There was a gradual increase until June 22, juveniles outnumbering mature males, two to one.

On June 26 there was a slight increase to 1,000 or more. A small colony of Cliff Swallows were seen with the martins. By July 16 there were 6,000 birds, many of them youngsters being fed by parents. They usually arrive by sunset. On July 25, though, they were very late arriving, and I waited and watched them fly in hastily in moonlight.

The peak number was estimated on July 28 at 10,000. This number is down from the 1975 count of 20,000. - ANN BISCAN

MIGRANTS TARRY IN DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND. At St. John's Cathedral in downtown Cleveland, where some half-dozen White-throated Sparrows wintered, a single bird was present as late as June 7. On June 4 a White-throat, presumably this same bird, sang repeatedly.

Also tarrying on the cathedral grounds was a Common Yellowthroat which sang again and again shortly after 8:00 a.m. on June 2 and 3 from a clump of hawthorn bushes which probably this same bird frequented during the last week of May. - DONALD L. NEWMAN

LEAST BITTERN FINDS ITSELF EXPOSED. In the driveway leading to the Corning Lake parking lot at Holden Arboretum we saw a Least Bittern on August 31. It must have been a migrant that had become exhausted and landed there. It was standing in the driveway about 4:15 p.m., and my sister and daughter almost stepped on it.

I followed the bird as it slipped away into the weeds

bordering the drive, and it put on quite a show. The weeds and grass were only about six inches high and offered little concealment, but it made a great effort to hide. It ruffled its feathers, then laid them flat, and pointed its beak upward. We approached to within about three feet of it and then left it alone. - MARY HUEY

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AN INVITATION: The Kirtland Bird Club meets at 7:45 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month except July and August in The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle. Visitors are always welcome.

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Inquiries and correspondence regarding subscriptions to THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR should be addressed to The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.