



CLEVELAND REGION

*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

Editor

Ray Hannikman

Editorial Assistant

Elinor Elder

Jean Hoffman

Ethel Surman

Weather Summary

William A. Klamm

CONTRIBUTORS

Ann Biscan

B. P. Bole, Jr.

Kay F. Booth

Dave Corbin

Fanny Dale

Ralph W. Dexter

Elinor Elder

F. W. and Marilyn Fais

Vic Fazio

Ray Hannikman

Dick and Jean Hoffman

Jim Hoffman

Nancy Ibsen

Perry F. Johnson

Tom Kellerman

William and Nancy Klamm

Charles H. Knight

Walter Kremm

Tom LePage

Chris Makulec

Jack and Dorothy Miller

Carl and Mary Newhous

Perry K. Peskin

John Pogacnik

Marjorie Ramisch

Richard Rickard

Larry Rosche

Marjorie S. Sheldon

Margaret H. Sherwin

Gordon Spare

Michael Stasko

Ethel D. Surman

Bert L. Szabo

Jerry Talkington

Clinton E. Ward

\*\*\*\*\*

All records, comments, and observations should be sent to:

Ray Hannikman  
13706 Eaglesmere Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44110

WEATHER  
Winter 1978-1979

December - The month was markedly brighter and warmer than usual. Sunshine prevailed 42% of the time possible and temperatures averaged out to 33.7 degrees or 3.4 degrees warmer than normal. Precipitation in all forms occurred on 15 days and totaled 2.96 inches, 0.60 inches in excess of normal. Transient icing of lagoons and quiet waters occurred on occasion but became severe on the 24th and was extensive in the harbor area by the 29th. Lake Erie remained open at all times with only minor shoreline ice developing by the 25th.

January - Decidedly wintry weather prevailed. Snow occurred on 15 days and was heavy on the 7th and the 25th. For the month snowfall was 15.1 inches. All forms of precipitation totaled 3.61 inches, 0.05 inches more than normal. Sunshine occurred only 35% of the time possible and temperatures averaged 22.0 degrees or a cold 4.9 degrees below normal. Lake Erie developed extensive ice cover by the 5th although some open expanses developed through the 24th. After the 24th extensive ice cover was sustained.

February - Temperatures averaged a frigid 19.1 degrees or 8.8 degrees below normal. Snow occurred on 12 days and totaled 16.0 inches. Total precipitation was 2.74 inches, 0.56 inches in excess of normal. Sunshine prevailed only 29% of the time possible. Throughout the month Lake Erie retained extensive ice cover.

-

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

The winter of 1978-1979 offered birders a number of interesting ways to pursue the birds of the season. As usual lakefront areas attracted the rarer species. The challenge of trying to find a Thayer's Gull or a Lesser Black-backed Gull amid thousands of Herring Gulls and hundreds of Great Black-backed Gulls, when oftentimes the challenge was just trying to remain outside against bitter cold and icy winds, lured many to Lorain Harbor and the Cleveland lakefront. Most often the cold won out, but for those who persisted success could be seen flying over the metal breakwall at East 72nd Street or through the steam at Lorain Harbor. Other highlights of the winter were an unusual number of wintering American Robins and several flocks of Evening Grosbeaks. Whether you participated actively in the birding activities of the winter season or just in a casual way it is hoped that the following pages of commentary, noteworthy records, and field notes will add to your memories of the birding in the winter just past.

Waterfowl Common Loons were sighted both along the lakefront and at Lake Rockwell on several dates in December. Eight loons along the Cleveland lakefront on December 2 and two loons at Lake Rockwell on December 5 were the maximum counts for both localities (Klamm, Elder). Stragglers continued to be reported until December 24.

No truly outstanding flocks of Common Goldeneyes, Greater or Lesser Scaup, Redheads or Canvasbacks occurred. High for any of these species was 1,000 Common Goldeneyes at Lorain Harbor on February 18 (Stasko). Common Mergansers, however, gathered in large numbers at Lorain Harbor with an estimated 8,000 birds being present also on February 18. No large concentrations of Common Mergansers occurred along the Cleveland lakefront and there were no reports of the species numbers at Eastlake.

All three species of scoters were reported. An unusual inland record was that of a White-winged Scoter in the canal between Pleasant Valley and Rockside Roads from February 25 to 28 (Rosche). When any of the scoters wanders inland it is usually the larger lakes or reservoirs which host the birds. What led this particular White-winged Scoter to such a small water area is anyone's guess.

Gulls Large concentrations of gulls; including those fascinating rarer species, drew observers to lakefront areas. Both the Cleveland lakefront and Lorain harbor had a similar pattern of gull abundance: excellent numbers within the period from mid-December to mid-January, a paucity of gulls during late January and February, a reappearance of good numbers in mid-February with numbers only to fall off again during the latter third of the month. Along the Cleveland lake front peak counts of Herring, Ring-billed, and Bonaparte's Gulls occurred between December 29 and January 8. On December 23 alone there were an estimated 11,100 Herring Gulls, 47,000 Ring-billed Gulls, and 34,000 Bonaparte's Gulls (Klamm). Numbers dwindled throughout the first half of January so that by month's end very few gulls remained. Herring Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls reappeared in fair numbers between February 11 and 20 after which date counts began to diminish again. At Lorain Harbor estimates were 10,000 Ring-billed Gulls, 25,000 Bonaparte's Gulls, and "thousands" of Herring Gulls in mid-December (Ward) and 9,000 Herring Gulls and 5,000 Ring-billed Gulls in early January (Pogacnik). The upswing began on February 9 and peaked between February 15 and 19 with as many as 25,000 Herring Gulls and 9,009 Ring-billed Gulls.

The Arctic and east coast species of gulls again showed well. Particularly impressive were the counts of Great Black-backed Gulls. More than 400 were recorded from Lorain Harbor on February 13 while a similar tally was submitted for East 72nd Street on February 15. Glaucous Gulls were not as numerous as during the winter of 1977-1978, but were, nonetheless, reliable at favored open water areas. Highest numbers were eight birds both at Lorain Harbor and at East 72nd Street on February 15 (Pogacnik, Klamm). Inland two Glaucous Gulls were present at Summit Lake in Akron on February 18 (Tveekrem fide Rosche). Concurrent with the presence of large flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls along the lakefront in late December and early January were small numbers of Little Gulls. Daily observations along the Cleveland lakefront produced six Little Gulls on both December 27 and January 6 (Klamm). Immatures, sub-adults, and adults were all noted. Details of the rarer species appear in the Noteworthy Records section.

Snowy Owl Snowy Owls were present throughout the winter in the Cleveland area. Observers were able to ascertain by plumage characteristics that at least two individuals occurred along the Cleveland lakefront. The birds were most frequently found between East 72nd Street and Burke Airport. Lorain Harbor observations were of an all-white Snowy Owl on December 13 and a darker individual on January 9.

Thrushes Hundreds of American Robins wintered in the region. A simple comparison of the numbers of these birds reported on both the 1977 and 1978 Christmas Counts for Akron, Lorain, and Cleveland reveals the magnitude of the "invasion" of this species into the area. For 1977, the tally was 24, 13, and 31 Robins for Akron, Lorain, and Cleveland respectively. For 1978 Akron's total was 139 birds while both Lorain and Cleveland reported record numbers of Robins with 323 at Lorain and 428 at Cleveland. Among other notable totals were: 200-300 Robins along the Shaker Rapid tracks east of Lee Road on February 18 (Rickard), 153 and 166 on Cleveland's west side on February 4 and 11 (Stasko), "hundreds" along Hobart Road in Waite Hill on February 6 and 7 (Sherwin), and a flock of between 100 and 120 all winter at a residence in Bath (Ibsen). The Waite Hill observer reports that the Robins were so numerous along Hobart Road that automobiles had to slow down to avoid running over the birds. Not all the automobiles avoided the Robins successfully.

Somewhat encouraging news was received concerning the status of the Eastern Bluebird. Twenty-five Bluebirds were noted on the Akron Christmas Count. Perhaps the various Bluebirds propagation projects underway in the area are starting to reap small dividends in terms of more Bluebirds.

Cedar Waxwings Cedar Waxwings, just like American Robins, were plentiful at several locations throughout the winter. Largest flocks were noted as follows: Shaker Lakes - 361 birds on December 22, 315 on December 30, and 290 on January 6 (Fazio). Reflecting the transient nature of this species the count at Shaker Lakes had diminished to 38 on January 27, was up to 128 on February 10, and back down to 65 by February 25. Akron - 100 Waxwings were present at the F. A. Seiberling Nature Center on December 13 and 75 were there the following day (Szabo). Bath - 150-160 birds all winter (Ibsen). Lorain - 256 on the Lorain Christmas Count on December 16 (fide Pogacnik). Aurora - 100 January 7 (Elder). Kirtland Hills - 150 Waxwings on February 24 at the Holden Arboretum (Elder). Lakewood - 200 were reported from Lakewood Park Cemetery on both January 18 and 27 (Klamm). As was the case with the American Robins abundant wild food attracted and kept the birds to one particular area.

Winter Finches Winter Finches were decidedly uncommon during the period. Common redpolls showed only at Shaker Lakes, with the high count a very modest four birds on December 9 (Fazio), and at a residence in Lorain, a single bird on February 2 (Pogacnik). Pine Siskins appeared sporadically, usually solitary birds at feeders. A small flock

of 15, however, was seen at Rocky River Metropark on January 17 (Klamm). The continuing saga of Kent's "resident" Pine Siskin entered its eighth month as this bird was present throughout the entire winter at a feeder in Kent (Rosche) .

Only a very minor incursion of Evening Grosbeaks developed. Hanging Rock Farm in Kirtland Hills hosted the largest flock of these birds as up to 50 were noted in February (Bole, Jr.). Other small flocks appeared at feeders in Brecksville, Chagrin Falls, Chardon, Hunting Valley, Solon, and Ridgehill Cemetery in Lorain. Both species of crossbills as well as the Pine Grosbeak went unobserved.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-throated Loon - Two observations of a single bird on December 2 at White City (Klamm) and at Wildwood Park (Rosche) may have been the same individual.

Red-necked Grebe - (1) At the Avon Power Plant a lone bird was noted on February 19 and 20 (Pogacnik). (2) From February 25 to the end of the period another solitary individual remained at Gorge Park in Cuyahoga Falls (Rosche).

Green Heron - An extraseasonal straggler was found at Shaker Lakes on December 9 (Fazio).

Blue-winged Teal - One was observed at Shaker Lakes on December 16 and 22 (Fazio).

Harlequin Duck - (1) Up to two birds, an immature male and a female, intermittently appeared at Lorain Harbor between December 24 and January 24 (Pogacnik). (2) A female was at Perkins Beach on December 2 and December 17 (Klamm). (3) A male was at Perkins Beach on December 2 (Pogacnik).

Common Eider - A female remained from December 2 to December 4 near the Coast Guard Station at Lorain Harbor. Observations as close as 35 yards aided in the identification of this bird (Pogacnik).

Goshawk - (1) An immature appeared on several dates between December 18 and February 27 at a residence in Lorain (Pogacnik). Another individual, "a magnificent bird," was found in Macedonia on February 27 and 28 (Rosche).

Purple Sandpiper - An uncommon number, three, was on the rocks of the breakwall of the Northeast Yacht Club on December 3 (LePage, Hannikman). The birds hopped about the slippery, algae-strewn rocks with no trouble at all.



Spotted Sandpiper - The single bird that had been reported from Wildwood Park in late November was last observed on December 2 (Kellerman et al). This observation becomes both the initial December and winter record of this species in CBC records.

Sanderling - An incredibly late vagrant was at the Lorain Harbor pier parking lot on January 11 (Pogacnik). The bird was feeding on the boat ramp with Starlings. This sighting also becomes an initial January and winter record for the species.

Red Phalarope - Two birds, one of which appeared oil-covered, were spotted on the sand bar at Lorain Harbor on December 6 (Pogacnik).

Pomarine Jaeger - On February 11, an immature Pomarine Jaeger knocked food away from a gull at Lorain Harbor. As the jaeger dropped to the water to try to retrieve its booty a number of gulls chased the jaeger over the breakwall and out of sight (Pogacnik). Rare enough in the fall, midwinter records of Pomarine Jaeger in the Cleveland area are unprecedented. The normal wintering haunts of this maritime species are the waters of the southern oceans off the coast of Africa.

Iceland Gull - Four birds on February 15 at Lorain Harbor was the highest count for the period. Individuals were also reported from the Cleveland lakefront at East 72nd Street. Sharp-eyed observers at both Lorain and Cleveland were again able to locate adult birds of the Kumlien's race of Iceland Gull.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - An adult wintered at Lorain Harbor (Pogacnik, Hoffman, LePage).

Thayer's Gull - At about 3:00 p.m. on January 14 a first-year Thayer's Gull was spotted flying above the large metal barricades at East 72nd Street (Hannikman, Hoffman). Silvery underwings and upperwings, light brown color throughout the gull's whole mantle and back, and tail pattern of light brown upper tail coverts contrasted with a distinctly browner full tail band were the characteristics noted. Intense observation of this bird lasted about 25 minutes until it flew out of sight toward the northwest.

Black-headed Gull - (1) An immature, identified by its yellow legs, black bill that was yellow at the base, dark underwings and light upperwings, was found at Lorain Harbor December 27, 30 and January 1 (Pogacnik). Heretofore all sight

records of Black-headed Gull in the region have been adult birds. (2) An adult in winter plumage was on the ice that was forming at the Lakeside Yacht Club adjacent to the Municipal Light Plant on December 31 (Kellerman, Hannikman).

Gray Catbird - One was observed at Holden Arboretum on January 27 (Corbin).

Wood Thrush - Another late straggler, one was reported on the East Side Christmas Count on December 16 (Rosche).

Hermit Thrush - Single birds were noted at Shaker Lakes on January 20 (Fazio) and after the blizzard at a residence in Lorain on February 26 (Pogacnik).

House Wren - Another new winter record came into being with the sighting of a House Wren at Shaker Lakes on December 1 (Fazio) .

Northern Shrike - (1) An immature was mist-netted, banded, and photographed on December 2 in Eastlake (Talkington). The shrike had caught a Black-capped Chickadee and was allowed to keep and finish eating its quarry. . (2) An adult was seen at a residence in Rocky River on December 21 (Pogacnik).

Common Yellowthroat - An immature male was discovered at Ridgehill Cemetery on December 22 (Pogacnik).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak - Another tardy migrant, one occurred at Shaker Lakes on December 1 (Fazio).

Rufous-sided Towhee - An extraordinary number, twelve, was counted in the industrial Flats section of Cleveland on January 9 (Fazio). In recent years Rufous-sided Towhees have become decidedly uncommon even as spring and fall migrants. The observation of twelve in mid-winter was a most unusual sighting.

#### FIELD NOTES

Red-bellied Woodpeckers in the Winter In mid-December a male Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen on the same tree where a pair had nested the previous summer. The bird worked on a different hole and was observed to disappear into the hole and stick his head out to spit out chips of wood. He was seen almost daily digging out this nest sight. On January 12 a female was seen looking into the hole (we seldom see females at the suet feeders in winter). On January 21 the pair, calling softly a sort of rolling CHRRR CHRRR, was again at the hole. At this time we also heard a flicker-like call as they chased each other round and round the tree trunk. - DOROTHY MILLER

\* \* \* \* \*

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.

\* \* \* \* \*

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