



CLEVELAND REGION

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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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WEATHER  
Winter 1979-1980

December - Temperatures averaged out to 33.7 degrees, 3.4 degrees above normal. Lake Erie remained open all month but transient icing of shallow lagoons first came on the 19th. Sunshine prevailed 25% of the time possible. Precipitation occurred on 12 days and totaled 4.00 inches as water for an excess of 1.64 inches above normal. Total snowfall was 4 inches.

January - Sunshine prevailed only 23% of the time possible. Total precipitation was 1.18 inches, 1.38 inches below normal. Snowfall was 11.3 inches. Temperatures were 1.4 degrees cooler than normal. Basins and lagoons developed ice cover in the 6th to 10th period but Lake Erie remained open until the 28th by which time ice had reached the horizon.

February - Temperatures were 6.0 degrees cooler than normal, averaging 21.9 degrees. Lake Erie remained extensively ice covered but some fissures and open water expanses offshore were not infrequent after the 13th. Measurable precipitation totaled 1.27 inches for a deficit of 0.99 inches. Snowfall was 19.2 inches. Sunshine prevailed 24% of the time possible.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

There are times when a birder's only choice is to accept a bird he sees for attempting to understand its presence define any logical explanation. So must be recorded the occurrence of Heermann's Gull at Lorain Harbor in mid-February. Arctic and European gulls both at Lorain Harbor and at East 72nd Street were other highlights of winter birding in, quite frankly, a rather dull season for the Cleveland area. The comment on the season, its noteworthy records, and field notes follow below.

Waterfowl Quite unusual was the appearance of nine very late migrating Common Loons over Kuhlman Woods on December 8 (Hannikman). The season's last Common Loon was recorded from the Cleveland lakefront on December 15 (Klamm).

Nine thousand Red-breasted Mergansers on December 3 at Lorain Harbor was the greatest number reported for any species of waterfowl for the period (Pogacnik). Greater Scaup was the next most abundant duck with "thousands" present along the Cleveland lakefront from December 18 to 21 (LePage) and 4,500 at Avon on February 6 (Pogacnik). Small numbers of Gadwall, Pintail, and Ring-necked Duck added variety to the more usual species that frequent the area's open waters during the winter.

Most significant report from Lake Rockwell was 70 Hooded Mergansers on December 4 and 20 Gadwall on both December 4 and 12 (Rosche). The Akron area's LaDue Reservoir hosted the largest wintering flock of Canada Geese with about 1,000 birds present in mid-January (Elder, Rosche).

In addition to the usual single and/or pair reports of Oldsquaw was the observation of 11 of these ducks from the lakefront area of the Lakewood Christmas Count (Stasko). The only scoters were noted at lakefront areas with all three species being present during the season.

Gulls Lorain Harbor proved to be the "hot spot" for wintering gulls. In addition to the rarer Arctic, European, and coastal (both east and, yes, west) species, good numbers of the area's regularly occurring winter gulls were present. An almost daily gull-watch produced maximum counts of 25,000 Herring Gulls on February 7, 48,000 Ring-billed Gulls on January 15, and 20,000 Bonaparte's Gulls on January 12 (Pogacnik). Glaucous Gulls were noted daily from January 25 to February 12

with a fine count of 13 on February 5. Little Gulls were regularly observed in numbers up to six until early February. Very few gulls were observed from February 13 to 26 at which time numbers began to build with 20,000 Ring-billed Gulls present February 29 (Pogacnik).

The first 10 days of January produced the greatest gull counts for the Cleveland lakefront. Approximately 6,400 Herring Gulls and 52,000 Ring-billed Gulls were tallied along the lakefront on January 2. Bonaparte's Gulls reached their peak on January 10 with a count of 33,000 (Klamm). The East 55th Street Marina and the Edgewater Yacht Club areas continued to attract Little Gulls in December and early January. Eleven was the best one day count. Northern Ohio, at least the last two years, has been one of the nation's best locations to observe Little Gulls.

Short-eared Owl Marsh Hawk Marsh Hawks and Short-eared Owls were attracted to the farm fields between Mennell and Law Roads in Grafton Township in late January an early February. Best time to observe the Marsh Hawks was the hour before sunset while just after sunset was the best time to watch for the owls. It was not uncommon for several pairs of Marsh Hawks to be coursing over the fields at the same time and oftentimes both species could be observed in the air at the same time. A healthy rodent population and lack of deep snow cover probably were the significant factors which led to the abundance of these species at this area.

Winter Finches Very few winter finches were reported. Evening Grosbeaks were just noted on four dates during the period with 15 birds in Bath Township the best count (fide Dexter). Common Redpolls were just as scarce; the season's only reports were of 4 or 5 birds at Ridgehill Cemetery on February 3, a single bird at the same locality on February 29, and 35 birds on December 16 south of Summit Lake in Akron (fide Szabo). A lone Pine Siskin on February 8 and 9 at a feeder in Lorain completed the bleak winter finch picture in the Cleveland area.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-necked Grebe - A lone bird was on a farm pond in Kirtland Hills on January 1 (Faber).

Green Heron - One was sighted on the East Side Christmas Bird Count on December 15 (fide LePage)..

Goshawk.- An adult appeared at a residence and at Ridgehill Cemetery in Lorain on several dates between February 3 and 25 (Pogacnik).

Osprey - The first winter Osprey in CBC files was found sitting in a tree about 500 yards from Lake Erie on January 13 at Lorain (Pogacnik).

Merlin - what appeared to be a female caused quite a stir on a peaceful, suburban street in Solon when she. took a male Cardinal near the observer's feeder on December 6 (Surman).

Spotted Sandpiper. The second winter observation of this species in CBC records occurred when a single bird appeared along the beach at Lakeview Park in Lorain on December 16 (Pogacnik).

Purple Sandpiper - Two early January observations were of single birds at the East 55th Street Marina on the 5th and 6th (Denbow fide Hoffman, LePage) and on the Lorain Muni Pier on the 7th (Pogacnik).

Iceland Gull - (1) Up to three birds, were seen at Lorain Harbor from January 18 to February 11 (many observers). (2) Only observations from East 72nd Street occurred on February 1 and 2 when a near adult and a first-year immature were noted (LePage, Rosche).

Lesser Black-backed Gull - (1) An adult appeared at East 72nd Street on January 5 (Hannikman et al.) and January 28 (Klamm). (2) Another adult was a sporadic visitor to Lorain Harbor from January 15 to February 11 (Pogacnik et al.).

Thayer's Gull - (1) A single, first-year immature, initially noted at Northeast Yacht Club on January 2, was subsequently found at East 72nd Street on January 5, 25, 26, and 27 (Hannikman, LePage, Elder). (2) At least two adults were observed at Lorain Harbor from February 5 to 19 (Pogacnik).

Black-headed Gull - (1) Adults were at Wildwood Yacht Club on January, 7 (Klamm) and 12 (Hoffman). (2). Lorain Harbor observations were from January 12 to February 11. An observer who found all the Lorain birds speculated that as many as three different Black-headed Gulls may have been present (Pogacnik).

Heermann's Gull - See the Field Notes Section for the details on the extraordinary and totally unexpected occurrence of a sub-adult Heermann's Gull at Lorain Harbor from February 12 to 18.

Black-legged Kittiwake - Single, immature birds were at East 72nd Street on December 22 and 24 (Hoffman, Klamm) and at Lorain Harbor on January 25 (Pogacnik).

Snowy Owl - The lone winter report was a bird in Grafton Township on February 4 (Pogacnik).

Saw-whet Owl - One was located at Shaker Country Club on December 15 (Dale).

Mockingbird - A single bird was reported throughout the period from Tallmadge (Rosche).

Gray Catbird - An individual remained at F. A. Seiberling Nature Center from February 6 to the end of the period (Szabo).

Brown Thrasher - Individuals were reported from Eastlake on December 15 (LePage) and at Lake Rockwell from February 23 to 29 (Rosche).

Black-and-white Warbler - An immature or female was observed at Jessie Smith Wildlife Park in Kent on December 1 (Rosche). This record becomes the first winter sighting of this species in CBC files and surpasses the previous latest fall date of November 28, 1948.

Orange-crowned Warbler - An individual, "actively feeding on weeds", was observed in Kuhlman Woods on December 2 (Hannikman).

Red Crossbill - Two birds (possibly wanderers from the flock at Findley State Park) appeared at Ridgehill Cemetery on January 27 (Pogacnik).

Vesper Sparrow - The first Cleveland area January record since 1904 was of a lone bird seen on Webster Road in Lorain County on January 29 (LePage).

#### FIELD NOTES

Ohio's First Heermann's Gull (pronounced, HAIR munz) On February 12, 1980 I was to meet Jim Fry, a birder from Columbus, at the Lorain Muni Pier to show him a couple of gulls, a Black-headed Gull and a Lesser Black-backed Gull, that had been pre-

sent, the day before. I arrived at about 12:15 p.m. and soon found an adult Thayer's Gull, which I knew would be a life bird for Jim. When Jim arrived I showed him and Arden and Erdine Thompson, two birders from Lorain, the Thayer's Gull. As they were studying this bird, I went to my car to change camera lenses. While I was doing this I happened to look up and notice a very dark gull with its dark legs dangling. I immediately knew I had something, so I jumped out of the car, called the others over, then began to take pictures.

We all began watching the Heermann's Gull and noticing the field marks. The bill was about the same size as a female Herring Gull's, but slightly thinner, and was reddish-orange with a black tip. The head was whitish with very light dusky. The eye was dark brown in color. The white color of the head blended into the medium gray color of the neck. The belly, the upper rump, and undertail coverts were all the same medium gray color. The legs and feet were totally black. The wings were a uniform slatey-brown above and below. The primaries were totally dark, while the secondaries had a white trailing edge. The tail above and below was black with a narrow white band at the tip. The bird flew around for about five minutes before flying off to the west. We thought that would be the last anyone would see of it, but as it turns out, the gull was seen daily until February 18.

There really is no logical explanation for a Heermann's Gull to be here as its normal wintering range is from Oregon to Guatemala. A Heermann's Gull had earlier been observed in Detroit. Our Lorain bird is undoubtedly this same individual. This one bird is the first known occurrence of Heermann's Gull east of the Mississippi River and is definitely one of the most unusual (and lost) birds to show up in the Cleveland region.

Heermann's Gull thus has become the seventeenth species of gull known to have occurred in the state of Ohio. Of these 17 species, only California Gull (first satisfactorily documented for Ohio at Huron Pier on November 24 and 25, 1979) has not been recorded from the Cleveland region. - JOHN POGACNIK

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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.

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

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The Kirtland Bird Club sponsors a weekly RARE BIRD ALERT at (216) 696-8186. Sightings of species rare in the Cleveland region as well as other interesting observations should be called into the tape on Mondays as the tape is replaced with current sightings each Tuesday. In the case of extreme rarities, e. g., Heermann's Gull, varied Thrush, the tape should be called the day of the observation.