



CLEVELAND REGION

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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 | |
| 22 Natural Science Museum | |
| Wade Park | |
| 23 Baldwin Reservoir | 51 Stebbin's Gulch |
| 24 Shaker Lakes | 52 Chardon |
| 25 Lake View Cemetery | 53 Burton |
| 26 Forest Hill Park | 54 Punderson Lake |
| 27 Bedford Reservation | 55 Fern Lake |
| 28 Hudson | 56 LaDue Reservoir |
| 29 Kent | 57 Spencer Wildlife Area |



CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN
PARK SYSTEM



PORTAGE ESCARPMENT
(800-foot Contour Line)

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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THE WEATHER
Winter Season 1982-1983

December -The month was extremely warm as temperatures averaged out to 40.5 degrees, an amazing 10.2 degrees warmer than normal. Record high temperatures were notable especially on the 2nd (70 degrees), 3rd (77 degrees), and 25th (64 degrees). Lake Erie water temperature only declined from 47 degrees to 41 degrees during the month. Precipitation occurred on 18 days with snow on 7 of these days. Precipitation totalled 3.68 inches for an excess of 1.32 inches. Snowfall measured 6.3 inches with falls in excess of 1 inch on the 10th and 20th. Sunshine prevailed 18% of the time possible.

January -Measurable precipitation occurred on 10 days of which 7 were as snow. Trace precipitation came on 12 additional days to total 1.08 inches, 1.39 inches below normal. Snow measured 6.5 inches and was confined to the period from January 12 through 19. Temperatures averaged out to 30.7 degrees, 5.2 degrees warmer than normal. Lake Erie remained open all month with transient shore ice on the 20th and after but the water temperature did not reach the 33 degree minimum until the 29th. Sunshine prevailed 24% of the time possible.

February -Temperatures averaged out to 33.9 degrees, 6.5 degrees warmer than normal. Precipitation totalled only 0.77 inches, 1.43 inches below normal. Precipitation came on 10 days, of which 8 were snow which totalled 8.3 inches. Lake Erie acquired various ice conditions after the 4th, initially as slush, skim ice, pack ice, and shoreline shelves with floes and variable ice fields becoming fairly extensive after the 8th and most severe on the 14th and 15th. After this date expanses of open water increased except in harbors and shallows. Sunshine increased to 37% of the time possible.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

Putting it mildly (which is a good way to describe the winter of 1982-1983), birding during the winter season was not what local birders had grown accustomed to. Mild weather kept Lake Erie open during the season and wind chill factors of 50 degrees below zero did not destroy lakefront birding activities. Highlights of the season included wintering Northern Gannets, an unprecedented wintering of Bonaparte's Gulls, and the discovery of the Cleveland area's first California Gull. All in all the winter of 1982-1983 offered a welcomed respite from the cold of past years and served as a fitting introduction to spring, with its hopes for renewed beginnings, that had already started to arrive in earnest by period's end.

Waterfowl In addition to single Double-crested Cormorants that spent the winter both at Lorain and East 72nd Street, a most unusual migrating flock of 25 was noted flying west in a high, single file line at Lorain on December 26 (Hoffman). Other noteworthy waterfowl sightings included 23 Whistling Swans at Lorain on December 11 and what was probably the same flock of 23 the following day at Sims Park and all three species of scoter at Lorain in early December.

With an open Lake Erie, it was not surprising that no large concentrations of bay ducks were noted. "A few thousand" Greater Scaup in late December off Perkins Beach was the best numerical total received for any species (LePage). One species whose numbers bear watching is the Redhead and, at least locally, this species had a good wintering year with peak abundance in February.

Northern Gannet Certainly one of the highlights of the season was the presence of one and sometimes two immature Northern Gannets along the lakefront. The initial sighting was made at Lorain on December 7 (LePage) and continued until the final observation at Eastlake on February 14 (Emery). As observations of the Gannet(s) continued after December 7, differences in plumage characteristics began to be noticed so speculation began to arise that there may be two birds in the area. This was later confirmed when both Northern Gannets were noted together at Lorain on January 14 (Pogacnik) and Avon Lake (Elder) and it was apparent that one of the birds was actually darker than the other. Recent records of this seabird in the Cleveland area were in 1960, 1969, and 1978 and protracted occurrences of this species here are extremely rare. One has to go back to the winters of 1947-1948 and 1949-1950 when win-

tering birds were last present in the region. The Gannets became quite an attraction as most of the state's top birders got to see one or both of the birds, even though as many as 10 trips to the lakefront were necessary before you actually got your first look at the birds!

Gulls Bonaparte's Gulls were the big gulling story during the winter. The season's mildness and an open Lake Erie resulted in an unprecedented wintering of this species along the lakefront. One just has to compare the numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls during the winter of 1981-1982 with those of the past winter to realize the magnitude of this phenomenon. After January 7, 1982 only one Bonaparte's Gull was recorded (that poor, wind-chill battered first-winter bird at Lorain) whereas on 5 dates in late January 1983 did counts of this species exceed 20,000 birds. To be sure numbers diminished in February and curiously there were no reports for the period from February 13 to 19, but counts still ranged from several hundred to a maximum of 4,260 on February 26 (Klamm). An excellent article on the wintering Bonaparte's Gulls appears in the Field Notes section of this issue. And as usual, small numbers (1 to 6) of Little Gulls could be found wherever the Bonaparte's Gulls concentrated.

Along with the Bonaparte's Gulls were vast numbers of Ring-billed Gulls. Peak total was 88,894 on December 18 at Lorain (Pogacnik) and tens of thousands remained throughout the entire season. Maximum count for Herring Gulls was 35,000 on February 8. This latter date was the gull day of the winter as Lorain produced 11 Glaucous Gulls, 1 Iceland Gull, a record-breaking total of 640+ Great Black-backed Gulls, 2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls, 3 Thayer's Gulls, and a Black-legged Kittiwake (Pogacnik). Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Thayer's Gull in past winter issues of the Cleveland Bird Calendar were included in the Noteworthy Records section, but local birders have become so proficient at finding and identifying these species that all three should now be considered uncommon winter residents.

Winter Finches This group of birds certainly made news during the season by their absence from the local scene. Only one Common Redpoll was reported, on February 18 at Lorain, and there were no sightings of Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak, or either of the crossbills. Purple Finch was the exception as several contributors remarked on their abundance as the mild winter did not force these birds farther south. The season's best count was registered at North Chagrin with 80+ birds on December 18 (Corbin).

Odds and Ends The season's mild weather produced some interesting observations and/or lack thereof. Among these were up to 100+ Brown-headed Cowbirds and several hundred Common Crows in Euclid and other eastern suburbs, and small (maximum 38) but persistent flocks of American Robins that remained in a particular area until the food supply was exhausted. It was surprising that no Hermit Thrushes and Yellow-rumped Warblers were submitted as small numbers of these birds are usually present even in the harshest winter. And last, but not least, the most interesting locale for a good bird had to be the Carolina Wren at Northeast Yacht Club on December 4 (LePage). How this particular bird got there is a cause for wonderment. But such occurrences make birding an unpredictably fascinating pastime.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-throated Loon - "The grayest individual I have seen in this state" described a lone bird at Lake Rockwell on December 9 (Rosche).

Northern Goshawk -An immature was observed in a contributor's backyard in Lorain on December 25 (Pogacnik).

Bald Eagle -What may have been the same bird that was observed in November occurred at Lake Rockwell on December 7 and 9 (Rosche).

Purple Sandpiper -(1) Up to 4 birds occurred on the breakwall at Mentor Headlands from December 1 to 5. (many observers). (2) One was observed on the breakwall at White City on December 18 (Hannikman). (3) A hardy bird spent late January and most of February at the Avon Lake Power Plant (many observers).

Dunlin -On January 2 a single bird was found at the Gordon Park Impoundment (Hoffman). This sighting constitutes the first January record in CBC files.

Red Phalarope -One was briefly noted at Mentor Headlands on December 2 (Rosche, Hannikman).

Pomarine Jaeger -An immature appeared at Lorain on December 12 (Rosche, Elder).

Parasitic Jaeger -Single immatures were identified at Lorain on December 11 and January 26 at Wildwood Park (Corbin). The latter bird pursued a Ring-billed Gull which then turned the tables on the jaeger by briefly pursuing it. Certainly a

first January CBC record, the occurrence of Parasitic Jaeger inland in midwinter is an extraordinary event.

California Gull -An adult was discovered late in the afternoon on January 12 at Lorain (Pogacnik) and was painstakingly scrutinized on January 13 (Pogacnik, LePage, Elder, Corbin). Long sought after along the Cleveland lakefront, this record becomes "Ohio's second verified observation of this species. All 18 species of gull known to have occurred in Ohio have been seen in the Cleveland region.

Characteristics noted were dusky spot on the lower mandible before the red spot, mantle, a deeper gray than the mantle color of surrounding Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls, legs shorter than those of nearby species and nearly the same color of Ring-billed Gulls' legs.

Mew Gull - Another first-winter individual of the west coast race occurred at Avon Lake, then later at Lorain, on January 31 (Peterjohn fide Pogacnik).[Sighting later deleted at observer request]

Common Black-headed Gull - Single adult birds were seen on five dates between December 28 and February 12 at various places along the Cleveland lakefront and Cuyahoga River (Hoffman). An adult also appeared at Lorain on December 31 and January 1 (LePage, Pogacnik). It is most probable that all records were of the same bird.

Black-legged Kittiwake - One was at Lorain on December 26, January 20, and February 8 (Hoffman, Pogacnik) while one frequented the Cleveland lakefront from Edgewater Park to East 72nd Street from January 17 to 29 (Emery et al.). A second-winter bird was at Avon Lake on January 12 (Pogacnik).

Forster's Tern - Another first January record in CBC files was a winter-plumaged individual at Edgewater Yacht Club on January 6 and 8 (LePage, Hannikman, Rosche).

Brown Thrasher - The Lorain Christmas Count produced the winter's only bird on December 18 (Pogacnik).

Northern Shrike - Single birds were noted at Bedford Metropark on December 22 (LePage), in Warrensville on January 9 (Rosche), and near the Lost Nation Road area in Willoughby from January 6 through February 6 (many observers).

White-eyed Vireo - A first Cleveland area winter record was of a bird at Lorain on December 18 (Pogacnik).

Rufous-sided Towhee -12 were found at Elmwood Cemetery in Lorain on January 3 (Pogacnik). A similar number, 12, was reported in the Flats area of Cleveland on January 9, 1979 (see CBC Vol. 75, No. 1, p. 8). What makes this species suddenly appear in numbers at one place in winter is a matter for speculation, but it is certainly an interesting occurrence.

Corrections Summer, 1982

Deletion Painted Bunting - On August 10, 1982 a female Painted Bunting escaped from the Akron Children's Zoo. The bird that appeared in late August at an Akron feeder was undoubtedly this individual. The total species list for 1981-1982 does not change, however, as a belated report surfaced of American Bittern from Mentor Marsh.

Addition Saw-whet Owl - On June 26, 1982 a weakened, juvenile Saw-whet Owl, found in a yard in Bay Village, was brought into the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center in Bay Village. Last reported in summer in 1964, this was a reported third sighting of Saw-whet Owl in Bay Village during the past year.

FIELD NOTES

Wintering Bonaparte's Gulls This winter the presence and behavior of Bonaparte's Gull in Cleveland provided insights into the mildness of the season and the improved condition of the Cuyahoga River in the Flats.

Normally, as more severe winter weather sets in, Bonaparte's Gulls leave the Cleveland area from late December to late January. In 1974, when they remained quite late, 8,000 were still present on February 2 at East 72nd, but were mostly replaced by large gulls on February 9 and absent thereafter. Thus on December 28, 1982 when large numbers were seen streaming west past East 55th, we expected their imminent departure from the region. To our delight, this did not occur.

For the next month almost no Bonaparte's were to be seen east of downtown Cleveland. They took up residence on the water off Edgewater Park, commuting to the Cuyahoga River to feed on the abundant alewives. The air over the river and its bridges was white with their flocks moving to and fro, dipping and wheeling like shorebirds. The river took on the appearance of a snowstorm wherever they chose to feed. We have never seen so many gulls feed on the river before, but the Bonaparte's and

Ring-billed Gulls did so this winter for well over a month with no shortage of fish even as the water began to freeze. This must indicate an improvement in the water quality on this infamous stretch of river. It may also reflect on the state of the economy in depressing industrial activity and its pollutants.

Though the gulls fed throughout the day, the best time to observe them was in the late afternoon when numbers were largest and activity most pronounced. On January 22 and 23 we estimated 20,000 Bonaparte's on the river at this time of day. This was also the best time to find the rarer gulls among them. On the January 22/23 weekend there were also present an adult Common Black-headed Gull, at least two adult, one second-winter, and one first-winter Little Gull, the latter with a puzzling rosy blush. After sunset the gulls left the river in endless flocks until by dark all were gone to roost on the open lake.

Much of the river was frozen by January 26 and that day the gulls were out on the lake, moving east. But still they did not depart. On January 29 we again estimated 20,000 Bonaparte's Gulls at East 72nd and 2,000 on February 12 and several hundred were still there at the end of February. The plentiful food supply and unusually warm weather have apparently supplied the normal need for the Bonaparte's to spend mid-winter elsewhere. This is the first winter in our experience that numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls have remained in Cleveland throughout the entire winter. JEAN AND DICK HOFFMAN

A Friendly Screech Owl On January 29, 1983 I first saw a Screech Owl in the opening of a Wood Duck house located about 16' up in a tree at the end of a pond and about 130' from our house. His head would appear in the round hole of the Wood Duck house about 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. and remain until dusk. One night I watched him until he slipped quickly out of the house into the semi-darkness. I never saw him after he left the house, and I never heard him at night. A half dozen times I saw a pair of Blue Jays making a fuss and approaching the entrance on days the owl occupied the house. And on a couple of occasions the Blue Jays were followed by 7 or 8 smaller birds -- 3 or 4 chickadees, a pair of nuthatches, and a couple titmice. They too flew close around the occupied Wood Duck house and seemed agitated; one nuthatch perched momentarily at the entrance and looked inside. But like the Blue Jays, the smaller birds remained near the house only a few minutes and then flew away. The Screech Owl did not appear to be disturbed by the

activity outside except once when he appeared in the entrance soon after the jays and other birds had left. That was about 11:00 a.m. He disappeared from view shortly and evidently resumed his sleep. The owl's habits were irregular. I saw him 15 days, and he was absent another 15 days. Sometimes he would appear about 3:00 p.m. - sometimes at 4:00 p.m. or later. Once he appeared at noon and stayed in sight all day.
 WALTER P. KREMM

Pileated Woodpeckers Staghorn sumacs look strange enough in winter, with their distinctive branching habit, and erect, torch-like berry clusters. A small grove of these trees in Claridon looked stranger still on the morning of February 18 as I watched a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers feeding in them. The great birds, only a couple of feet apart, clung precariously to near-terminal branches as they reached for the berries above them. It was a rare and beautiful sight.
 GORDON SPARE

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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.

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A N 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) 969-8186. Sightings of species rare in the Cleveland area 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., Mew Gull, Varied Thrush, the tape should be called the day of the observation.