



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

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WEATHER SUMMARY
Winter, 1983 - 1984

December - The month was cold and gloomy with sunshine prevailing only 13% of the time possible. Temperatures averaged out to 23.2 degrees, 7.9 degrees colder than normal. Precipitation came on 17 days and totalled 2.92 inches, 0.17 inches above normal. Snowfall total was 13 inches. Lake Erie acquired its first extensive shore ice cover on December 25.

January - Precipitation for the month was 1.25 inches, 1.22 inches below normal. Snowfall was 12.9 inches. Temperatures averaged 20.7 degrees, 4.8 degrees below normal. Sunshine prevailed 33% of the time possible.

February - Temperatures averaged 34.5 degrees, 7.1 degrees above normal. 18 days of measurable precipitation totalled 3.32 inches, 1.62 inches above normal. Driving winds and heavy snow were exceptionally bad on the 27th and 28th with 15.7 inches of snow. Total snowfall for the month was 27.1 inches. Lake Erie displayed variable periods of expansive shore ice or open water at times. Sunshine prevailed 40% of the time possible.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

As the Cleveland Bird Calendar begins its 80th year of publication, with the Winter, 1983-1984 issue, it was the cold that occupied birders more than the birds of the season. But this reflects more on the changes in birders themselves, and their better field skills, rather than on any radical change in the region's wintering bird population. Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Thayer's Gulls, once sought after as unusual winter visitors, have become so regular along the lakefront that the game has become not just finding these species but trying to identify as many plumage sequences for each as possible. Highlights of the season included late movements of Common Loons, the Cleveland area's first confirmed record of Barrow's Goldeneye (an unmistakable adult male), and excellent counts of Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Common Loon Loon watchers were rewarded with unusually high December numbers of this species. The East Side Christmas Count produced 39 Common Loons over Lakeview Cemetery (Hoffman) while the Lorain Count posted a total of 37 (Pogacnik). 60 Common Loons were noted before 9:00 a.m. on December 7 under somewhat unusual circumstances. On this day the observer began noticing the birds as he was riding the bus along Lake Shore Boulevard. The birds were observed all along the I-90 ride into downtown Cleveland as well as over St. Clair Avenue from East 9th Street to the Justice Center where the observer was going for jury duty. No other reports of Common Loons were received for December 7 but it can safely be inferred from the above rather limited observations that this day was the season's best loon-watching day.

Hawks Strong, southerly winds on February 19 produced the following count of raptors at Shaker Lakes: 3 Cooper's Hawks, 14 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Rough-legged Hawk, and 1 Golden Eagle (Fazio). This hawk watch lasted about 5 hours. Elsewhere, Burke Airport hosted Rough-legged Hawks and Northern Harriers for most of December.

Gulls What a difference a year makes: Prolonged, unseasonably mild weather induced Bonaparte's Gulls to remain in unprecedented numbers during January and February 1983 whereas the cold snap of late December this season drove this species almost entirely from the area. High count for Bonaparte's Gulls for the entire winter period was 800 on December 7 (Klamm). It is not surprising, then, that with the number of Bonaparte's Gulls so reduced that Little Gulls failed to appear

anywhere along the lakefront. Black-legged Kittiwakes also went unreported for the first time in many years.

The more uncommon, larger gulls were regular along the lakefront (mostly at Lorain) as soon as winter had taken hold of the area. The majority of the season's occurrences of Glaucous Gull, Iceland Gull, Thayer's Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, and Lesser Black-backed Gull fell between December 17 and February 3, the period of the season's wintriest weather. With mild weather opening Lake Erie after early February, the larger species would mostly be encountered when northerly winds shifted ice floes against the shoreline and forced the birds to feed at the open water areas that remained ice-free.

Blackbirds East Side Christmas Count numbers of Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds set all-time records. For Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds the numbers were 1,414 and 368 respectively with one team noting 1,000 grackles and 208 cowbirds themselves (LePage, Kellerman). Since the previous year's Christmas Count produced then-record numbers of Brown-headed Cowbirds from basically the same area, the far eastern suburbs, current thinking of the winter status of this species may have to be reevaluated.

Winter Finches Evening Grosbeaks persisted at two feeding stations during the period. Throughout the winter about 20 were in residence at a feeder in Chardon (Spare). Largest flock was in Chesterland where numbers built up from 20-25 in mid-January to 50 on January 31, increased to 70 on February 4, and peaked at 70-75 on February 13 (Klaus). About 25 birds remained for the balance of the period. 28 Pine Siskins were banded in Willoughby from December 4 to 12 and several remained there through mid-February (Talkington). In late February smaller groups of Pine Siskins (maximum about 6 birds) began to appear elsewhere in the area. Common Redpolls and the crossbills were entirely absent from the area for the entire period.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-throated Loon - One was at Lorain on December 16 (Pogacnik).

Green-backed Heron - As dusk was falling, a single bird was identified by silhouette at the Watergate Apartment complex in Euclid on December 29 (Corbin).

Black-crowned Night-Heron - Up to nine birds (December 11) were found at the Gordon Park Impoundment in December (many observers). A lone, bedraggled immature, perhaps seeking inland shelter from the previous day's storm, was found perched in a tree at the Erie Street Cemetery in downtown Cleveland on January 10 (Hannikman).

Barrow's Goldeneye - An unmistakable adult remained at Lorain from January 7 through 10 (Hoffman et al.). This record becomes the first acceptable sighting of this species not only for the Cleveland area but also for the State of Ohio. All previous records were rejected by the Ohio Records Committee because they lacked sufficient details to document the bird, documentation was not available to the Committee, or specimens, identified as this species, could not be located.

Osprey - Only the second winter record in CBC files was of a bird noted flying eastward in Willoughby on February 12 (Talkington).

Bald Eagle - What was thought to be a first-year immature frequented Lake Rockwell from December 22 to 27 (Rosche). At least three different Bald Eagles occurred at this location in 1983.

Northern Goshawk - An immature was reported from Lorain on February 1 and 8 (Pogacnik).

Golden Eagle - An adult was closely observed at Shaker Lakes on February 19 (Fazio). The sighting occurred about 12:45 p.m. and though it lasted about a minute, all salient field marks of Golden Eagle were noted. The record, becomes the first winter observation in CBC files.

Sanderling - A late migrant was at the Gordon Park Impoundment on December 1 (Klamm).

Purple Sandpiper - (1) One was observed at the Gordon Park Impoundment on December 10 (Klamm, LePage). (2) Another individual appeared to have wintered at the Avon Lake Power Plant as the bird was found from January 28 through February 16 (Peterjohn, et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger - An immature was found at Lorain on February 2 (Pogacnik). Since other sightings of this species in the last several years have been made in mid-to-late December, and there are now two February records, it seems probable that the tardi-

ness of the passage of the few birds that do make it to the Great Lakes results in occasional birds being trapped by Lake Erie's freezing over and thereby being forced to open water areas in search of food.

California Gull - Another adult (last year's bird?) reappeared at Lorain on January 1 and was reported last January 10 (Peter-john et al.).

Short-eared Owl - First spotted being harrassed by the gulls with which it was soaring, a lone bird was closely observed at the Gordon Park Impoundment on February 26 (Hannikman).

House Wren - One was discovered in Kent on the extraordinary date of December 18 (Rosche).

Gray Catbird - An extremely tardy laggard was noted at East 34th and Broadway on December 2, 5, and 6 (Knight).

Brown Thrasher - One frequented a feeder at Shaker Lakes from January 23 to the end of the period (Fazio).

Orange-crowned Warbler - East 34th and Broadway attracted a member of this species on December 2 (Knight).

Yellow Warbler - The first December and winter record in CBC files was a thoroughly documented individual at the Northeast Yacht Club on the extra-seasonal date of December 7 (Emery, Corbin). The bird appeared sluggish, but managed to hop around on the ground and feed low in the weeds.

Pine Grosbeak - Two immature males and a female were feeding in an ornamental crabapple tree in open farm country in Lorain County on January 23 (Pogacnik).

Chipping Sparrow - One was noted in Kent on January 31 (Rosche).

FIELD NOTES

Cooper's Hawk Behavior - I have observed an immature Cooper's Hawk at Sims Park on several occasions, the first date being February 10. I had always thought that Cooper's Hawks fed primarily on birds and was surprised to observe evidence to the contrary on February 23. Around 12:00 this individual lit high up in an oak and a few minutes later dove to the northern edge of the sunken garden. It proceeded to make short runs

through the leaves in a manner reminiscent of a pheasant. I walked over to the area and it flew up and perched low in a maple. A few minutes later it flew across the garden and perched high in a tree on the other side. As I stood watching the hawk, I noticed a vole or shrew-type animal emerge from the area where I flushed the hawk and run from one side of the steps to the other. This small mammal rummaged about among the leaves and then vanished. I theorize that voles and chipmunks may be an important prey item for some Cooper's Hawks, especially immatures. -- DAVE CORBIN

The First Day of Spring - Saturday, February 18, was a cool, foggy, and still day that typified the weather Cleveland had experienced most of the previous week. It was that dead time in February when it was warm enough for the ice on Lake Erie to break up, keeping the concentrations of gulls and ducks away from shore, but not warm enough to initiate a northward movement of migrants. The week had been uneventful except for a Hermit Thrush in the Shaker Lakes area February 14. Despite this when the weather report stated Saturday night that the area would be experiencing strong winds from the southwest I started to get spring fever. Just as I started to envision the calendar reading March 19 I calmed myself down and thought of the reality that at best the local blackbird population would be supplemented by some newcomers. Even so I planned to be out all day Sunday in Shaker.

I awoke the next day somewhat late - 8:15 a.m. and thought for a moment how disappointing the day could be but by 8:40 a.m. I was out and beginning my count. No sooner was I out on the Shaker Country Club golf course, to which my home is adjacent, than I watched a pair of Northern Pintails fly over and head up Doan Brook. Here it was 9:00 a.m. and my day, I thought, was complete for I had never before seen this species in the Shaker Lakes area. With this on my list I went to Horseshoe Lake and picked up a Carolina Wren at a feeder. I left Horseshoe Lake for Lower Lake and picked up Killdeer and Horned Lark, a hard bird to come by here, flying overhead and, just as I had supposed, large number of blackbirds. The walk around Lower Lake produced the first Rusty Blackbird of the day and by this time the total for White-throated Sparrows had grown unusually high. I walked the boardwalk of the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center without seeing the Great Horned Owl, Northern Harrier, or Brown Creepers of the previous day, but numbers of titmice and chickadees were decidedly up. At 11:00 a.m. I found myself in South Woodland Park between Shaker Boulevard and South Woodland Road investigating the last woodlot of the

day. While counting quite a few White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncoes I reminisced about the first time I had seen a Rough-legged Hawk at Shaker. It was a day like this one in early March several years ago while I stood at that very spot. A minute later a Red-tailed Hawk flew high overhead, the first sign of a possible hawk flight, so I began scanning clouds. Moments later a vee of 11 Tundra Swans, heading in the same direction, north by northeast, passed over. While watching these birds a light phase Rough-legged Hawk passed through my binocular field; now I knew it was going to be a good day.

Realizing this, I made my way back to the Larchmere Bridge between Lower Lake and the nature center. I have used this as an observation point before as it has provided some good hawk watching in Shaker. The tree line toward the south and west is fairly distant and with the bridge itself being somewhat elevated makes for a broad horizon over which one can best count hawks. This is not to suggest that numbers comparable to those seen along the lakefront occur here, but for an inland, suburban locality I find it quite exciting at times, if only it means counting 14 Red-tailed Hawks (my highest local total for the species). So I set myself up there at about 11:15 a.m. and almost immediately a strong gust of wind that must have surpassed 30 mph hit, and 4 Red-tailed Hawks were tallied. Observation continued, as it usually does, for a while before any more hawks appeared. However my waiting was rewarded with something special at 12:45 p.m. By this time I had seen 9 Red-tailed Hawks, all of which had appeared from the southwest and had glided with the wind to the northeast. I was therefore surprised to notice from over my shoulder a very large, all dark raptor drifting lazily and effortlessly against the wind. As the bird was directly overhead at no more than 200 feet, much lower than the Red-tailed Hawks, I had no difficulty identifying this Golden Eagle. The bird went on over the nature center woods, circled back a moment, and then continued south. This permitted me almost a minute of observation. The plumage was, for the most part, that of a full adult save for a small dab of white in the wing where the immature would have a great deal of white.

While this was certainly the highlight of the day, hawk watching was not over. A little after 2:00 p.m. a Cooper's Hawk went kettling by, the only bird to have done this. Two more Red-tailed Hawks came through just ahead of a cold front that dropped the ambient temperature 10-15 degrees almost instantly. Considering this and the fact that I have rarely seen hawks after 2:00 p.m., I thought it was time to head

home. I began to do this but got only as far as the nature center when I thought the better of it, afterall, I was only three Red-tailed Hawks short of my record. I stayed on and hoped a bird would pass through behind the front. By 3:30 p.m. I had tallied three more Red-tailed Hawks for a day's total of 14. This fittingly ended the best February migration day I have experienced in Ohio.

Moral of the story? Whether it be February or May, if very strong winds from the southwest are coming through, especially after several days of relatively calm weather, birds are going to be moving, and the birder who is aware should be watching. -- VIC FAZIO

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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, OH 44106.

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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 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. Sighting of species rare in the Cleveland area as well as other interesting migration highlights should be called in to the tape on Mondays as the tape is updated with current sightings each Tuesday. In the case of extreme rarities, e. g., Sabine's Gull or Varied Thrush, the tape should be called the day of the observation.