



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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The Weather
Fall, 1984

September - Temperatures averaged out to 61.1 degrees, 3.0 degrees cooler than normal. Lake Erie water temperature fell from 75 degrees on the 1st to 64 on the 30th. Precipitation was thinly scattered on 14 days to total 2.43 inches, 0.49 inches below normal. Sunshine prevailed 59% of the time possible.

October - Precipitation totalled 2.20 inches, 0.25 inches below normal. Temperatures averaged 56.2 degrees, 3.2 degrees above normal. Lake Erie water temperature remained fairly stable and had only dropped to 60 degrees by the 31st. Sunshine prevailed 34% of the time possible.

November - The first snowfalls came on the 11th and 12th, and again on the 19th and 20th to total 4.0 inches of snow. For the entire month precipitation totalled 3.95 inches, 1.19 inches above normal. Temperatures averaged 40.9 degrees, 0.9 degrees below normal. Lake Erie water temperature declined from 60 degrees on the 1st to 47 degrees on the 30th. Sunshine prevailed 37% of the time possible.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

For two and a half weeks in October, the birding capital of the midwest was Cleveland, and the star attraction was an Asiatic shorebird, a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Its appearance in Ohio certainly was not ever to be expected and it would be hard to argue against anyone who wanted to call this the "best" bird ever to have occurred in the Cleveland region (Ivory Gull fans, stand up and be counted). But while the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper made its indelible mark on local birding lore, other aspects of the season must not be forgotten, and it is the purpose of this publication to assemble the picture of the fall migration for 1984 for those who experienced it and wish to relive it or those who will read about it and wish they could have been here.

Common Loon, Tundra Swan Despite a band of observers, a strong fall movement of Common Loons did not materialize locally. Not even the stormy weather of November 12, with its gale force like winds, produced very significant counts. It was curious, though, that the season's highest count occurred the day after, on November 13, with 83 birds at Edgewater (LePage). 63 loons were also noted at Edgewater on October 31 and the bulk of the season's migrants were found between October 31 and November 4. This time period is about 7 to 14 days earlier than previous peak loon migration dates and significantly expands the range of dates within which to expect this species.

Previous discussions about the fall movements of Tundra Swans had revealed that there appeared to be a close correlation between the fall appearance dates of both Common Loons and Tundra Swans. This fall's best swan counts were lakefront movements of 264 birds on October 31 and 144 on November 2 (LePage) and 151 at Lake Rockwell on November 16 (Rosche). These dates correspond exactly with the peak dates for loons so this hypothesis proved itself well, at least for 1984. Other noteworthy counts of swans were 75 in Chardon on November 6 and 65 at Sims Park on November 22.

Other Waterfowl It was a rather dull waterfowl migration. Comment was elicited from contributors about scoters and this fall there were apparently too few of the birds around to write home about. Among the reports were 7 somewhat early Surf Scoters at Gordon Park on October 5 with 3 to 5 birds present

there until October 11. Both White-winged and Black Scoters were reported but only as single birds and only on a few dates. As Black Scoter has been periodically found within the migrating masses of Red-breasted Mergansers, it was surprising that none was found with these birds. Sims Park seemed to be the only point with consistent numbers of Red-breasted Mergansers with several thousand present after November 22 until the end of the period. The only significant west side tally was about 5,000 mergansers between Avon Lake and Lorain on November 6.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper An immature Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was present at the Gordon Park Impoundment from October 6 through at least October 24 (Rosche et al.). During this period, scores of birders, local, Ohio, and out-of-state, observed this waif and its presence was well covered by a front page newspaper article and a local news crew.

Questar views, oftentimes within 20 yards, enabled all diagnostic field characteristics of immature Sharp-tailed Sandpiper to be detailed: deep reddish cap, prominent, white supercilium, buffy orange breast almost entirely devoid of streaking, the rich, rusty red color of the edgings of the secondaries and tertiaries, and the spotting of the undertail coverts and sides of the breast. The bird was banded on October 6 (Talkington). Outside of Alaska where this Asian species is a regular fall migrant in the Western Aleutians, the Bering Sea islands, and coastal areas adjacent to the Bering Sea, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper normally appears as a rare but regular fall visitor from British Columbia south to California. Elsewhere the species is casual at best, with increased sightings due in part to more knowledgeable and well-travelled birders. For most of its stay here, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper kept close company with Pectoral Sandpipers and it is most likely that the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper got mixed up with a flock of Pectoral Sandpipers in western Alaska and migrated with them southeastward across Canada and the Great Lakes and ended up in Cleveland. Now when local observers scan flocks of fall Pectoral Sandpipers, they can wonder about the far-flung origins of the birds under observation on the mudflat and they can reminisce about the one that was a little different in October 1984.

Other Shorebirds No doubt about it, 1984 was the year of the shorebird in Cleveland, specifically at Gordon Park. Super

rarities, like the above detailed Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and the summer's Curlew Sandpiper, plus excellent numbers for practically all species made this a banner year for shorebirds. Gordon Park produced the following excellent counts: 43 Red Knots, a local high count, on September 9, 16 Greater Yellowlegs on October 28, 10 Ruddy Turnstones on September 9, and 300+ Dunlin on October 28. Peeps, dowitchers, and Lesser Yellowlegs continued in good numbers for most of September at Gordon Park. Noteworthy shorebird numbers at Lake Rockwell were 16 Greater Yellowlegs on October 27 and 10 Common Snipes on October 31 whereas West Branch State Park yielded 50 Dunlin on October 25. Note the close correlation of dates between lakefront areas and inland areas. Golden Plovers and Black-bellied Plovers seemed to shuttle back and forth between Burke Airport and Gordon Park with Goldens peaking in late September-early October and Black-bellieds in mid-October. Exceptions to the general abundance of shorebirds were Willet, with only a single report, September 10, and Whimbrel, no reports at all. Willets, in particular, have been scarce the past few years and this scarcity becomes even more curious when one realizes the excellent habitat the Gordon Park mudflat could provide for migrating Willets.

Water Pipit The Gordon Park Impoundment attracted good numbers of this species. Beginning with 20 on September 15 and peaking at 60 on October 28 Water Pipits got to be a regularly noted migrant at Gordon Park. It is most probable that many more pipits actually occurred than were recorded as oftentimes flocks would put down only for a few moments before taking flight or the birds would move about nervously among the weeds and would be difficult to count.

Warblers The fall warbler migration can best be described as "unspectacularly steady". A review of contributors' reports shows a steady stream of warblers the entire month of September and this resulted in little comment from observers. The season lacked any radical changes in the weather in September and early October and this more than anything else made for the lackluster warbler migration. Excellent birding along the lakefront undoubtedly diverted observers from looking for warblers and thus resulted in the decrease in the volume of reports.

Winter Finches A paltry two Evening Grosbeaks, Chardon on September 28 and October 20, "invaded" the Cleveland area. And

to complete the winter finch story for 1983-1984, there were no reports of Common Redpolls during November. This means that Common Redpoll went unreported for the entire CBC year and this may be unprecedented in the entire history of this publication. If any contributor knows of any valid sightings of Common Redpoll from last winter, last spring, or this fall, please report them so that Common Redpoll may be retroactively included in the yearly species summary for 1983-1984.

Yearly Summary For the CBC year now ended (December 1, 1983 to November 30, 1984), a total of 277 species was recorded. This excellent total includes 5 new species for the Cleveland area - Barrow's Goldeneye (a first verified, multi-observer record, and an adult male). American White Pelican, Curlew Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and Bell's Vireo. The addition of 5 new species to the bird list of the Cleveland area in one December to November period has never been achieved before in the 30 years that such statistics have been published in the CBC. Although habitat and Lady Luck aided in the addition of these new birds, enough cannot be said about the caliber of field identification skills exhibited by local contributors to produce excellent yearly totals consistently from year to year.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Eared Grebe - A single bird occurred at Gordon Park from September 8 through 26 (Rosche et al.).

Least Bittern - There were two reports: a bird caught and banded at Gordon Park on September 23 (Talkington) and at Rocky River on September 25 (Klamm). This latter bird appeared at the same location as one had appeared during the spring.

Brant - One was found at Gordon Park on November 3 (Kellerman).

Harlequin Duck - A single bird was intermittently observed at Northeast Yacht Club from November 8 to 24 (Corbin, LePage) and either this individual or another showed up at Avon Lake on November 30 (Pogacnik),

Bald Eagle - An adult frequented Lake Rockwell from September 30 to October 23 (Rosche).

Peregrine Falcon - Records were as follows: (1) An immature at Edgewater on October 1 (LePage). (2) An adult, or near adult, at Mentor on October 6 (Elder, Rosche). (3) Possibly the above bird was noted at Gordon Park from October 8 to 20 (many observers). (4) An adult at Lorain on October 20 (Pogacnik).

Piping Plover - The single bird present at the end of August at Gordon Park lingered until September 2 (many observers).

American Avocet - Three birds were discovered at Lake Rockwell on October 23 (Rosche). This sighting was not only a first for this location but it also was the initial observation of American Avocet away from the Lake Erie lakefront.

Hudsonian Godwit - All observations were at Gordon Park: single birds on September 4 and 15, November 2 and 5, 2 on September 29, 7 on September 11, and 24 on September 10. Previous Cleveland area high count had been 6 on August 18, 1979 so the September 10 total of 24 obliterates the old mark. The November sightings become both the region's first November records and correspondingly new latest fall dates. (Klamm, LePage).

Marbled Godwit - One appeared at Gordon Park on September 16 (Rosche).

White-rumped Sandpiper - One or two birds were encountered at Gordon Park from October 6 to 27 (many observers).

Purple Sandpiper - Wildwood Park's first Purple Sandpiper occurred on November 3 (Kellerman).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - A meager fall showing locally resulted in only two birds at Burke Airport on September 5 (LePage) and a very tardy individual at Gordon Park on October 14 (Klamm).

Long-billed Dowitcher - From one to two birds were found at Gordon Park beginning September 29 until October 21 (LePage).

Wilson's Phalarope - A lone bird remained at Gordon Park from September 2 through 15 (many observers).

Red-necked Phalarope - One was identified by call as it flew past Mentor Headlands on October 21 (Rosche).

Red Phalarope - (1) A single bird first appeared at Gordon Park on that memorable October 6 and remained until the 16th (Rosche et al.). (2) What may have been the same individual was noted at Northeast Yacht Club on November 3 (Kellerman) and later at Gordon Park on November 6 (LePage).

Parasitic Jaeger - An immature appeared at about 8:40 a.m. on November 24 and about 9:00 a.m. the following day off Sims Park (Hannikman). The bird engaged in typical jaeger-like behavior - chasing gulls and performing graceful aerobatics. A couple of times, however, the tables were turned on the jaeger when the gulls turned pursuer and took off after the jaeger which quickly and easily avoided any unwanted encounters.

Laughing Gull - First-winter birds were noted as follows - at Lorain on September 16 and 20 (Klamm), at Gordon Park on November 1 and 2 (Klamm), and November 16 at Edgewater (LePage). It is most probable that all sightings were of the same individual. The November 16 sighting becomes the new latest fall date for the species.

Black-legged Kittiwake - (1) One, sometimes two, first-winter birds frequented the Eastlake Power Plant area from November 24 to the end of the period (Corbin et al.). (2) Another observation, possibly one of the above birds wandering, was made along the Cuyahoga River on November 29 (Emery).

Black-backed Woodpecker - A lone bird was incredibly photographed at Lakeview Park on September 27 (Pogacnik). Last recorded in the region in 1964, this species is truly a prize bird to have on a birder's state list and lucky was the observer who got to see this northern woodpecker.

Eastern Wood-Pewee - Tantalizingly late was a single bird at Mentor Headlands on October 21 (Rosche).

Purple Martin - Two very late migrants appeared at Gordon Park on October 7 (Klamm).

Gray Catbird - An active bird was seen at Sims Park on November 19 (Corbin).

Northern Shrike - An adult was located in the Cuyahoga Recreational Area on November 18 (Rosche).

Nashville Warbler - A late migrant was found at Sims Park on November 3 (Corbin).

Black-throated Blue Warbler - An adult male was observed at Mentor Headlands on October 29 (Elder). This equals the previous late fall date set way back in 1954.

Wilson's Warbler - A single bird was at Sims Park on the late date of October 27 (Hannikman).

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - A single bird was found at Streetsboro Bog on September 30 (Rosche) and several were at Gordon Park in mid-October.

Lapland Longspur - Two at Gordon Park on September 16 established a new early fall date for the species and signalled an excellent influx of these birds along the lakefront with a maximum count of 38 on October 25 (Klamm et al).

Yellow-headed Blackbird - An immature occurred at Gordon Park on September 23 and 25 (Klamm).

Rusty Blackbird - 3,500 was the estimate of the flock that overwhelmed Lake Rockwell on October 31 (Rosche). A count this high for this species may be unprecedented in CBC files.

FIELD NOTES

Breeding Behavior of Mourning Warbler in Russell Township

- June 3 Two males were heard singing and seen at two different locations.
- July 4 A singing male was again observed at one of the stations above.
- July 7 A female was seen making several entrances and exits from the base of a small beech tree. During this period, a male flew into a nearby tree, sang once, and dove into a thicket.
- July 8 Both the male and female were seen at the same location as observed on July 7. The female was seen emerging from the same small beech tree. The male was seen and heard singing nearby.
- July 10 The male only was observed on this date about 30 yards from the small tree. The male seemed very excited by my presence. He circled me close in, sang several times from low perches, all the while pecking. He then disappeared into the thicket. From this date on, the female was not seen again. The cleared area is so thick with briars that one cannot go beyond the trail.
- July 12, 14, and August 18 - On all these dates the male was heard singing in the general area but not seen
- ANDREW FONDRK

An Unforgettable Saturday Year after year, each weekend gains importance in a birder's life. The chance to seek out the rarities and lost vagrants that appear periodically along the south shore of Lake Erie provides a stimulus that only a few can understand. Saturday, October 6, was a beautiful day, but with southerly breezes the hopes of seeing a Sabine's Gull vanished. It was a day to take a leisurely walk among the cottonwoods at Headlands State Beach to see what migrants lingered there.

I encountered a few warblers and good numbers of Winter Wrens, which never cease to amuse me with their nervous antics. Suddenly there was immediate stillness and I looked up to see a majestic Peregrine Falcon resting in a tree less than 100 feet from me! The immature bird allowed people to pass below unnoticed. I eagerly showed him to Elinor Elder and to Lois and Harold Wallin's group of novice birders. I can't help but think that they felt a little of the birding hook that has caught more than a few of us.

After more than an hour with the falcon, Elinor and I decided to investigate a report of a Red Phalarope at Gordon Park. Upon arriving at the landfill, we came upon the phalarope immediately, an auspicious beginning to say the least.

Next we scanned for shorebirds on the east side of the mudflat. We were happy to find a White-rumped Sandpiper among a rather disappointing number of peeps and pectorals. I then decided to check the smaller areas on the west side. Leaving my camera and jacket behind, I looked through my spotting scope and immediately backed away, rubbing my eyes in disbelief. I peered anxiously again and sure enough, the brilliant brick red cap outlined elegantly with a white superciliary line that broadened behind the eye and the golden, unstreaked breast left no doubt. It was an immature Sharp-tailed Sandpiper!

The pulse rate quickened, and I thought to myself, "I must get a good picture." Oh no! My camera was 100 yards away! "Please stay put, bird." Fortunately, the legends of the lakefront, Bill and Nancy Klamm, were nearby. Trying to maintain some level of composure, I nervously summoned them to guard the bird until I returned. I then dashed for my camera telling Chuck and Tim Hocesvar that I had found a good bird. They followed quickly as I circled the bird to achieve the best possible lighting conditions. I rapidly exhausted my roll of film while hearing the usually unflappable Bill Klamm proclaim, "It's a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper."

Now to get in touch with other people! The nearest telephone was a good half mile away and I, being the fittest of those with

the sandpiper, was chosen to spread the exciting news. I called Bill Osborne in Akron and Cleveland's resident Attuvian, Ray Hannikman. The word spread rapidly. By nightfall the bird had been viewed by people as far away as Columbus and had been netted and banded by Jerry Talkington. The rest of the story is history.

In looking back at the first verified record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Ohio, a great deal can be appreciated. First of all, the bird had the presence of mind to arrive on schedule, as lower forty-eight records indicate, and on a weekend at that! Secondly, the sandpiper turned out to be more than a check on a list: it was a bird to be remembered. It gave everyone ample opportunities to experience the total character of a bird that, in all likelihood, will never grace the Cleveland area with its presence again. LARRY ROSCHE

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.

The Kirtland Bird Club sponsors a WEEKLY RARE BIRD ALERT at (216) 696-8186. Sightings of species rare in the Cleveland area as well as other interesting observations 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. Varied Thrush, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, the tape should be called the day of the observation.

Inquiries and correspondence regarding subscriptions to the CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR should be addressed to:

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