



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 | |
| 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)

Vol. 81, No. 1 December 1984, January, February 1985 - 1 -

The Cleveland Bird Calendar

Editor

Ray Hannikman

Assistant Editor

Elinor Elder

Weather Summary

William A. Klamm

Editorial Assistants

Jean Hoffman

Ethel D. Surman

CONTRIBUTORS

H. Thomas Bartlett

Kay Booth

Dave Corbin

Elinor Elder

Joe Emery

Ray Hannikman

Dick and Jean Hoffman

Perry F. Johnson

William and Nancy Klamm

Walter Kremm

Tom LePage

Jack and Dorothy Miller

Bill Osborne

Perry Peskin

Bruce Peterjohn

Edwin Pierce

John Pogacnik

Richard Rickard

Larry Rosche

Gordon Spare

All records, observations, and field notes should be sent to:

Ray Hannikman
440 East 260th St.
Euclid, OH 441321460

W E A T H E R
Winter 1984-1985

December - Temperatures averaged 36.5 degrees, 5.4 degrees warmer than normal. Precipitation totalled 3.38 inches, 0.63 inches above normal. Snow totalled 8.9 inches, Lake Erie water temperature declined from 47 degrees on December 1 to 39 degrees on the 31st, and sunshine prevailed 33% of the time possible.

January - Snow occurred on 21 days and measured 25.5 inches. Overall precipitation totalled 1.78 inches, 0.69 inches below normal. Lake Erie attained extensive ice cover the 16th for the first time and lake water temperature reached 33 degrees then. Temperatures averaged 20.8 degrees, 4.7 degrees below normal and sunshine prevailed a meager 19% of the time possible.

February - Temperatures averaged 25.2 degrees, 2.2 degrees below normal. Precipitation totalled 2.6 inches, 0.4 inches above normal. Snowfall was 18.2 inches. Lake Erie water temperature was stable at 33 degrees. Extensive ice cover and limited open water fissures were dominant until the 20th when winds and shifting ice yielded increasing open water thereafter. Sunshine prevailed 38% of the time possible.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

When it's below freezing for almost all of January and the first half of February and when, during that time, people are warned to stay indoors because of wind chill factors of -60 F, no wonder birds hightail it out of Cleveland. The winter of 1984-1985 had to have been one of the most laid-back in recent memory as a lack of exciting birds instilled a sort of birding malaise into local birders. There were no chase birds, ala the Barrow's Goldeneye of January, 1984, winter finches continued to avoid the area like the Plague, and numbers and lack thereof of land birds drove everybody to the lakefront. It could be argued, however, that such a relatively poor birding season was a blessing in disguise as it will make spring seem that much better, and it is with this optimistic approach that the following report on the winter of 1984-1985 is written.

Waterfowl Nine Tundra Swans at Lorain on both January 17 and 26 indicated that this group probably wintered in this area. The late February thaw brought seven early migrants to Lake Rockwell on the 28th. Bay ducks had begun to gather somewhat earlier along the lakefront as these numbers were recorded for February 17: Redhead (1005), Canvasback (1002), scaup (sp.?) (3036), Common Goldeneye (262), and Bufflehead (114). Common Mergansers, which can sometimes build up in numbers in late February, did not appear in any appreciable numbers. In addition to the presence of all three species of scoter at various points along the lakefront during the period, four White-winged Scoters appeared inland at Cuyahoga Falls from February 18-24. Oldsquaws were noted in the usual ones and twos with the exception of 11 at Lorain on December 4.

Ring-necked Pheasant Downtown Cleveland's Burke Airport has attracted its share of rare birds (Pomarine Jaeger, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper), unusual nesters (Upland Sandpiper, and historically, Black Tern and probably Western Meadowlark), and is usually the most reliable place to find Snowy Owls in the Cleveland area. Recently, unusual numbers of Great Blue Herons have been found there and during the past winter numbers of Ring-necked Pheasants were encountered. Up to 16 birds were counted on February 20 and 21 and these numbers certainly are the most reported for this species in recent memory. The occurrence of pheasants in this area is not unprecedented for birds have been found along the railroad tracks just south of South Marginal Road and also have been seen in the brushy areas of nearby 'Dead

counts of 100+ Great Black-backed Gulls were submitted, quite in contrast to past tallies of 300+ individuals which had been reported in the past. Despite the lack of the larger species of gulls, few negative comments were made about the season's gulls (after all, 100,000 Bonaparte's Gulls is a little awe-inspiring, isn't it?).

Snowy Owl At least two different Snowy Owls could be found at Burke Airport from early December through January 9. After this date the winter's only other sighting was of a lone bird at Lorain on January 24 (Klamm).

American Robin This species wintered in more than the usual numbers. A roost of more than 5,800 in Lorain from December 15 on was most impressive (Pogacnik). Only other significant, specific numbers were 95 at Lakewood Park Cemetery on January 19 (Klamm), 125 at Lakeview Cemetery on December 15 (Hoffman), and 40 at Euclid Square Mail on January 26 (Hannikman). The birds were compelled to remain in the area by a very good fruit crop and after the very heavy mid-January snows the birds were drawn to the fruit trees where they voraciously ate all the available food from the shrubs, trees, and bushes in the areas they frequented.

Winter Finches It was another bleak year for local birders seeking winter finches. Again there were no Common Redpolls, and only single Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins. Like the old saying goes, wait 'till next year,

Snow Bunting In the open fields east of Aurora, 150+ Snow Buntings remained from January 27 through February 20 (Rosche). Along with the Snow Buntings were 100+ Horned Larks. Again, these excellent numbers were undoubtedly brought together by the severe weather of the previous week. The season's token Lapland Longspur was with Snow Buntings at Gordon Park on December 15.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Brant - A single bird briefly appeared at Lorain on December 6 (Pogacnik).

King Eider - A nearly adult male spent December 9 off Avon Lake (LePage). Males close to adult plumage are very rare

counts of 100+ Great Black-backed Gulls were submitted, quite in contrast to past tallies of 300+ individuals which had been reported in the past. Despite the lack of the larger species of gulls, few negative comments were made about the season's gulls (after all, 100,000 Bonaparte's Gulls is a little awe-inspiring, isn't it?).

Snowy Owl At least two different Snowy Owls could be found at Burke Airport from early December through January 9. After this date the winter's only other sighting was of a lone bird at Lorain on January 24 (Klamm).

American Robin This species wintered in more than the usual numbers. A roost of more than 5,800 in Lorain from December 15 on was most impressive (Pogacnik). Only other significant, specific numbers were 95 at Lakewood Park Cemetery on January 19 (Klamm), 125 at Lakeview Cemetery on December 15 (Hoffman), and 40 at Euclid Square Mail on January 26 (Hannikman). The birds were compelled to remain in the area by a very good fruit crop and after the very heavy mid-January snows the birds were drawn to the fruit trees where they voraciously ate all the available food from the shrubs, trees, and bushes in the areas they frequented.

Winter Finches It was another bleak year for local birders seeking winter finches. Again there were no Common Redpolls, and only single Evening Grosbeaks and Pine Siskins. Like the old saying goes, wait 'till next year,

Snow Bunting In the open fields east of Aurora, 150+ Snow Buntings remained from January 27 through February 20 (Rosche). Along with the Snow Buntings were 100+ Horned Larks. Again, these excellent numbers were undoubtedly brought together by the severe weather of the previous week. The season's token Lapland Longspur was with Snow Buntings at Gordon Park on December 15.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Brant - A single bird briefly appeared at Lorain on December 6 (Pogacnik).

King Eider - A nearly adult male spent December 9 off Avon Lake (LePage). Males close to adult plumage are very rare

Virginia Rail - An out-of-place individual was present in Akron from at least February 3 through the 17th (Pierce fide Rosche).

Western Sandpiper - The first December and winter record of this species in CBC files was of a lone bird identified at Gordon Park on December 14 (Klamm).

Purple Sandpiper - Reports of this species were as follows: single birds at Mentor Headlands on December 1 (Rosche) and Avon Lake on January 3 (Pogacnik) and two birds together at Gordon Park on January 5 (Rosche).

Dunlin - Two late birds were last recorded at Gordon Park on December 20 (Klamm). Up to six birds had been present there earlier in December.

Common Snipe - A single bird was in Akron on February 10 (Rosche).

Parasitic Jaeger - An immature, dark-phase bird, described as being nearly all black, flew by two experienced observers at Perry Park in Lake County on December 1 (Rosche, Peterjohn). As is usually the case with specific identification of immature jaegers, the observers experiences with all three species of jaegers, as well as the presence of Ring-billed Gulls, aided in the documentation of this bird.

Franklin's Gull - Single birds were reported from Edgewater on December 2 (Rosche) and Lorain on December 14 (Pogacnik).

Common Black-headed Gull - Three sightings of winter adults were probably all of the same bird: December 4 at Edgewater (LePage), and at Lorain on December 14 (Pogacnik) and January 12 (Bartlett).

Black-legged Kittiwake - The "kittiwake" invasion continued with first-winter birds at Lorain on December 6 and 7 (Pogacnik), another at Eastlake from December 9 through 26 (several observers), and lastly at Edgewater on January 2 (LePage).

Short-eared Owl - The season's only report was of a bird at Gordon Park on December 12 (LePage).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - One was at Lakeview Cemetery on December 15 (Hoffman).

Northern Shrike - An adult was present at West Branch State Park from December 28 through January 6 (Rosche).

Vesper Sparrow - A tardy migrant was found at Gordon Park on December 12 (LePage).

Yellow-headed Blackbird - An adult male was identified in a large flock of blackbirds in Lorain on January 5 (Pogacnik).

Red Crossbills - Reports were as follows: at Ridgehill Cemetery in Lorain were 3 birds on December 6 and 1 bird on December 14 (Pogacnik), at Mogadore Reservoir near Akron were two males on December 9 and several on December 24 (Rosche), and lastly, there were 5 birds at North Chagrin on January 7 (Corbin).

F I E L D N O T E S

Parasitic Jaeger at Perry Park, Lake County

Behavior - The bird flew from east to west along the lakeshore approximately 200-300 yards offshore. It was by itself for most of the time although it briefly harrassed one Ring-billed Gull.

Plumage Characteristics -

"jizz" - very similar to Ring-billed Gull (direct comparison) but had a heavier body and relatively smaller head in comparison to body size. Its pointed wings were fairly narrow at the base.

plumage - overall color very dark brown, much darker than typical juvenile Herring Gull. Flight feathers were darker blackish-brown with white shafts on the outer 3-4 primaries. These shafts were visible in flight, but not very "bold". They were present on both surfaces of the wing. The underwing coverts were uniformly dark. The tail was also blackish-brown without any apparent longer central tail feathers. Larry noted that the upper tail coverts were lighter than the remainder of the upperparts.

flight characteristics - When I first observed the bird, its flight pattern was more like a gull rather than the fast, steady flight

characteristic of a jaeger. It exhibited the characteristic flight pattern only when it harrassed the Ring-billed Gull. Its flight was generally buoyant with wings raised far above the horizontal on the up-beat.

Elimination of Similar Species -

Long-tailed Jaeger: dark phase very rare in this species.

Pomarine Jaeger: has a distinct white crescent on underwing coverts (all dark in this bird); larger with a heavier body and broader wings. BRUCE PETERJOHN

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) 969-8186. 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 reports 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:

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History
Wade Oval, University Circle
Cleveland, OH 44106
Attention: Helen Yenkevich