



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

Beaver Creek	30 Lake Rockwell
North Amherst	31 White City
Lorain	32 Euclid Creek Reservation
Black River	33 Chagrin River
Elyria	34 Willoughby
LaGrange	Waite Hill
Avon-on-the-Lake	35 Sherwin Pond
Clague Park	36 Gildersleeve
Clifton Park	37 North Chagrin Reservation
Rocky River	38 Gates Mills
Cleveland Hopkins Airport	39 South Chagrin Reservation
Medina	40 Aurora Lake
Hinckley Reservation	41 Aurora Sanctuary
Edgewater Park	42 Mantua
Perkins Beach	43 Mentor Headlands
Terminal Tower	44 Mentor Marsh
Cleveland Public Square	45 Black Brook
Cuyahoga River	Headlands State Park
Brecksville Reservation	46 Fairport Harbor
Akron	47 Painesville
Cuyahoga Falls	48 Grand River
Akron Lakes	49 Little Mountain
Gordon. Park	Holden Arboretum
Illuminating Co. plant	50 Corning Lake
Doan Brook	
Natural Science Museum	
Wade Park	
Baldwin Reservoir	51 Stebbin's Gulch
	52 Chardon
Lake View Cemetery	53 Burton
Forest Hill Park	54 Punderson Lake
Bedford Reservation	55 Fern Lake
Hudson	56 LaDue Reservoir
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 1985-1986

December - Temperatures averaged out to 24.3 degrees, 6.8 degrees colder than normal. Precipitation totalled 2.63 inches, 0.12 inches below normal. Snowfall totalled 23.4 inches. Sunshine prevailed 21% of the time possible.

Lake Erie water temperature fell from 48 degrees on the 1st to 33 degrees on the 31st. Some slush ice and ice shards and floes first appeared on the 19th with all bays and shallows ice covered. Extensive skim ice (90%) covered the lake by the 26th. Succeeding ice conditions varied with wind and weather.

January - Temperatures averaged 26.7 degrees, 1.2 degrees warmer than normal. Precipitation totalled 2.23 inches with snowfall of 17.2 inches. Sunshine prevailed 32% of the time possible. Lake Erie water temperature held steady at 33 degrees with ice cover changing with wind and weather.

February - Temperatures averaged 28.8 degrees, 1.4 degrees warmer than normal. Precipitation totalled 3.08 inches, 0.88 inches above normal. Snowfall totalled 10.8 inches. Sunshine prevailed 22% of the time possible. Lake Erie water temperature remained at 33 degrees.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

One of the most interesting facets of birding the winter of 1985-1986 was the emergence of the Eastlake Power Plant hot water outlet as the season's major gull hot spot- Lorain Harbor had been the focal point for gull watching for the last decade, but Eastlake proved to be the most consistent place to watch gulls. Other topics to be covered in the following paragraphs include the winter finch story, some interesting waterfowl record, and a drive-up Long-eared Owl. Winter birding reflects much on an individual's dedication to his hobby -- the winter issue of the Cleveland Bird Calendar is the manifestation of all that dedication of all its contributors.

Waterfowl - Brant continued in unusual numbers and were the season's waterfowl highlight. 6 birds were noted in Lakewood on December 3 and 6 were found at Burke Airport and later at Gordon Park on December 4. Three birds remained until December 18 (Klamm). Finally, 18 Brant were observed at Lorain on December 15.

White-winged Scoters and Oldsquaw were conspicuous at favored spots. 6 Oldsquaw were regular at Eastlake after February 15 whereas the occurrence of White-winged Scoters was concentrated within the period of February 7 to 17. Highest numbers were at Avon Lake on February 16 with 12 birds present. Other interesting waterfowl reports were 72 Tundra Swans over two contributors' home in Lakewood on December 3 (Klamm) and a spate of sightings of rather early-migrating Horned Grebes between February 7 and 12. Elsewhere, 300+ Hooded Mergansers at Lake Rockwell through December 8 highlighted a routine winter season inland.

Ring-necked Pheasants - This species was again present in numbers at Burke Airport. Maximum count was 23 on December 23 (Klamm). The pheasants appear to have been released so that they could be hunted. This explanation would seem to answer why winter is the only time these birds are ever reported from this area.

Bald Eagle - There were three verified and one unverified reports of Bald Eagle during the winter. Verified sightings were as follows: an adult at Lake Rockwell on December 8 (Peskin), and immature birds at Eastlake on February 9 (Corbin) and from February 23 to the end of the period between Avon Lake and

Lorain (many observers). Unverified by any regular CBC contributor was the report of an immature eagle over Pepper Pike Country Club on January 22. In the early to mid 1970s, one report a Year of Bald Eagle was enough to make the CBC editor deliriously happy, so three reports during the winter, the season least likely for Bald Eagle appearances, can not help but elate all birders. A determination has not been made or even attempted on whether the immature birds of the above reports may have been of the same individual. Specific plumage characteristics did not accompany any of the eagle reports. The Avon Lake bird made both the Lorain and Cleveland newspapers with the latter printing a front-page article on the bird. This article voiced concern about the possible diet of the eagle as it was thought that this bird may have been eating ducks that had ingested lead shot. This would, of course, endanger the bird. The origin of these eagles is anyone's guess, especially if more than one immature bird were involved. The adult bird must have been a late migrant because the adult that had been reported at Lake Rockwell from the previous season was last noted on October 26 and cover age of this area between sightings certainly was adequate enough to detect the presence of a Bald Eagle. The fact that no subsequent observations were made after December 8 would also strongly indicate the transient nature of this bird. The immature bird(s) could have been true migrants or they could have been bird(s) that were raised in Ohio and were just wandering about the lakefront. Wherever they came from, these bird added excitement to winter lakefront birding.

Gulls - If you wanted to observe gulls and did not mind working at finding them, you must have been satisfied with the winter gulling. As hinted at in the introductory paragraph, the hot water outlet of the Eastlake Power Plant provided the most consistently good gull-watching during the winter. Highlights were: a wintering first-winter Iceland Gull, 5 Thayer's Gulls on December 21, 2 Little Gulls from January 31 to February 3, 300+ Great Black-backed Gulls and 14 Glaucous Gulls on February 10, 1-2 Lesser Black-backed Gulls throughout December and again in February. Most fascinating was an adult Lesser Black-backed Gull on February 9 that showed a very dark, blackish mantle indicative of an individual that was not of the subspecies heretofore exclusively recorded in Ohio, Larus fuscus graellsii. There are two other subspecies of Lesser Black-backed Gull currently recognized, L. f. intermedius and L. f. fuscus, both of which are characterized by much darker mantles than L. f. graellsii. As the bird was far distant out on the ice, close scrutiny to determine subspecies was not possible.

Numbers of the rarer gulls were smaller at Lorain and Avon Lake but composition was similar to that of Eastlake. What was most interesting about the winter's gulls was their pattern of occurrence. From January 14 to 30, Herring and Ring-billed Gulls were in poor evidence -- only a scant 92 Herring Gulls were reported during this time -- but numbers changed in late January. At this time, thousands of both Herring and Ring-billed Gulls reappeared at favored spots and the vast majority of reports of Great Black-backed and Glaucous Gulls occurred during this period. The reappearance of 2 Little Gulls at Eastlake in late January is even more curious when one considers that this species is normally associated with Bonaparte's Gulls which had been absent from the lakefront since early January. For the statistically minded, peak gull totals were as follows: Herring Gull, 4,100 on December 3, Ring-billed Gull, 37,000 on December 4, and Bonaparte's Gull, 20,000 on December 27.

Winter Finches - Contributors got too enthusiastic too quickly about winter finches last fall and consequently were disappointed at the moderate showing put in by these birds during the winter. The following is a summary of the major occurrences of winter finches in the Cleveland area during the period --

Evening Grosbeak - A flock of between 10-12 birds remained in Chesterland the entire period (Klaus). 14 birds on January 16 and 6 birds on February 23 on Major Road in Peninsula seemed to indicate that a small flock may have wintered in that area but there were no reports between those dates to verify this. 6 birds at Holden Arboretum in the last week of February and 5-11 birds at a residence in West Geauga County rounded out the major reports of this species.

Common Redpoll - Best counts were as follows: at Shaker Lakes - 30 on December 8 and 10 on January 16 (Peskin), and Lakewood Park Cemetery - 26 on December 16, 38, 17, and 15 on January 7, 8, and 10 (Klamm). Only other large flock was 27 at North Chagrin Metropark on December 21 (Corbin). Last report of the winter was a single bird on January 18 at Lakewood Park Cemetery.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Northern Goshawk - (1) An immature bird appeared at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History on December 19 (Henderson). (2) Sim's Park's second-ever, also an immature, was critically scrutinized early in the morning on January 24 (Rosche).

Merlin - An immature was intermittently observed in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area from December 15 through February 16 (Rosche).

Virginia Rail - One lingered at Lake Rockwell until January 5 (Rosche).

Laughing Gull - First December record ever was of a bird at Lorain on the 1st (several observers).

Common Black-headed Gull - Birds were seen at Bay Village on December 29 and Avon Lake on January 1 (Pogacnik).

Mew Gull - Most probably the same individual found at Huron last December 7 and 8 was located at Lorain on January 14 (Pogacnik).

California Gull - Single birds were noted as follows: at Eastlake on February 1 (Hannikman, Rosche, Corbin) and at Avon Lake on February 15 and 16 (Pogacnik).

Black-legged Kittiwake - Single immatures were at Eastlake on December 6 and 7 (Corbin) and at Lorain on December 7 and 15 (Alexander, Pogacnik).

Common Tern - Second latest December record ever, and the latest since 1953, was of a bird at Lorain on December 15 (Pogacnik).

Long-eared Owl - Two birds, from February 13 to 18, with a single bird through the end of the period, remained in pine trees in the front yard of a Euclid residence (Jeannie and Rich Hannikman). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, this species was annually observed at the Old Brooklyn Airport, but none has been noted there since 1982 because this site is now part of 1-480.

Northern Saw-whet Owl - Scolding Black-capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice alerted the observer to the presence of a Northern Saw-whet Owl crouched about 20 feet up in a pine tree along the wildlife loop management trail at North Chagrin Metropark on December 31 (Corbin).

Wood Thrush - Last fall's Chester Commons bird, appearing weakened by winter's first onslaught of cold and snow, was last seen on December 3 (Hannikman)

Northern Shrike - Two immatures were well described from Lake Isaac on December 31 (Harlan). This is the first record in CBC files of more than one bird being found in the same place.



Pine Warbler - One was photographed at an Akron feeder on December 26 (Rosche). This species had only been recorded once in the Cleveland area in December before, on December 1, 1962.

Common Yellowthroat - An immature male dawdled near Lake Rockwell from December 29 to January 15 (Rosche, Henderson). A bird at Shaker Lakes on January 3 and 31, 1959 had been the only January record of this species.

Yellow-headed Blackbird - Single adult males were reported from Willoughby on December 25 (fide Hannikman) and Lorain on January 11 (Pogacnik).

Pine Grosbeak - Two males were discovered on a snow covered road in Peninsula on December 14 (Maugans).

#### FIELD NOTES

The Gulls of Lake Erie - An Update An article entitled "The Gulls of Lake Erie" appeared in Vol. 67, No. 2, Spring 1971, of the Cleveland Bird Calendar. At that time, twelve species of gulls had been recorded from Ohio. In the ensuing almost 15 years, 6 more species of gulls have been found in Ohio and the Cleveland region. Since gulls are a main feature to winter birding, I thought it would be appropriate to update the original article with the details (along with some personal, anecdotal comments) of the additional six species that now have a place in the bird life of Ohio ---

Thayer's Gull - Considered a subspecies of Herring Gull until it obtained full species status with the publication of the 32nd Supplement to the A. O. U. Checklist in April, 1973, Thayer's Gull was first found in the Cleveland area on January 15, 1978 at Lorain. Since then this species has been recorded annually in small numbers with the majority of the records between December and March. Since gull taxonomy is so complicated and studies are continuously being performed on this species, it is possible that the status of Thayer's Gull may again change. At least the gulls know who they are.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - A European species that has literally exploded in North America, this species was first recorded at Gordon Park on January 20, 1977. Numerical and seasonal status parallels pretty well that of Thayer's Gull.

Heermann's Gull - An adult was recorded at Lorain February 12-18, and March 3-9, 1980, December 20, 1980, and January 17 and 19, 1981. Totally inexplicable is the best that I can come up with to describe the Ohio and Michigan records of this west coastal gull. When I got the call about this bird, I became speechless, the person calling me thought that I had passed out. But I saw this bird, and believe me, it was no funny-looking Ring-billed Gull.

Mew Gull - An immature of the North American subspecies, Larus canus brachyrynchus, was found at Lorain on November 29, 1981. An immature, not positively identified racially, was at Lorain on January 16 and 17, 1982. An adult was observed by many at Huron on December 7 and 8, 1985.

California Gull - First state record was an adult at Huron on November 24, 1979. Many looked for the bird the following morning in a cold, dreary rain with most giving up about noon. Larry Rosche, Elinor Elder, and I went to local restaurant to get warm and dry and have a little snack. Afterwards we went to the dock where we had spent the morning and I found the bird just sitting on the pier. Perseverance and luck had paid off! Further sightings have included adults at Lorain in January of 1983 and 1984, an adult at Avon Lake in February, 1986, and a bird, not quite adult, at Eastlake, also in February of this year.

Ivory Gull - Last, but certainly not least, an adult Ivory Gull was recorded from Gordon Park from December 17, 1975 to December 19, 1975. I left the office at about 3:00 p.m. on December 18 with Chuck Hocevar and by the time we got to Gordon Park a blizzard was blowing in off the lake. Chuck and I got out of the car, looked around, and retreated back into the car for some warmth and to wipe off our binoculars. As Chuck was getting into the car, he said, "I see something white," and we hurriedly got out of the car. There, near the water outlet by the freeway bridge was the Ivory Gull effortlessly flying above the turbulent lake. Chuck and I just stared at this magnificent creature and then we headed back to work. Seeing your first Ivory Gull in a snowstorm -- how fitting! The bird was last seen the next morning. Other Ivory Gulls were observed along the Great Lakes during December and January of 1975-76. This bird was part of that "invasion". Unfortunately, statewide communication was not as well established back in 1975 as it

is now so just a few very lucky Greater Clevelanders got to see this gull. And, unfortunately, unlike the species annotated above, Ivory Gull has not reappeared in Ohio.

So what's next? I do not know, but I hope it's pink!! RAY  
HANNIKMAN

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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.

The Kirtland Bird Club sponsors a **WEEKLY RARE BIRD ALERT** at (216) 289-2473. Sightings of species rare in the Cleveland area as well as other interesting migration and seasonal observations should be called into the tape on Sundays as the tape is updated each Monday with current sightings. 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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