



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                    |
| 14 Perkins Beach             | 43 Mentor Headlands          |
| 15 Terminal Tower            | 44 Mentor Marsh              |
| 16 Cleveland Public Square   | 45 Black Brook               |
| 16 Cuyahoga River            | Headlands State Park         |
| 17 Brecksville Reservation   | 46 Fairport Harbor           |
| 18 Akron                     | 47 Painesville               |
| 18 Cuyahoga Falls            | 48 Grand River               |
| 19 Akron Lakes               | 49 Little Mountain           |
| 20 Gordon. Park              | Holden Arboretum             |
| 20 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  
Spring Season 1987

March - Temperatures averaged 39.0 degrees, 2.4 degrees warmer than normal. The highest temperature, 76 degrees, was reached on the 29th and the lowest, 14 degrees, on the 11th. Precipitation came on 9 days to total 3.84 inches as water, 0.85 inches in excess of normal. Snowfall measured 26.2 inches in total and was notable on the 14th with 8.0 inches, the 30th with 7.2 inches, and the 31st with 9.3 inches. Sunshine prevailed 63% of the time possible. Lake Erie water temperature held at 33 degrees on the 1st and rose to 38 degrees on the 31st. Ice cover on Lake Erie was ever changing. Extensive ice cover redeveloped on the 3rd, allowed large expanses of open water by the 7th, was beset by extensive shore and pack ice on the 9th, and displayed variable shore ice, offshore icefields, and ever increasing open water during the subsequent days.

April - Temperatures averaged 49.1 degrees, 1.0 degree above normal. Sunshine prevailed 52% of the time possible. Precipitation was distributed on 14 days and total 2.97 inches, 0.35 in deficit of normal. Snow accumulated to 4.0 inches and occurred only on the 1st to the 4th. Lake Erie remained open all month with only residual shore and pack ice evident, but some harbor and protected shallows retained rotting ice for many days. The water temperature climbed to 46 degrees on the 30th from 38 degrees on the 1st.

May - Temperatures averaged 63.0 degrees, 4.8 degrees above normal. Sunshine prevailed 62% of the time possible. Precipitation was measurable on 13 days and totaled 2.40 inches, 0.90 inches below normal. Lake Erie water temperature rose from 46 degrees to 58 degrees on the 31st.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

One veteran Shaker Lakes birder succinctly summed up the spring when he called it "very unsatisfactory" (Peskin). Nothing gets one's birding adrenalin flowing like ducks along the lakefront, strung-out kettles of Broad-winged Hawks overhead, or 25 species of warblers before 9:00 a.m. These phenomena and other regularly occurring spring migration patterns were lacking or in very poor evidence as odd weather influenced migration. Unusually heavy snows on March 31 undoubtedly were responsible for putting down Ohio's first Brambling in Bath while cool winds off the lake in late April and the first half of May produced conditions which inhibited hawk movements and warbler waves. But the dogged determination of local birders overcame the birding blues to produce reports of excellent rarities as well as insightful commentary about the birds of spring of 1987.

Waterfowl Most spring Common Loons were reported from Lake Rockwell with a maximum count of eight on April 1. Only lakefront location to produce consistent, but meager, numbers of loons was Sims Park where three on April 26 was the highest count. Sightings of Tundra Swans were restricted to areas in and around the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area with reports as follows: 23 on March 16 and 18, 25 on March 21, and 40 in nearby Independence on March 16 (Harlan, Chaser). No other flocks were reported.

With large amounts of open water on Lake Erie in early March, no concentrations of waterfowl developed. Scaup ducks were the most numerous ducks during March while several hundred Redheads appeared between March 7 and 10. The annual build-up of Red-breasted Mergansers peaked at 2,000 along the lakefront on April 5. Mid-March and mid-April were the twin peaks of duck movements which the spring waterfowl survey of the Akron Lakes produced. In mid-March it was 755 Ring-necked Ducks at Mogadore Reservoir on the 15th while April 9 saw 320 Ruddy Ducks, 160 Horned Grebes, and 300 Ring-necked Ducks at Mogadore and 120 Ruddy Ducks at Lake Rockwell. 120 Ring-necked Ducks were at Barberton on April 12. What lures Ring-necked Ducks to Mogadore Reservoir is anybody's guess but large numbers there seem to be an annual spring feature. Interesting Shaker Lakes observations were three Oldsquaw on April 12 and a male Surf Scoter, a first for the area, on April 9.

Hawks The spring's hawk flights were virtually non-existent. Perkins Beach produced the only series of observations with the best tallies as follows: Turkey Vulture - 52(3/29), 106(4/10), 57(4/11); Sharp-shinned Hawk - 49(4/15), 24(4/29); and Broad-winged Hawk - 61(4/29) (Klamm).

Shorebirds One major highlight of the spring was a virtual "invasion" of Lesser Golden-Plovers. Though numbers were not significant, one must consider that there had been only one spring record of this species in the nearly 20 previous years so any sightings during this season by definition must be significant. First sighting was of three birds at Burke Airport on May 3 (Rosche). Eleven were at Burke on May 10 (Hannikman) and four at Barberton on May 6 (fide Rosche). Some of the birds were in full breeding plumage. When one stops to consider that Lesser Golden-Plovers are regular spring migrants in western Ohio, the dirth of local observations at this season becomes all the more curious and one must wonder why these birds showed up. More continuous and strong westerly and northwest winds in late April and early May probably caused this sight eastward perturbation in the birds' regular migration route. Other interesting shorebird records were 43 Semipalmated Plovers on May 17, 29 (Short-billed) Dowitchers on May 11, and 1-2 White-rumped Sandpipers from May 21 to 24 at Gordon Park and 2 Upland Sandpipers at Burke Airport from April 20 to 23. Huge concentrations of Semipalmated Sandpipers were not reported this spring from Barberton and Red-necked Phalaropes failed to appear there for the first time in two years.

Gulls, Terns Glaucous Gull, both adults and immatures, were found along the lakefront throughout March, April, and until May 6. Four Iceland Gulls on March 11 could have represented either an influx of birds that had wintered at other Great Lakes locations or a local phenomenon due to the month's coldest weather. Great Black-backed Gulls also seemed to have staged a little influx into the area in March. None was recorded from February 27 to March 10, 15 were along the lakefront on March 14, and 33 and 18 were found on March 17 and 20. Most of the Great Black-backed Gulls seem to have departed from the area by late March as only ones and twos, mainly birds in first and second summer plumages, were to be found along the lakefront from Gordon Park to Mentor Headlands in April and to May 6. Surprising was a second-summer Lesser Black-backed Gull at Gordon Park on April 26 (Talkington) and the season's only Franklin's Gull was at this location on May 1 (Klamm).

Bonaparte's Gulls tease lakefront observers. The species' well-known pattern of occurrence is tremendous numbers in December and early January and then a virtual disappearance to the wintering grounds from the end of January through February. Usually small numbers appear in mid to late March and then in early April, birds with no hoods to full hoods and every shade in between suddenly begin to show up. This year was no exception as mid-March saw no more than 18 Bonaparte's Gulls being counted on a single day and then 520 were noted on April 5 (Klamm). This count of 520 was the high for the spring as no more than 400 Bonaparte's Gulls were reported in one day for the rest of the season.

Maximum count of Forster's Terns was 7 on May 8 as the majority of sightings fell between May 2 and 10. Caspian Terns appeared somewhat later than usual being first noted on April 10. Numbers built up quickly to the peak count of 174 on April 16. Continuing a sad trend, maximum counts of Common Terns was only two each on April 29 and May 18.

Owls As usual, few owls were reported. A Snowy Owl was confirmed from the I-X Center at Hopkins International Airport on March 1 (Harlan). This bird was reportedly in this area for some time before it was noted on March 1. No other Snowy Owls were reported. Short-eared Owls appeared at Gordon Park on March 16 and from April 15 to 19 with two birds being found on the 16th. It appears that the key to finding one's Eastern Screech-Owl for the spring is to find the birds when they are calling and setting up territories in early March for once serious nesting commences the birds become quite difficult to locate. This spring's only reports came from early March. Long-eared Owls and Northern Saw-whet Owls went unreported.

Flycatchers This group of birds did not excite birders. Eastern Phoebes were "in exceptional numbers" from March 26 to 29 but probably suffered in the heavy snows of March 31 and April 1 (Klamm). Adler Flycatchers arrived in typical late May fashion - the 25th at Streetsboro and Eastern Wood-Pewees, with the exception of an arrival in Kent on May 7, were first noted May 17. Somewhat early was an Olive-sided Flycatcher at Mentor Headlands on May 10 (Rosche).

Brown Thrasher Even though one contributor from the Akron area gave a "much improved" report card to the status of Brown Thrasher, reported numbers how little if any increase over 1986. In fact, most of the reports came from Sims Park where observation probably included multiple sightings of the same bird(s) rather than newly arrived migrants. Until hard numerical evidence is presented, Brown Thrasher must be considered a locally declining species. All reports of this species thus become very important in the evaluation of the local status of this bird.

Warblers Warblers were a major disappointment. Warbler waves were lacking and what birds did come through did not linger. The period from May 13 to 17 saw the best variety of warbler species, but numbers were not great. Those contributors who did report numbers for this period showed less than 10 individuals for most species when double-digit counts should be expected for species such as Magnolia Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and Cape May Warbler. And to say the warblers did not linger locally would be an understatement. Lakefront locations such as Sims Park and Mentor Headlands routinely attract a dozen or more warbler species during Memorial Day weekend but half that number was the rule this year. In 1986 Canada Warblers, American Redstarts, and Wilson's Warblers filled Sims Park during Memorial Day weekend whereas finding 1 or 2 individuals of each of these species during the holiday weekend in 1987 became a hard morning's work. Sims Park again proved to be the Oporornis capital of the Cleveland area as the area's only Connecticut Warblers (May 15 and 18) and Kentucky Warbler (May 21) were found there. Mourning Warblers were regular at this location from the 15th of May to month's end. At Lake Rockwell Pine Warblers were present at the end of May and were thought to nesting.

Sparrows Significant movements of sparrows involved the area's two most common migrants - Song Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows. Fortunately for local observers peak numbers for these species do not coincide as Song Sparrow is a mid to late March migrant and White-throated Sparrow an early to mid-May migrant. March 24 saw a count of 300 Song Sparrows at Gordon Park and 50+ and 25+ individuals at Sims Park and Donald Gray Gardens also on this date indicated a good local movement. 325 was the maximum count of White-throated Sparrows at Firestone Metropark on May 2 with numbers diminishing appreciably

during the next 14 days. Only two White-throated Sparrows were found after May 15. Fox Sparrows showed well in late March as more than the usual migrants showed up at Donald Gray Gardens and Sims Park. There was only one report each of Henslow's Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Winter Finches A recently-fledged Pine Siskin was discovered on May 9 in Brecksville (Harlan). This constituted the first successful nesting documented in the Cleveland area. Last year a pair tried to nest but failed. It was also thought that there was possible breeding activity of Pine Siskins at Lake Rockwell in May but by season's end no conclusive proof of breeding had been obtained. Elsewhere Pine Siskins were reported as "common" from late March to mid-April in the Akron area and there was a good movement in mid-May at Sims Park. Other winter finch highlights included 40 Evening Grosbeaks at Bath on April 5 and from 1 to 4 Common Redpolls in Mid-March in Northfield (Chaser).

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-necked Grebe - One bird remained at Summit Lake from March 5 to 14 (Mock et al.).

American Bittern - Single birds were noted as follows: April 26, Medina County; and April 27, Firestone Metropark (Pierce); May 3, Gordon Park (Hannikman), and May 17, Akron (Rosche).

Snowy Egret - An individual was found at Gordon Park on April 10 (LePage). This species had never previously been recorded in the Cleveland area in the month of April as the former early spring date was May 7, 1950.

Tricolored Heron - Summit County's first record was of a bird at Barberton on May 5 (Rosche). This species has now been recorded locally for two straight years.

Bald Eagle - (1) An immature appeared at Lake Rockwell on March 1 (Rosche). (2) Another immature startled observers at Gordon Park early in the afternoon on May 3 (Mallon).

Merlin - An adult whizzed by Mentor Headlands on April 26 (Rosche, Hannikman).

Northern Bobwhite - 28 birds, a spectacular number considering the decline of this species throughout the Cleveland area, were found at the Windham Quad in Summit County on May 31 (Rosche).

Piping Plover - Two birds were noted - one at Gordon Park on April 11 (Harlan, Rosche), and one at Burke Airport on May 11 (Klamm).

Willet - May 2 was Willet day - 10 at Barberton (Rosche) and 18 at Gordon Park (Harlan).

Whimbrel - Portage County's first record was of an individual at West Branch State Park on May 17 (Rosche).

Marbled Godwit - The first spring record of this species in the Cleveland area since 1880-occurred when a lone bird was observed with the above-mentioned Willets on May 2 at Gordon Park (Harlan).

Red Knot - Records from Gordon Park were one bird on May 24 (Klamm) and two on May 28 (LePage).

Pectoral Sandpiper - Two very early migrants were at Gordon Park on March 22 (Hannikman).

Stilt Sandpiper - The area's first April record was one bird at Barberton on the 27th (Rosche). A second finely plumaged individual fed with other migrant peeps at Gordon Park on May 17 (Hannikman). This latter sighting represented the first spring Stilt Sandpiper along the Cleveland lakefront since 1966.

Wilson's Phalarope - Three and one were noted at Gordon Park on May 24 and 26 (Harlan, Klamm, LePage).

Laughing Gull - An adult was discovered on the beach at Mentor Headlands on May 31 (Kellerman).

Common Black-headed Gull - The area's first April sighting was of a summer plumaged individual on the 5th at East 72nd Street (Hannikman) and the 6th inside Gordon Park (Harlan).

California Gull - A sub-adult was reported from Gordon Park on April 29 (Harlan). This bird was the first California Gull to be recorded in the spring as all previously accepted and documented birds have come from the late fall and winter.

Iceland Gull - An immature was photographed at Gordon Park on the very late date of May 1 (Klamm).

Black Tern - Single birds, perhaps the same individual, were recorded at Barberton on May 3, 5, and 9 (Rosche, Pierce).

Belted Kingfisher - A total of eight, in ones and twos, passed Sims Park within one-half hour of each other on April 11 (Hannikman). Even though small, a passage of any numbers of this species has been seldom witnessed in the Cleveland area.

Tree Swallow - A record early spring migrant was reported from Barberton on March 12 (fide Rosche).

Sedge Wren - One was mist-netted and banded on May 18 at Sims Park (Talkington, Hannikman).

Shrike (sp.?) - A shrike, unidentified as to species, was encountered on Route 2 in Lorain County on March 22 (LePage).

Brewster's Warbler - Lone birds were at Firestone Metropark on May 2 (Rosche) and Brecksville on May 9 (Harlan).

Yellow-throated Warbler - Birds were at Hinckley on April 29 (Harlan) and Peninsula on May 4 (Rosche).

Worm-eating Warbler - One was located in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area on May 8 (Maugans fide Rosche).

Kentucky Warbler - The only spring overshoot was a rather late individual at Sims Park on May 21 (LePage).

Summer Tanager - An immature male was singing at Sims Park early on May 25 but quickly departed eastward. (Hannikman).

Blue Grosbeak - A male sang from the top of a small tree in a field near an industrial park off Lost Nation Road on May 30 (Talkington). This bird has been the only report in the 1980s. It could not be relocated the next day. Unconfirmed was the report of a Blue Grosbeak from a feeder in Willowick in early May. This latter location is not very far from Lost Nation Road.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - Single birds were flushed from the same marshy area at Gordon Park on May 13 and 17 (Hannikman).

FIELD NOTES

First Ohio Record of Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla*). When I received a call from Akron Parks naturalist Bert Szabo about a Bay-breasted Warbler attending Helen and Horace Harger's feeders in Bath, I thought immediately of a Eurasian species, the Brambling. This species is known to wander widely and there have been reports from Indiana and Pennsylvania. Few people would expect such a bird at their feeder and to mistake it for a Bay-breasted Warbler seemed entirely possible.

I called Helen to discuss the field characteristics of her "mystery" bird. The bird seemed too large by her description and for a warbler to be eating sunflower seeds seemed absurd. I asked what, if anything, made her think it was not a Bay-breasted Warbler. She said it had a large orange area above the wing. My pulse quickened and I asked her to look up Brambling and she excitedly exclaimed, "That's the bird." I told her to expect me after work.

I met Pat Haddad and Bill Osborne at the feeders and we were soon joined by Bert Szabo and the vigil began. Alas, no luck, the bird did not reappear. On Friday, Helen saw the elusive bird again and once again Pat held a long lasting sentry duty but to no avail. The weekend was upon me and my hopes of being at the feeder early Saturday were dashed by a foot of snow. Again the Hargers saw the bird and photographed it several times. In the afternoon I braved the snow and met with the Hargers to discuss the bird further. My belief that the bird was truly a Brambling became stronger as I watched the feeder and listened to Helen and Horace identify each species that appeared.

Sunday morning began unauspiciously as fog lay over the entire area. Undaunted, Cleveland Bird Calendar editor Ray Hannikman and I drove to Bath. After an hour the bird appeared! It was indeed a Brambling! My faith in the Hargers' observations had been rewarded. Now a Brambling is big news in the birding community, not just locally but also nationally. This bird was not only a rarity, but also a strikingly plumaged male. I informed the Hargers of the possibility of many people wanting to see the bird and they said that they would be delighted to share their Eurasian beauty.

Helen called the Bath police to warn them of an influx of binocular clad strangers and Horace kept the feeders filled. Rare bird hotlines alerted Ohio's bird lovers and the North American Rare Bird Alert spread the news across the country. Soon crowds of birders descended onto the quiet Bath community.

The groups assembled with anticipation Sunday afternoon only to be frustrated. By Monday birders from as far away as Columbus and Cincinnati were nervously stationed in front of the Harger home. Many saw the bird in the early morning, but again the Brambling seemed to know that he was in control of the minds of many. He was going to make the curiosity seekers wait. He seemed to say. "If you want to see Ohio's first Brambling, then you are going to have to put your time in."

The bird made a few brief appearances Monday afternoon, but only the few who had waited patiently got to see him. By Tuesday morning the Brambling had become reluctant to appear at all. The snow cover had abated and easier foraging was to be found elsewhere. As if to taunt the 50 plus people gabbing on the street, he flew in briefly to be seen only by those intently watching the feeding stations.

All in all over 100 people came to view the bird. Many came and were disappointed, but such is the way of birding. A bird such as the Brambling comes along once in a birder's lifetime and Helen and Horace can not be thanked enough for letting us all share in the sighting of the Brambling.

Other data about this sighting are as follows:

Dates of observation: March 31 through at least April 7. Unconfirmed was the report of an April 9 sighting.

Sex: Male

Activities: The bird was observed eating sunflower seeds at the feeders of the Hargers' and kept company with Dark-eyed Juncoes with which it was probably migrating.

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) 289-2473. Sightings of species rare in the region as well as other interesting migration and seasonal observations should be called in to the tape on Sundays as the tape is updated with current sightings each Monday. In the case of extreme rarities, e.g., Kirtland's Warbler, 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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