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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  
Summer 1987

June - Temperatures averaged 70.2 degrees, 2.6 degrees warmer than normal. The highest temperature, 90 degrees, was reached on the 19th and the lowest, 42 degrees, on the 10th. Lake Erie water temperature rose from 58 degrees on the 1st to 70 degrees on the 30th. Sunshine prevailed 64% of the time possible. Precipitation occurred on 12 days and was often very heavy. Total rainfall for the month was 7.94 inches, a hefty 4.45 inches in excess of normal. A one day record of 2.57 inches fell on the 20th.

July - Temperatures averaged 75.2 degrees, 3.6 degrees above normal. Lake Erie water temperature rose from 71 degrees on the 1st to 78 degrees on the 31st. Measurable precipitation occurred on 7 days nearly all of which were in the first half of the month. Rainfall totaled 3.36 inches, 0.1 inches below normal. Sunshine prevailed 67% of the time possible.

August - Temperatures averaged 70.8 degrees, 0.4 degrees warmer than normal. Lake Erie water temperature held steady at 78 degrees from the 1st to the 19th, then at 77 degrees from the 20th until the 25th, and then declined to 72 degrees by the 31st. Sunshine prevailed 58% of the time possible. Precipitation totaled 5.51 inches, 2.13 inches above normal.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

Summer birding was much more pleasant in 1987 than in 1986 as there was no repeat at Gordon Park of the botulism epidemic that last year snuffed out the lives of so many unsuspecting shorebirds and waterbirds. Shorebird observations at Barberton and Baldwin Lake continued to provide information about the movements of these birds through our area. Nesting highlights included Mourning Warblers in Newbury and Carolina Wrens at several locations as well as an apparently expanding Least Flycatcher population. And truly remarkable has been the change in Forster's Tern in the Cleveland area. But read on and enjoy all about the birds of the summer of 1987.

Waterfowl - Dredgings gradually replaced water at Gordon Park as the season progressed so summering waterfowl were not as varied nor as plentiful as in the past. Out of season stragglers were limited to single Green-winged Teal on June 12 and 16 and a lone female Red-breasted Merganser on June 26 and July 7. During the last several summers various species of bay ducks had appeared at Gordon Park. None, however, showed up this year.

Common Moorhens again were a feature at Gordon Park throughout June and into mid July. At least 2 young were observed on June 20 and several subsequent dates but their fate could not be determined. Another nest was destroyed by dredgings. Common Moorhens had better success at Barberton as evidenced by 20 birds there on July 23.

Shorebirds - Gordon Park again (perhaps for the last time) produced the best shorebirding in the Cleveland area. Last year's botulism epidemic was not repeated because so much dredgings were pumped in to the impoundment that the level of the impoundment was raised above the lake level. This prevented water from seeping through the breakwall and forming stagnant pools which became death traps for shorebirds and waterbirds a year ago. By season's end most of the mucky mudflat had become baked and dried. This type of habitat is less appealing to most shorebirds so numbers of birds were rather low by the end of August.

As usual, the first week of June saw late migrants at Gordon Park with up to 15 Semipalmated Sandpipers and 9 Least Sandpipers on June 5, 2 Dunlins on June 3 and 5, and 4 Semipalmated Plovers on June 7 (Klamm). By late June adult Short-billed Dowitchers and Lesser Yellowlegs had begun to appear. In recent years the first few days of July have become the best time to look for the largest flocks of Willets. This year 5 and 14 Willets were noted at Gordon Park on July 1 and 4 respectively. Only single Willets were observed during the rest of July and August. Twelve Willets also were at Lorain's Lakeview Park on July 1 (Kellerman). Other

noteworthy sightings at Gordon Park were Whimbrels on 3 dates in July and 3 in August, up to 5 Red Knots from August 20 to the end of the period, and a maximum of 4 Western Sandpipers on August 22 and 30. Single Wilson's Phalaropes were observed on 2 dates in June and 4 dates in July. Then, from August 13 to 19, up to 3 Wilson's Phalaropes could be found with a single juvenile present from August 29 to 31.

Upland Sandpipers were observed at several locations. Possible breeding birds were discovered at the I-X Center near Cleveland Hopkins Airport in late June and early July but positive breeding evidence was not obtained. Burke Airport hosted up to 6 Upland Sandpipers (July 26) from July 25 to August 6. Fly-by migrants were seen at Gordon Park on August 2 and 16 and at Mentor Headlands on August 30. The summer's sightings are most encouraging, especially the I-X Center birds.

Baldwin Lake and Barberton produced no notably rare shorebirds. Stilt Sandpipers were at both locations along with good counts of Lesser Yellowlegs and Pectoral Sandpipers.

Gulls, Terns - Two Great Black-backed Gulls were occasionally noted at either Mentor Headlands or Gordon Park throughout the period. The birds, as is typical, were either in first or second-summer plumage. Herring Gulls attempted to nest atop the old Addressograph-Multigraph buildings in Euclid but apparently were not successful. About 2 dozen adult Herring Gulls frequented this area around East 222nd Street and St. Clair the entire summer as was the case during the summer of 1986 when initial reports of summering Herring Gulls at this location were made. It is probable that other nesting attempts go unnoticed because the nesting sites are closed off to observations.

A pattern has developed regarding summer Laughing Gull and Franklin's Gull sightings. Birds noted in the months of June and July are adults and/or first-summer birds almost exclusively while juveniles as well as other age types can be found afterwards. Laughing Gulls noted this year included a first-summer bird at Mentor Headlands on June 21 and juveniles at Lorain on August 17 and at Gordon Park on August 25 (LePage). A first-summer Franklin's Gull was at Mentor Headlands at the end of June but Franklin's Gulls at Gordon Park in July and August were not aged. If at all possible summer reports of these gulls, as well as other non-regularly occurring or out of season species, should include the age of the bird.

The status of Forster's Tern in the Cleveland area has dramatically changed since 1980. Prior to this time, seeing a single Forster's Tern was noteworthy. In 1980 this species appeared in the region in spring for the first time in 40 years and each subsequent spring has seen a handful of records. But

the really dramatic increase has been noted in the summer and this year 121 Forster's Terns on August 22 and 132 on the 24th on the tire rafts at Lorain eclipsed all previous best counts (Klamm). Clearly the increase in sightings of this species can be attributed to the building of the tire rafts at Lorain Harbor. Unfortunately, as Forster's Terns have increased, Common Terns have decreased. The decline of this species both in Ohio and throughout the Great lakes region has been reflected in much lower counts of this bird. Late August saw the peak of Common Terns locally at Lorain, Gordon Park, and at Mentor Headlands, but no count exceeded 66 birds. Most Black Terns were recorded within the traditional peak period of abundance for this species - the middle of August - with 43 on August 13 being the best count. Again, numbers of terns were undoubtedly reduced because of the dried and baked nature of the Gordon Park mudflat.

Common Nighthawk - Significant gathering of Common Nighthawks did not materialize until August 30. On this date 30-50 birds were noted in Aurora (Elder) and 800 were estimated from Gordon Park all along the lakeshore in Bratenahl to Eddy Road. Most interesting were about 20 Common Nighthawks observed hawking insects just over the treetops, and oftentimes below, at Gordon Park on August 29. A few times the birds came within 6 feet of the observer as they sought to catch the low flying insects (Hannikman).

Flycatchers - Alder Flycatchers summered in Kent, Wadsworth, and Streetsboro (Rosche) and were reported from Twinsburg on June 11 (Hoffman). Areas where this species has occurred in past summers, such as Geauga County and Solon, were either not surveyed or did not have this species. It appears that Least Flycatcher is slowly expanding as a summering, and possibly breeding, species in the southern parts of the region. Territorial males were recorded from Aurora Pond and Geauga Lake on June 21 (Hoffman). More reports from these areas may indicate the extent of this apparent expansion or it may reveal that these were isolated, unpaired males. Olive-sided Flycatcher was recorded in early June with single birds on the 1st in Parma Heights (Harlan) and at Sims Park on the 3rd (Hannikman).

Wrens - The gradual return of Carolina Wrens to former nesting areas again was evident during the summer. Two young were noted in Rocky River, a bird was observed in Strongsville, and single birds observed in Cleveland Heights on July 4 and at Shipman Pond near Mentor Marsh on August 30 were deemed to be in residence. "Gradually improving" was the comment from an observer who regularly surveyed Summit and Portage Counties. One to two Marsh Wrens delighted observers at Gordon Park from mid June through July until dredgings destroyed their preferred haunts. Marsh Wren were also reported from Baldwin Lake and Summit and Portage Counties (Harlan, Chaser). No Winter Wrens -

were reported.

Brown Thrasher - Only comment received from observers about the status of this species was a hopeful "improved in Lake Rockwell and West Branch (Rosche)". Two were noted from mid to the end of June at Gordon Park but competition from rival Northern Mockingbirds resulted in no nesting attempt. Contributors still must be aware of and report on the status of this species in the Cleveland region.

Warblers - Early June warbler migration, was non-existent. Sims Park seems to attract the few migrants as only the following were reported: Bay-breasted Warbler and Mourning Warbler on June 3 and Blackpoll Warbler on June 7. A Kentucky Warbler on June 9 and a Black and White Warbler on July 8 in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and a Black and White Warbler at Horseshoe Lake on July 27 were the only other out of season stragglers. Fall movement began in earnest with the weekend of August 29 and 30 with Magnolia Warblers being the most common migrant. Again appearing in late August were very early Yellow-rumped Warblers with the earliest individual at Mentor Headlands on the 23rd.

Mourning Warblers breeding in Newbury at the American Society of Metals property highlighted nesting season observation (Fondrk). Investigations of this area also produced Chestnut-sided Warblers and Ovenbirds. Another location for Chestnut-sided Warblers was an industrial park about 2 miles east of the above location. At least 2 nesting pairs of Prothonotary Warblers were found in the Brecksville area of the Cuyahoga National Recreation Area. Four Prothonotary Warblers were also located at Lake Rockwell in June. Other June observations from Lake Rockwell included 4 Chestnut-sided Warblers, 18 Hooded Warblers, and 35 Common Yellowthroats. Virginia Kendall Park produced 16 Ovenbirds and 28 Hooded Warblers in June survey. Dogged determination by many nesting season observers has continued to produce new evidence about the status of species such as Chestnut-sided Warblers, Prothonotary Warblers, Pine Warblers, etc. and these observers also have provided early warnings about possible and/or real declines in nesting populations such as Ovenbird. Enough can not be said about the work these people have done and hopefully will continue to do.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Little Blue Heron - An immature was present at Baldwin Lake from July 18 to 20 (Klamm).

Tricolored Heron - One was resting on the beach at Mentor Headlands on the morning of August 9 (Kellerman, Gustafson).

Northern Shoveler - A male was at Gordon Park on July 3 (Hoffman).

Lesser Scaup - A male was discovered at North Chagrin on June 13 (Kellerman). Inland records of any bay ducks during the summer are rare as most individuals have been found at or near lakefront areas.

Hooded Merganser - The second nesting record in CBC files was documented from the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in Brecksville as a female with 8 young was observed on June 4, 5, and 11 (Chaser). A female, 6 young Hooded Mergansers, and 1 young Wood Duck were noted on June 21 (Harlan). Three young were also noted on August 8 at Gordon Park, again in the company of a young Wood Duck (Harlan).

Ruddy Duck - A female was present at Gordon Park from June 3 to 26 (Klamm). Then a female being followed by a brood of young ducklings was noted on Lake Erie west of the East 72nd Street pier on August 1 (Gustafson, Peterjohn). This was a first nesting record in Cleveland area history.

Pipping Plover - A juvenile remained at Gordon Park. from August 15 to 24 (Klamm, Harlan, LePage et. al.).

American Avocet - This species was recorded at Gordon Park as follows: single birds on June 5 and July 23 and 12 on July 21 (Klamm, Harlan, LePage).

Marbled Godwit - Three appeared at Lakeview Park in Lorain on July 1 (Kellerman) and 1 was noted at Gordon Park for most of the morning on August 29 (Harlan, LePage).

Baird's Sandpiper - Most unusual was a very early adult at Gordon Park on July 24 (Klamm, Harlan, LePage). Adults are exceedingly rare in the Cleveland area as all birds noted in August and September are juveniles.

Long-billed Dowitcher - An adult was identified by call at Gordon Park on August 2 (Hannikman).

Least Tern - An adult made several passes over the mudflat at Gordon Park before it headed eastward mid-morning on July 11 (Hannikman). The tern was first heard calling as it came in over the breakwall from the direction of Lake Erie.

Loggerhead Shrike - A lone bird was discovered perched on telephone wires inside Gordon Park early in the morning on August 30 (Harlan, Hannikman). The bird then disappeared only to reappear on the same wires about dusk the same evening (Hannikman).

Northern Parula - One was reported from the Furnace Run Road area of the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area on June 24 (Maugans).

Yellow-headed Blackbird - A female or immature male was with the hordes of other blackbirds on August 16 at Gordon Park (Harlan).

#### FIELD NOTES

Disastrous Nesting Season for Kent Colony of Chimney Swifts (Chaetura pelagica) - While the total number of resident Chimney Swifts (24) in the colony at Kent State University in 1987 was better than the lowest on record (18 in 1985; average of 32 since 1949), the nestling season was disastrous. There were 10 nesting pairs, one nesting threesome (a helper with one pair), and one unmated bird that lived alone. Eleven nests were made, but four were washed off the wall and two were soaked by heavy rain. One nest was replaced, but it later fell with three eggs. The eggs disappeared from four other nests and no effort was made to replace them, even though the birds remained for some time in three of those nesting sites (air shafts). Only one pair (with a "helper") succeeded in nesting. Four eggs were laid (the normal number) and three juveniles were produced. This was the poorest season for nesting since observations began in 1944. - RALPH W. DEXTER

Streetsboro Virginia Rails - On July 19, 1987 we visited the Streetsboro Bog area (along OH 303 at the railroad tracks west of Streetsboro). We concentrated on a small marsh segment on the west side of the tracks and south of the road. Here the sedge-like vegetation is much shorter than cattails and there are numerous openings near the tracks. We played Virginia Rail tapes and heard vocalization while the tapes were playing, but the birds did not seem to be responding and were more visible after we ceased playing them. One adult was visible several time while feeding between clumps of vegetation and once while calling (the typical grunt of laugh call). Another adult flew over the tracks and into the marsh where immediately after we heard a lengthy series of high-pitched "kick-kick" calls reminiscent of the normal "kid-ick" call and once even duplicating it. This series ended with the grunt call from both the adult there and the other farther to our left. This "kick-kick" call was given several times, the others all brief. The adults periodically gave the grunt call and there were occasional random single note calls almost like a squeal.

It is our feeling that the squeal calls were begging or locational calls from the young and the "kick-kick" was given during the feeding of the young birds. We never saw any young,

however, and could not verify this. Whatever the exact circumstances, the birds were quite vocal and the calls were either typical adults' calls or ones not too unlike other common calls in adults. The mid-morning time (9:05 - 10:25 am) indicates that calls should be heard any time of day and thus the presence of Virginia Rail family groups should be self evident at this time of years. JEAN AND DICK HOFFMAN

AN INVITATION: The Kirtland Bird Club meets at 7:45 pm on the first Wednesday of each month except July and August at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. 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 each Monday. In the case of extreme rarities, e., g., Rufous Hummingbird, Western Kingbird, 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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RH:sav