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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                |                              |
| 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)

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

Editor

Ray Hannikman

Editorial Assistants

Elinor Elder  
Janet Hannikman  
Jean Hoffman

Weather Summary

William A. Klamm

CONTRIBUTORS

Dwight and Ann Chaser  
Mary Gustafson  
Ray Hannikman  
Neil Henderson  
Dick and Jean Hoffman  
Tom Kellerman  
William and Nancy Klamm  
Charles Klaus

Walter Kremm  
Tom LePage  
Perry Peskin  
Richard Rickard  
Larry Rosche  
Bruce Peterjohn  
Ed and Cheryl Pierce

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All records, comments, and observations should be sent to

Ray Hannikman  
440 East 260th Street  
Euclid, Ohio 44132

THE WEATHER  
Winter, 1987-1988

December - Temperatures averaged 34.8 degrees, 3.7 degrees above normal. The highest temperature, 58 degrees, was reached on the 15th, the lowest, 10 degrees, on the 30th. Lake Erie water temperature declined from 45 degrees on the 1st to 38 degrees on the 31st. Precipitation, on 17 days, totaled 2.96 inches, 0.21 inches above normal. Snowfall, on 11 days, totaled 16.4 inches. Sunshine prevailed a dismal 15% of the time possible.

January - Temperatures averaged 25.6 degrees, 0.1 degrees above normal. Lake Erie water temperature declined from 38 degrees on the 1st to 33 degrees on the 10th and was constant thereafter. Precipitation totaled 1.03 inches, 1.44 inches below normal. This resulted in the 7th driest January on record. Snowfall totaled 8.7 inches. Sunshine prevailed 33% of the time possible.

February - Temperatures averaged .25.8 degrees, 1.6 degrees below normal. Lake Erie water temperature was 33 degrees all month. Precipitation totaled 2.84 inches, 0.64 inches above normal. Snowfall totaled 22.9 inches. Sunshine prevailed 30% of the time possible.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

Several factors combined to make the winter of 1987-1988 an unimpressive one in the Cleveland area. Gull watching seemed rather uninspiring (except for January 4 at Edgewater) as Bonaparte's Gulls were not as abundant as usual and the arctic species were not as obvious and were not as easy to find. Winter finches made a poor showing and only in the Portage and Summit County areas to the south of Cleveland were woodland birds reported with and regularity. On the positive side was the continued compilation of seasonal data at Lake Isaac and from the Akron lakes. Studies at these locations have proven invaluable in assessing seasonal trends. Birds liven up the winter scene - the following paragraphs present what happened during the winter of 1987-1988 in the Cleveland area.

Waterfowl - Small numbers of Common Loons persisted until the end of December. Maximum counts were five birds on December 5 along the Cleveland lakefront and four on the Akron lakes on December 23. The open water of the Akron lakes keeps Pied-billed Grebes there all winter. Tallies included 22 on December 23, 18 on December 8, and 16 on February 28 (Rosche). Two flocks of Tundra Swans were noted at the end of December - 33 at Perry on the 26th and 45 at Lake Rockwell on the 30th.

Red-breasted Mergansers and Common Mergansers highlighted lakefront waterfowl observations. With record numbers of Red-breasted Mergansers present along the lakefront during November, it was not surprising that excellent winter counts were made. Highest counts were 10,000 birds - in Cleveland on December 1 and Lake County on December 6. A flock was continuously present at Eastlake throughout December with 3,000 early in the month dwindling to 700 by month's end. In the annual Cleveland Christmas Bird Count, a record total of 9,038 Red-breasted Mergansers was recorded. January's highest counts were 3,712 on the 7th and 1,526 on the 27th (Klamm). Most birds cleared out by early February as the lake froze over near shore. Common Mergansers did not arrive in force until early January, 2,618 was the highest count on January 7. Other good totals during the month were 1,070 on the 16th and 1,035 on the 27th (Klamm). Among other lakefront highlights were 1,000+ Canvasbacks at Lorain on February 21 (Gustafson, Peterjohn). brief appearances of all three species of scoter, and three Oldsquaw at Edgewater at the end of February.

Continuous coverage of Lake Isaac produced no real surprises except for three Northern Shovelers on December 8 with a dawdler there until January 1. Hundreds of Mallards, American Black Ducks, and Canada Geese remained at this inland waterfowl haven through out the period (Harlan).

Waterfowl records from the Akron lakes continued to reinforce the fact that these areas are prime stopover points for several species. Though, like Lake Isaac, Mallards and Canada Geese dominated in numbers of individuals, there were interesting counts of other species. 30 and 20 Gadwall were at Lake Rockwell December 19 and 30, 3-5 Northern Shovelers were seen on three dates during the period, and small numbers of Common Goldeneye could usually be found. Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Duck seem to have a affinity for Mogadore Reservoir. This was true in December as counts on December 5 and 21 were 40 and 130, and 297 and 121 for Ring-necked Duck and Ruddy Duck respectively. Upwards of 600 American Coots were present on the Akron lakes during December with number dwindling to 60-80 during February. This species is locally most abundant during all seasons in the Akron area (Rosche).

Gulls - Two things made gull watching rather uneventful during the winter - the arctic species were inconspicuous and difficult to find and numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls were much reduced. Peak count of Glaucous Gulls was three at Lorain on February 10. No Glaucous Gulls were recorded in December or during the period from January 4 to January 26 and all told this species was recorded with much less frequency than in recent years. Iceland Gulls were recorded on three dates during the season - adults on January 27 and February 14 and a third-winter bird on February 7. Great Black-backed Gulls peaked at 161 at Lorain on February 10 while Lesser Black-backed Gulls, all singles--all adults, turned up from Eastlake to Lorain. Apparently Edgewater's first Lesser Black-backed Gull was sitting on the ice there on February 7. Ring-billed Gulls were most abundant along the Cleveland lakefront in January with counts ranging from 5,400 on the 7th to 30,000 on the 27th (Klamm). Most disappointing, however, were the Bonaparte's Gulls. Only one day, December 26 between Mentor and Perry Park when 6,000+ were recorded, was there any sizeable numbers of this species. Many winters see periods in late December and the first three weeks of January when tens of thousands of Bonaparte's Gulls blanket favored locations such as Lorain or Edgewater or Eastlake. Not so during the winter of 1987-1988.

Correspondingly the more unusual smaller gull species, which seem to wander in with the large numbers of Bonaparte's Gulls, were in poor evidence. Adult Little Gulls were only observed as follows - 1 each at Mentor Headlands and Perry Park on December 26 (Rosche, Hannikman), and 1 at Edgewater on December 29 (Klamm). There were no reports of Black-legged Kittiwakes and Common Black-headed Gull put in only a one-day appearance.

Snowy Owl - This species did not fare well locally as two birds were killed near Burke Airport. Two observers were actually escorted by a friendly airport official to pick up one of the dead birds (Klamm). During February a Snowy Owl was regular at Lorain. What would be a rather far inland occurrence for this species was of a bird that was reported at the Solon dump through January (fide Gustafson, Peterjohn).

American Robin - Only three American Robins were recorded from December 1 to 24. Afterwards moderate numbers were reported in January from Rocky River Valley areas (Klamm). In February even more birds were noted with 100 in Parma Heights on the 23rd (Harlan) while "large numbers particularly after late January" was the comment from the Akron area (Rosche). Why the increase of robins as winter progressed? Most probably it was December's mild weather which kept numbers farther north than usual with only the colder weather of late December forcing these birds south in to the Cleveland area. After the middle of February migrant birds from the South were evident as singing males could be heard on the milder days.

Cedar Waxwing - This species showed a curious occurrence pattern. None was observed from December 1 to December 20 after which birds were consistently reported from the Rocky River Valley until January 9. High count was 115 on January 4. Also during this period 75 Cedar Waxwings were present in Northfield from December 28 to 31 (Chaser). From January 9 to February 17 these nomadic wanderers were seen on only three days with 125 birds reappearing in the Rocky River Valley. After February 17 birds appeared at Lake Isaac and remained throughout the period and the species was termed "abundant" after late January in the Akron area. Catch as catch can is a good dictum when trying to find these birds.

Winter Finches - 25 Evening Grosbeaks on December 12 in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area was the only count of significance (Chaser). The birds were reportedly present in the area all winter but other reports were never submitted. A paltry nine Pine Siskins on February 16 at Lakewood Park Cemetery highlighted (?) winter occurrences of this species. No Common Redpolls were observed as was neither crossbill.

Blackbirds - Large numbers of Common Grackles and Brown-headed Cowbirds were observed throughout the period from the Euclid-Wickliffe-Willowick-Eastlake area. Oftentimes when a large flock was found it consisted primarily of one species mostly either Common Grackles or Brown-headed Cowbirds. Upwards of 1,000 individuals were noted. The flocks would seem to take over a neighborhood for a period of time and the birds would move from house to house and from tree to tree. Observations indicated that Mentor Marsh was the roosting area for these birds as flocks were observed streaming out of the marsh early in the morning. No other parts of the area produced blackbird counts as this eastern portion of the region.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-necked Grebe - A winter-plumaged bird was at Springfield Lake near Akron on February 28 and 29 (Rosche).

Eared Grebe - Two birds lingered: one at East 72nd Street from December 6 to 23 (Harlan, Klamm), and one at Eastlake from December 22 to 24 (Kellerman).

Northern Gannet - An immature appeared at East 72nd Street midday on December. 5 (Hoffman).

Harlequin Duck - At least one female occurred with sightings from Lorain on January 10 and from February 10 to 21, and from Edgewater on February 4 and 7 (Rosche, Klamm, LePage).

Barrow's Goldeneye - An immature female was critically studied at Lorain on February 20 (Gustafson, Peterjohn). Key field marks were the almost unmarked median coverts and an entirely lemon yellow culmen of the bill.

Bald Eagle - A subadult stirred up the gulls at Eastlake on January 9 by soaring in from the east and by retreating from where it had come (Hannikman, Rosche).

Pomarine Jaeger - An apparent winter-plumaged adult remained in the Edgewater Park vicinity from about 2:00 p.m. to about 3:00 p.m. on January 4 (LePage, Harlan). Characteristics noted were: blunt central tail feathers extending about an inch beyond the tail, pale belly, dark but not solid breast band, mostly dark tail with upper and lower coverts barred, throat and hind-neck dusky with a hint of yellow wash, dark bill and cap, horizontal streaking on the axillars, and plump-chested look. This extraordinary sighting marked the first ever adult Pomarine Jaeger recorded in the Cleveland region and continued the string of curious winter observations of this species (see CBC Vo. 80, No. 1, pp. 5-6). Adult Parasitic Jaeger has only been recorded once also in the region.

Common Black-headed Gull - An adult was noted January 4 at Edgewater (LePage).

California Gull - An adult was at Edgewater on February 21 (Gustafson, Peterjohn). This species has now been recorded 5 Out of the last 6 winters.

Northern Saw-whet Owl - An injured bird was found near Nimisila Reservoir on December 6, was rehabilitated, and was released near this location (fide Rosche).

Brown Thrasher - One bird spent the winter, December 23 to February 29, at Lake Isaac (Harlan).

Lincoln's Sparrow - The first record ever of a bird spending the entire winter in the Cleveland area was of an individual, quite incredibly, in downtown Cleveland at the National City Bank Building on busy East 9th Street (Klaus, Rosche, Hannikman). The bird partially subsisted on food put out for it and other downtown avian residents and actively skulked in the bushes to elude being photographed on February 29.

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Addendum (Fall, 1987)

Northern Saw-whet Owl - One was photographed in Stow on November 20 (Rosche).

THE BREEDING BIRD SURVEY AND BEYOND 1987 was the fifth and final year of data accumulation for the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas. Now that this task is behind us, we have more time to examine another aspect of the Cleveland region's nesting species — population trends.

This effort is facilitated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 1986 publication, The Breeding Bird Survey Its First Fifteen Years, 1965-1979 by Chandler S. Robbins, Danny Bystrak, and Paul H. Geissler. The Breeding Bird Survey, according to this report, "...is a cooperative program for gathering and analyzing quantitative information on populations of breeding birds in North America north of Mexico." The data for this study is collected by observers along "randomly distributed roadside routes" established within each 1 degree block of latitude and longitude in the United States and southern Canada." This 15-year trend analysis illustrates some interesting and often unexpected population changes. Some Cleveland area nesting species that have sustained noteworthy wide-scale declines are as follows:

- Northern Flicker - highly significant continent-wide decreases throughout the study period. This is largely attributed to the flicker's inability to compete successfully with Starlings for nesting holes.
- Eastern Bluebird - significant declines attributed in part to severe weather and competition from House Sparrows and Starlings.
- Yellow-breasted Chat - sharp and steady declines in east.
- Eastern Meadowlark - significant declines in 20 eastern states.
- Rufous-sided Towhee - significant decreases in east.
- Field Sparrow - highly significant declines continent wide. Attributed to more intense land use and smaller acreage of reverting fields.

- Song Sparrow - significant declines for the continent. This was believed to be a result of the severe winters of 1976-1977 and 1977-1978 and populations were expected to increase back to normal barring another such disaster.
- American Goldfinch - significant continent-wide declines throughout the period.

Conspicuously, many of these species share the same general habitat — brushy, abandoned fields and similar situations. It is important to pay special attention to these birds in upcoming years. With continued scrutiny, we will be able to determine if these trends continue and hopefully should be able to take the necessary actions in the future to prevent some of our common nesters from declining further. Rob Harlan

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, 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 Sunday afternoon 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 date of the observation.

Inquiries and correspondence regarding subscriptions to The Cleveland Bird Calendar should be address to:

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History  
Attention: Joan M, Palmer  
Wade Oval, University Circle  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106