



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

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 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, 1988

June - Temperatures averaged 68.9 degrees, 1.3 degrees above normal. The extremes were a low of 43 degrees on the 11th and a record setting high of 104 degrees on the 25th. Lake Erie water temperature of 59 degrees on the 1st rose to 69 degrees on the 30th. Precipitation came on only 6 days and totaled 0.65 inches, 2.84 inches below normal. Drought conditions worsened as the yearly deficit grew from - 3.60 inches on the 1st to - 6.33 inches on the 30th. Sunshine prevailed 84% of the time possible.

July - Precipitation on 12 days totaled 3.42 inches, 0.05 inches above normal. The yearly deficit peaked at - 7.61 inches on the 17th and eased to - 6.28 inches on the 31st. Lake Erie continued to warm and reached 76 degrees by month's end. Temperatures averaged 75.9 degrees, 4.3 degrees above normal. Sunshine prevailed 74% of the time possible.

August - Precipitation fell on 11 days and totaled 3.35 inches, 0.03 inches below normal. At month's end the yearly precipitation deficit stood at - 6.31 inches. Temperatures averaged 74.2 degrees, 3.8 degrees above normal. Lake Erie water temperature rose to 79 degrees on the 17th where it held steady through the 29th when it inexplicably dropped to 73 degrees at which temperature the month ended. Sunshine prevailed 67% of the time possible.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

The Summer of 1988 will always be remembered for its searing heat and penetrating drought. It became a chore just to go out birding as temperatures soaked one before 10:00 a.m. and the only activity that seemed rational after 12:00 noon was to sit in one's air conditioned house. The elements of nature never halt the birds. Nesting activities, shorebird migration, gatherings of Common Nighthawks, late August warblers all happened when they were supposed to - and results surprised. The enthusiasm displayed during the past summer says something good about the generosity of the people who enjoy birds and their effect on our lives.

Waterfowl - The Barberton Salt Flat area has been shown to be a very productive waterfowl breeding area in recent years. The following table lists species and number of young observed a one time or another during the season at this location —

<u>Species</u>	<u>Number of young observed</u>
Pied-billed Grebe	14+
Green-winged Teal	6-8
Blue-winged Teal	24+
American Coot	74

Completing the waterfowl picture from the Akron area were a summering Red-breasted Merganser and a Lesser Scaup duck on July 8, both at Lake Rockwell.

Little in the way of out-of-season waterfowl showed up along the lakefront. Typical small numbers of Green-winged Teal were observed at Gordon Park in June and July and a Northern Pintail flew over Mentor Headlands on August 27.

Shorebirds - Shorebirds did not disappoint those who pursued them. Regular surveys at Gordon Park and Barberton revealed good to excellent numbers of the region's commoner migrants interspersed with sightings of locally rare species.

Dredge dumpings at Gordon Park throughout most of the summer created an attractive mudflat for migrant shorebirds. Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpipers, and Short-billed Dowitchers all appeared in the last 3 days of June. Numbers peaked between July 24 and August 10 with selected high counts as follows: Lesser Yellowlegs (98 on July 30), Semipalmated Sandpiper (100 on July 24), Pectoral Sandpiper

(200 on August 6). Whimbrels, Western Sandpipers, and Willets, rare but nevertheless annual visitors, all were recorded at Gordon Park in ones and twos. When the dredge dumpings stopped and as the wet mudflat turned dry after mid-August the numbers of shorebirds were greatly reduced and the few remaining pools became focal points for the small numbers of birds that trickled through. During the last 10 days of August, 1 to 6 juvenile Baird's Sandpipers, a species which prefers drier areas, could be found. At nearby Burke Airport Upland Sandpipers appeared in late July. Far to the east successful nesting of this species was documented at Fairport Harbor in late June and July (Rosche, Hoffman). Previous observations in prior years in this same field led the observers to seek positive breeding evidence which was obtained when an adult and young were photographed (Rosche).

To the south, the timing and occurrence of shorebirds correlated well with lakefront migration. What determines the success of a shorebird migration season at the Akron lakes is how individual lake levels are managed - a lowering of lake levels will mean more exposed mud and consequently more habitat to attract the birds. Lake levels were low for most of the summer. Good finds at Lake Rockwell included the first ever June record there of Least Sandpiper on the 28th and a Willet on August 18 (Rosche). Highlights at Barberton were 1 to 3 Wilson's Phalaropes from July 31 to August 16 and a Baird's Sandpiper on August 19.

A Stilt Sandpiper on August 16 was the standout find at Baldwin Lake (Harlan). Peak counts of shorebird also were from late July through early August.

Gulls Terns - Season long observations at Mentor Headlands the past few summers have shown that Great Black-backed Gulls remain in the area all season. Up to three were found this summer. Early in the morning, usually before most of the beachcombers arrive, the gulls can typically be found resting with other gulls (usually non-breeding Ring-billed Gulls) on the beach. When scattered the Great Black-backed Gulls find their way to the breakwall and remain there. Herring Gulls again summered in the Euclid area around East 222nd and St. Clair Avenue. A pair was observed with a young bird on the roof of the old Addressograph-Multigraph factory on June 18 (Hannikman). Demolition activities may have led the adults to abandon the youngster. It is most probable that more nesting activities take place around this area in places which are private industrial concerns and not open for observations.

Deemed most unusual for the area in summer were three Bonaparte's Gulls at Lake Rockwell on June 30.

Terns were in poor evidence as the high count of Common Terns was 18 on August 15 and 33 was the peak tally for Black Terns on July 30. Fascinating was the observation of 2 adult Forster's Terns feeding what was described as a "very young bird" at Lake Rockwell on July 21.

Common Nighthawk - Everywhere in the region during the season was this species scarce. Reports from June 1 to August 25 indicated an extremely low summering population with contributors mentioning that the birds were absent from traditional nesting areas. What happened on the night of August 27, however, was an influx of Common Nighthawks into the Akron area, and to a lesser extent, the Cleveland area that few observers may ever be lucky enough to witness again. There were 3,500+ birds reported from Lake Rockwell and 2,000 from the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (Rosche, Stover). In northern Ohio in the Greater Cleveland area, 454 birds were tallied over East 260th Street from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m., 300 birds were noted between Routes 44 and 91 at this same time, and 170 were between East 260th Street and East 200th Street in Euclid, again from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Primary direction of movement was east to west which leaves one flabbergasted when no Common Nighthawks were detected that evening from Lakewood. This spectacle seemed to be concentrated in the eastern suburbs of Greater Cleveland and in the Akron area. 200+ birds were noted at Lake Rockwell the following evening and 500+ at Baldwin Lake on August 31 rounded out the season. Like so many other migration phenomena, e.g., loon migration, being at the right place at the right time is the key - and if you were in the Akron area on August 27 you certainly could have experienced the "Night of the Nighthawk".

Carolina Wren - Contributors continued to mention the improved status of this species in their birding areas. Pairs were sighted in locations such as the Rocky River Valley, Strongsville, Mentor Headlands, the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, and a continuing improvement has been noted from the Akron area. This recent area-wide improvement has meant a rewelcoming of Carolina Wrens back into haunts from which the bird has been virtually wiped out because of a series of bitterly cold winters in the last 12 years.

Warblers - Few late-migrating warblers were noted in early June. In late springs 10 or more species of warblers can be found in many places, especially along the lakefront, but this did not occur during early June. Yellow Warblers were on the move by the last 10 days of July as an excellent count of 30 at Gordon Park on the 24th indicated (Harlan). By late August general fall warbler migration was underway. 15 species, among which were 8 Canada Warblers, 15 Magnolia Warblers, 10 Wilson's Warblers, and 1 Mourning Warbler, were at Mentor Headlands on the 27th. Movements were also detected at Gordon Park, highlighted by a Connecticut Warbler on the 27th and 10 Cape May Warblers on the 31st, and in the Rocky River Valley.

Dedicated observers submitted excellent data on warblers noted during the prime breeding season of June and July. The following table lists individual warblers found during summer bird studies at 3 locations in the Akron area —

Species/Location	Lake Rockwell	Virginia Kendall	Mog. Res.
Blue-winged Warbler	3	6	3
Yellow Warbler	30	15	55
Chestnut-sided Warbler	3	0	0
Pine Warbler	3	0	0
Cerulean Warbler	3	3	0
American Redstart	8	2	10
Prothonotary Warbler	2	0	0
Ovenbird	1	6	7
Northern Waterthrush	3	0	1
Louisiana Waterthrush	0	4	0
Kentucky Warbler	0	1	0
Mourning Warbler	1	0	0
Common Yellowthroat	39	25	23
Hooded Warbler	13	43	3
Yellow-breasted Chat	2	0	0

Noteworthy items from the above data would be the excellent summering population of Hooded Warblers at Virginia Kendall Metropark and what appears to be a continuing presence of Pine Warblers at Lake Rockwell. Last summer's count of Ovenbirds at Virginia Kendall was 16 so concern still is warranted about the status of this species in the Cleveland area.

One observer (Harlan) hiked 3 different routes on 3 dates in June in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and compiled the following highlights —

<u>June 3 (1)</u>	<u>June 8 (2)</u>	=
Hooded Warbler (31)	Cerulean Warbler (10)	

June 15 (3)
 Blue-winged Warbler (14)
 Ovenbird (12)
 Hooded Warbler (31)

- (1) Snowville Road south to Boston Mills Road Bridge over Turnpike
- (2) Chippewa Creek Drive north to Alexander Road
- (3) Snowville Road north to Chippewa Creek Drive

This survey also indicated an excellent population of Hooded Warblers and provided data on Ovenbirds to compare to data on future surveys in the area.

Efforts such as the above deserve special mention for the keen interest those two observers have shown in the summering warblers of the region.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

American Bittern - Summer sightings of this declining species are always of interest: single birds were at Barberton on June 17 (Rosche) and Gordon Park on July 23 (Klamm, Harlan). Since both Gordon Park and Barberton received coverage throughout the summer and neither location produced further sightings, both birds were presumed to have been either unsuccessful migrants and/or breeders.

Little Blue Heron - An adult appeared in a small swampy area at the Menorah Center Home for the Aging on July 4 (Lewin).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron - One adult was noted throughout most of the summer along the Chagrin River at South Chagrin Metropark (Hoffman, Harlan). Two birds were found on July 20 (Harlan).

American Wigeon - A first June record of this species for Lakeview Cemetery was of a bird recorded on the 8th (Hoffman).

Ring-necked Duck - A female was noted at Sunset Pond in North Chagrin Metropark on 5 dates from July 17 to August 6 (Kellerman).

Hooded Merganser - A female and 5 young were seen at Brecksville Metropark on June 18 (Harlan).

Ruddy Duck - The second nesting ever in the Cleveland area was confirmed when 2 adults and 2 young were observed at Barberton on July 9 (Rosche). This pair had been present at this location since the end of May. The male was occasionally noted after July 9 but no further sightings were made of the female or young. The observer did speculate that the young were being kept in the cattails. Breeding success could not be determined for a pair that summered at Mogadore Reservoir.

Bald Eagle - Single immature birds were noted at Gordon Park on June 3 (Hoffman) and at Lake Rockwell on July 4 and August 27 (Rosche). Two immatures were at Lake Rockwell on August 29 (Rosche).

Peregrine Falcon - One surprised observers at Gordon Park on July 31 by flying in from the west, buzzing over and scattering the shorebirds, and then heading back westward. (Hannikman). Peregrine Falcons made major news in Toledo during the summer by nesting in the downtown area on a skyscraper.

Piping Plover - A juvenile was with other shorebirds at Gordon Park on August 4 (Klamm).

American Avocet - All sightings were at Gordon Park - single birds on July 11 and 27 and two birds on July 26 (Klamm, Harlan, Rosche, LePage).

Marbled Godwit - A lone bird was discovered on June 1 at Gordon Park (Harlan).

White-rumped Sandpiper - One was at Barberton on the very late date of June 19 (Rosche).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - A single bird remained at Gordon Park from August 26 to the end of the period (Hoffman et al.)

Long-billed Dowitcher - What was described as a calling non-juvenile was at Barberton on August 19 (Rosche).

Long-eared Owl - A most unusual sighting for the summer of 1988 was that of a Long-eared Owl found dead at Donald Gray Gardens on August 26 (Klamm). There appears to be only one valid, summer record previous to this one, that of a bird seen on July 3, 1960 in Gates Mills but heard often during that summer. This species' habits are so retiring that it may regularly nest and summer in the region but may escape detection.

Loggerhead Shrike - One appeared at Burke Airport on July 31 (Harlan).

Yellow-throated Warbler - A single bird was noted in Brecksville Metropark from June 8 to 19 (Harlan).

Black-and-white Warbler - A lone bird was at Hinckley on June 12 (Rosche).

Kentucky Warbler - Unusual in the fall, a male was observed in Parma on August 31 (Harlan).

Black-throated Sparrow - An incredible find, an adult male in breeding condition was discovered at Hambden Road Wildlife Area in Geauga County on June 4 and was present at least until July 29 (Fondrk, Rosche et al.). The bird was banded on June 24. This western desert species has wandered eastward, but all previous sightings east of the Mississippi River appear to have been fall or winter birds. Many of the records have been of birds at feeding stations. One can suspect that this bird, too, had been in this area since last fall or winter. The only previous Ohio record of Black-throated Sparrow was from Ashtabula, November 5, 1961 to December 6, 1961. See the Field Notes Section for the story of the discovery of this bird.

Red Crossbill - Three were found at Hambden Road Wildlife Area on June 5 (Haddad).

FIELD NOTES

Black-throated Sparrow Discovered Off-course - It was 7:20 a.m. on June 4, 1988 and the traffic on State Route 608 in Hamden Township had become so heavy that we were having difficulty listening for birds. Three of us were conducting the annual Breeding Bird Census. We were at stop number 16 which in the past has always been conspicuous for its absence of birds.

John Augustine and I were on the road while Bob McCullough was keeping time in the car. I noticed a small bird that had landed on an electric wire across the road. Through my binoculars I could see a triangular-shape black patch on its breast, a white stripe above and below the eye, and a dark tail. We discounted its being a Dickcissel since it showed no yellow on the breast. I casually mentioned Black-throated Sparrow as a possibility although at the time I could not have given a definite description of the bird. I had seen the bird twice before, once in Arizona and again at Big Bend in Texas. At this point a car came along and frightened the bird off the wire. Then it disappeared. Our time for this stop had expired so we had to move on.

After completing the survey, we returned to the spot but did not see any sign of the bird. At home I checked the field guides and felt more certain than ever that I had actually seen a Black-throated Sparrow. I debated calling anyone for fear of being ridiculed, but my excitement overruled my caution. Finally with some trepidation I contacted two fellow members of the a Kirtland Bird Club, Larry Rosche and Rob Harlan. They were both supportive of my discovery. Larry said he would meet me at the site the next morning.

When I arrived at about 7:15 a.m. the bird was on the wire. At this point I was positive it was a Black-throated Sparrow. About an hour later Larry arrived and confirmed the identity of the bird.

With a parabolic microphone I recorded three different vocalizations - two calls and a song. The main song is similar in cadence to that of a Song Sparrow. It starts out with two clear notes followed by a short slurred note and ends with a rapid trill. The two calls seem to be variations of the song. The one used most often when the bird is in dense shrubbery sounds like a higher-pitched, speeded-up version of the trill part of the song. The other call that I recorded while the bird was on the wire was clearly the trill part of the song. Perhaps this can not even be considered a separate call but only a part of a song.

To say the bird was out of its territory is a gross understatement. It normally resides in the southwest from Texas to California and as far north as Utah and Nevada and inhabits creosote and sage regions. The general size of the

trees would be the only similarity between its present Ohio habitat and the one it dwells in in the desert. Most of the area frequented by the sparrow here in Ohio is made up of low shrubs and trees, such as ash and cherry, that are in the process of succession. The closest thing resembling a desert in the area is a 51 acre almost bare field adjacent to the territory. A landscaping company had skimmed off the top soil and the present owner is selling it off into lots.

When you have so many expert birders in an area, it is not surprising that many other species of birds "turn up." I compiled a list of 42 species seen or heard near the Black-throated Sparrow site. These include three Red Crossbills, a Mourning Warbler, a Yellow-breasted Chat, a White-eyed Vireo, an American Redstart, an Alder Flycatcher, and a Black-billed Cuckoo.

It is interesting to speculate as to how the bird arrived in Northeast Ohio. Was it blown here by some storm or perhaps a series of storms? Did it make the trip in one year, two years, or longer? Perhaps it joined a flock of migrating birds in Texas and ended up in Ohio. And why did it decide to stop at this particular spot? The only other state record was at a feeder in Ashtabula in 1961. So why have the only two Black-throated Sparrows found in Ohio been located in the northeastern part of the state?

Finding the unexpected is one of the many joys of birding. It fuels one's enthusiasm for more. As of July 29, the bird was still on its Ohio territory - it will be interesting to see how long it stays, ANDY FONDRK

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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, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. Visitors are always welcome.

The Kirtland Bird Club sponsors a **WEEKLY RARE BIRD ALERT** at (216) 289-2473. Weekly 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., Black-throated Sparrow, Rufous Hummingbird, 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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