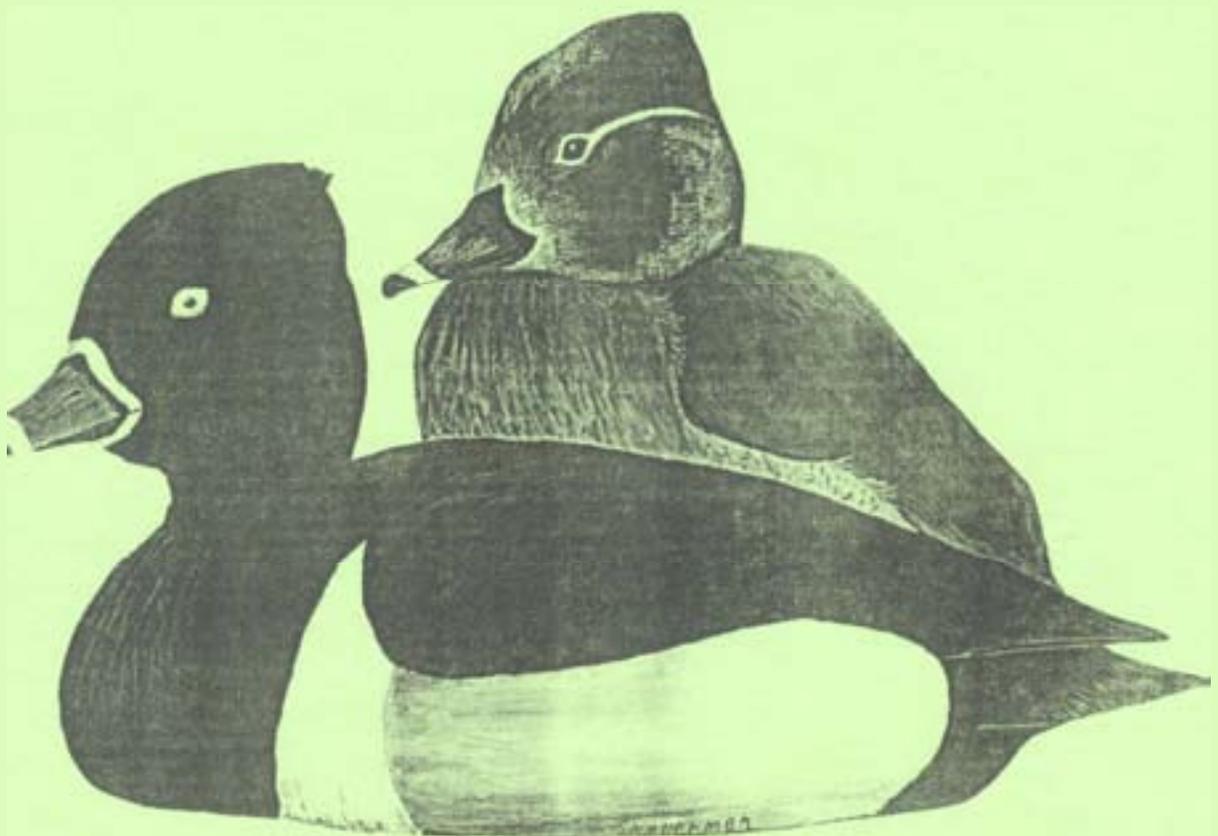


The Cleveland

June, July, August 1992

Volume 88 Number 3

# BIRD CALENDAR



Published by

**The Kirtland Bird Club and  
The Cleveland Museum of Natural History**

**The Cleveland Bird Calendar** was founded in 1905 by Francis H. Herrick of The Western Reserve University. The purposes of the publication are to provide information on the movements of birds through the Cleveland region, to monitor population densities of resident birds, and to help in the establishment of patterns of vagrancy for rarely encountered species of the region.

The Cleveland region includes Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit Counties.

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Due dates for seasonal field reports are as follows:

**5 March - winter season**

**5 June - spring season**

**5 September - summer season**

**5 December - autumn season**

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June, July, August 1992

Volume 88

Number 3

# The Cleveland Bird Calendar

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Richard Rickard (RR)

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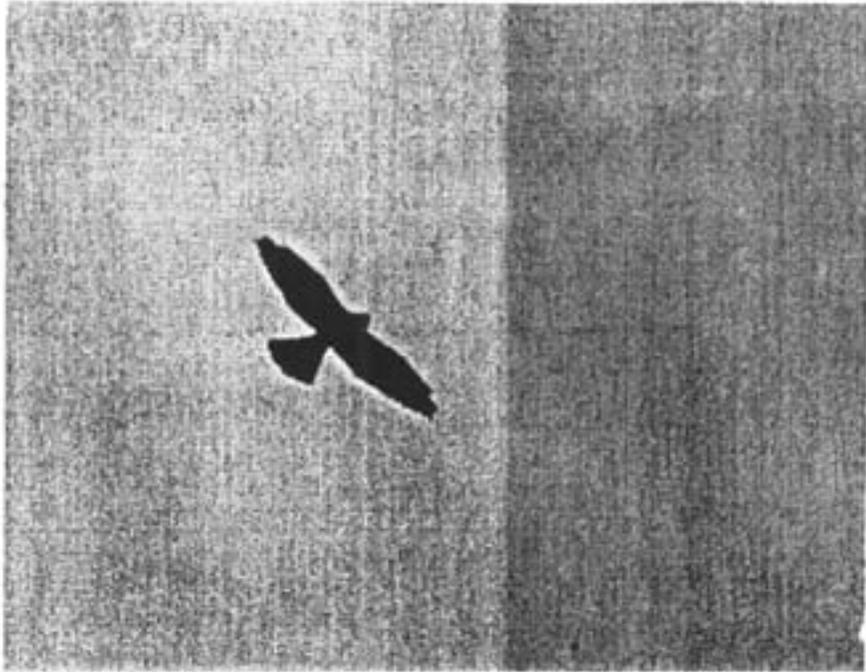
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*by Rich Stallcup*

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by Dick Hoffman

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## THE WEATHER SUMMER 1992

by William Klamm

**June** - The month was very cool as temperatures averaged 64.1°, 3.5° below normal. The highest temperature reached was 89° on the 17th and the lowest was 39° on the 22nd. Lake Erie water temperature stood at 58° on the 1st and rose to 64° on the 30th. Sunshine prevailed 65% of the time possible.

Precipitation occurred on 10 days and totaled 2.66 in., 0.83 in. below normal. The maximum rainfall in any 24 hour period was 1.18 in. on the 18th.

**July** - This was the wettest July since records began in 1870. Precipitation totaled 9.12 in., 5.75 in. above normal. This was distributed over 17 days while the greatest rainfall in any 24 hour period was 2.16 in. on the

29-30th. Temperatures averaged 70.7°, 0.9° below normal. The highest temperature was 88° on the 14th and the lowest 51° on the 22nd. Sunshine prevailed 47% of the time possible. Lake Erie water temperature rose to 72° on the 31st.

**August** - This was the tenth coldest August on record. Temperatures averaged 67.6°, 2.8° below normal. The highest temperature was 91° on the 10th and the lowest 48° on the 21st. Lake Erie edged up to only 73° on the 31st. Sunshine prevailed 64% of the time possible.

Precipitation was measurable on 17 days and totaled 4.58 in., 1.20 in. in excess of normal. The greatest rainfall in any 24 hour period was 1.21 in. on the 15-16th.

## REFLECTIONS

**Thirty Years Ago:** The first summer record of Prairie Warbler for the region was near Virginia Kendall Park on 1 July 1962 (Henderson). The first summer record of Hooded Merganser was on the Rocky River on 15 July (Klamm). A summering Black-and-white Warbler was found in Mentor Township on 7 & 31 July (Hammond). (As of 1992, local breeding of this species has yet to be verified.) A Connecticut Warbler was very early in Rocky River Reservation on 28 July (Klamm). An estimated 800-1000 Purple Martins gathered on telephone wires on the west side 11 - 18 Aug. (Stasko, Klamm).

**Twenty Years Ago:** White City was the main birding hot-spot of 1972. A Franklin's Gull was there on 11 June (Stasko). Seven American Avocets were there on 8 July 1972 (Carrothers). Young Ray Hannikman found 2 Willets there on 15 July. An alternate plumaged Stilt Sandpiper was there on 17 July (Hocevar). Marsh Hawks may have nested in Strongsville. An adult female and a juvenile barely able to fly were found in a field on 7 Aug. (Hocevar).

**Ten Years Ago:** Yellow-crowned Night-Herons nested in the Rocky River Valley during the summer of 1982 (Klamm). A Piping Plover was in Lorain on 12 July (LePage). A Red-necked Phalarope was at E. 55th St. on 29 Aug. (Hoffman). Red-breasted Nuthatches successfully nested in Kent (Rosche).

## Comment on the season

by Larry Rosche

Summer in the Cleveland region provides local birders a chance to monitor changes in breeding populations from year to year. This year Rob Harlan again organized and compiled the Cleveland Area Breeding Bird Surveys (CABBS). His report was very favorable for most species. John Pogacnik's daily field work in Lake County provided the first nest of Northern Parula Warbler in the history of the region. While I know that observers rarely feel compelled to report Green-backed Herons in the summer, it is disturbing to note that on the Klamms' daily surveys Black-crowned Night-Herons have become the more common of the two species. The Klamms regularly see 3-6 night-herons. This small number does not paint a bright future for the Green-backed.

I usually leave comments on the season's weather to Bill Klamm's detailed analysis. This June was dry and cold. July and August were exceptionally cool and wet. The effects on our breeding species' success are unknown but concern for the welfare of ground nesting species certainly is in order. I will be very interested in this autumn's passerine movement.

Finally, I have a few comments and questions on the confusing occurrence patterns of this past summer. I think it is interesting to note that Carolina Wrens are reported as often as House Wrens. Are House Wrens decreasing with the advance of more Carolinas? I noticed a great drop in American Robin numbers around Kent after the July rains. In fact, the nest in my blue spruce washed away. Did anyone else feel the same?. Where do Summer Tanagers come from at this season? One final observation. The last time that we experienced such a cool and wet summer was 1976. Do you remember the winter of 1976-77? I bet most Carolina Wrens don't.

## Summer 1992

Silver Creek Metropark (Summit Co.) was the only site where Pied-billed Grebes were reported to have nested this summer (BL, BS). A single was seen at Walborn Reservoir on 13 June (BL). Good numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were seen daily along Lake Erie and at Lake Rockwell. A Great Egret was seen in a pond north of Stow most of August (BS, JT, LR). Two birds at Lorain Harbor on 25 June provided the only Lake Erie report (WNK). The high count of Green-backed Herons was 3 at Lake Isaac on 18 Aug. (RHL). Black-crowned Night-Herons were again thought to have nested near Scenic Park along the Rocky River (WNK). Up to 3 were seen daily at Turkeyfoot Lake (BL). Walborn Reservoir provided

the only report of Blue-winged Teal on 13 June (BL). A hen Green-winged Teal was at Edgewater Park 8-21 Aug. (WNK). A family of Hooded Mergansers was encountered in Pinery Narrows (DAC). A female was at Hinckley on 1 July (RHL). Summering oddities included a Gadwall at Gordon Park 6-28 June (RH), and a Ruddy Duck at North Chagrin 14-20 July (KM).

At least one Osprey spent the summer at Lake Rockwell (LR). A bird was irregularly seen at Lake Medina most of July (CW). A bird at Indian Point Park on the 8th provided yet another July report (JP). Another was seen harassing an adult Bald Eagle at Lake Kelso in August (DB). A migrant soared by Perkins Beach on 8 Aug. (WNK). A bird was at HBSP on

29 Aug. (AJF). Another was at Berlin Reservoir on 28 Aug. (BL). A Northern Harrier was hunting in Highland Heights on 8 June (AJF). An immature was near Girdled Road Park on 6 Aug. (JP). Sharp-shinned Hawks were seen at Arcola Creek, Hogback Ridge, and Penitentiary Glen (JP). Red-shouldered Hawks were once again the most common raptor noted along the Upper Cuyahoga River (LR, BS). Harlan saw one at Hinckley on 15 June. The success of Broad-winged Hawks was unknown. Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels were widely reported.

Ring-necked Pheasants were reported from Walborn Reservoir (BDL) and Gordon Park (WNK). A Wild Turkey was in western Lorain Co. on 7 June (TL). Another was in Hiram

Rapids on 24 June (LR). Pogacnik saw one at Hell Hollow on 2 July. Rosche's tally of 54 Northern Bobwhites on his Wayland Breeding Bird Survey surpassed all other reports. A bird spent most of the summer near Pierce's backyard in Akron. A family was seen by J. P. Harlan in the CVNRA on 20 July. Rails received little mention. For the first time in recent memory, no reports of nesting Common Moorhens were received.

Shorebirds were scarce because of no habitat. As Bill Klamm put it, "Because of the lack of habitat, it was interesting to see a Lesser Yellowlegs and a dowitcher feeding on the algae-seaweed complex growing in the 55th St. marina on 12 & 13 July."

Black-bellied Plovers were seen only by a lucky few who happened to be along the lakefront when they flew by. A Semipalmated Plover was out of season at HBSP on 20 & 21 June (EB, RH). A Solitary Sandpiper was early on 6 July at Lake Rockwell (LR, CH). Two Willets at Lakeshore Park on 11 Aug. provided the only summer report (JP). The high count of Ruddy Turnstones at HBSP was 5 on 29 Aug. (EB, RH). Sanderlings were as expected. The earliest Least Sandpipers were at Lake Rockwell on 6 July (LR, CH). The highest tally for the species was 35 at Berlin Reservoir on 13 July (BL). No Pectoral Sandpiper flocks were seen. A small flock of 3 Buff-breasted Sandpipers was reported from Painesville Township Park on 13 Aug. (JP). A Short-billed Dowitcher was late at HBSP on 8 June (AJF). Fall migrants

were rarely encountered. The high total was 6 at Gordon Park. American Woodcocks received no mention.

A sizeable buildup of Bonaparte's Gulls was noted at HBSP during August. Great Black-backed Gulls were seen on every field excursion to HBSP. Local nesting is not out of the question. Caspian Terns were widespread inland. A count of 4 at Hinckley on 15 Aug. was representative (RHL). The Lanes encountered 6 Forster's Terns at Silver Creek Metropark on the late date of 6 June. Black Terns have decreased to a point where they are, for all intents and purposes, no longer expected locally.

A Black-billed Cuckoo was at Millstream Metropark on 14 June (RHL, TL). Yellow-billed Cuckoos were the more common of our two regularly occurring cuckoo species. A bird was at Silver Creek MP on 7 June (BL). A bird was at Triangle Bog on 4 Aug. (EE, JT). Presumed northward migrants were at Rocky River Metropark (WNK) and Donald Gray Gardens (RH) on 6 June. A Barred Owl at Lake Isaac on 18 Aug. was unique for the site (RHL). The high tallies of Common Nighthawks were 300-400 in Akron on 23 Aug. (JW) and 108 in Euclid on the same date (RH). Witt noticed many near Medina the last week of

August. A Whip-poor-will was at Chapin Forest on 24 Aug. (JP). Judged by the number of immatures at Rosche's feeder, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds were felt to have had good nesting success. Belted Kingfishers were surprisingly numerous along the Upper Cuyahoga. In 1990 they were noticeably absent along the some route (LR, BS).

Red-headed Woodpeckers nested widely along Lake Erie. Two young were fledged at Rocky River Metropark and 3 at Perkins Beach (WNK). Birds at Pinery Narrows in the CVNRA (DAC, JT) and Tinker's Creek SNP (JT) were noteworthy. Hairy Woodpeckers were fairly common in older woodlands. Pileated Woodpeckers were common along the Upper Cuyahoga River (LR, BS).

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was early at Lakeshore Park on 6 Aug. (JP). Eastern Wood Pewees were clearly our most numerous flycatcher. The 20 tallied at Hinckley on 1 July was indicative. Yellow-bellied Flycatchers lingered at HBSP through 7 June (m.obs). The earliest fall migrant reported along the lakefront was on 26 Aug. at Donald Gray Gardens (TL). While more selective in habitat preference than wood-pewees, Acadian Flycatchers were equally numerous at Hinckley (RHL). A bird at Donald Gray Gardens on 7 June was noteworthy (RH). Alder Flycatchers were reported from Findley SP on 6 June, the CVNRA on 13 June (RHL), Donald Gray Gardens and Euclid Beach SP on 8 June (TL, RH), and at Streetsboro Bog on 6 June (CH). Willow Flycatchers were common in most of the region. Least Flycatchers were as expected. Rickard

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**No flocks of  
Pectoral  
Sandpipers  
were seen.**

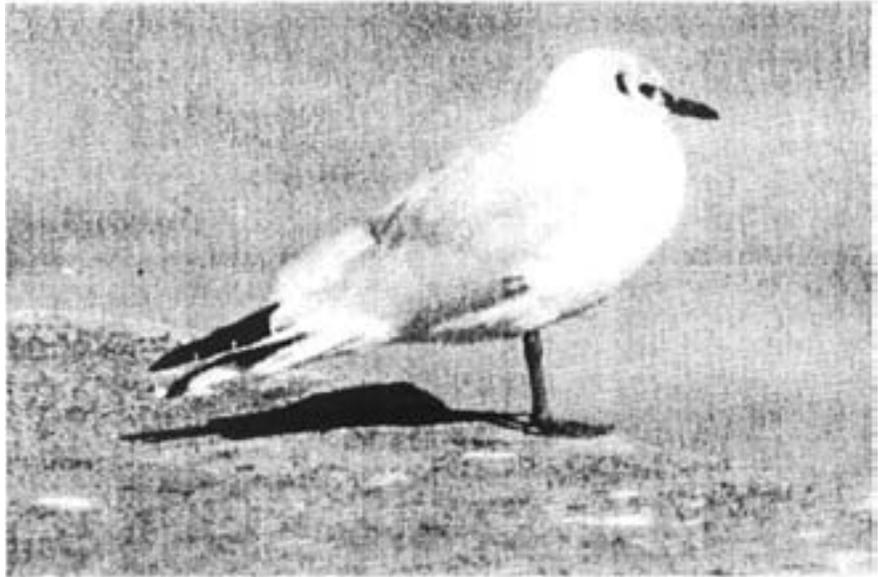
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found 2 at Holden Arboretum on 2 July. Eastern Phoebes were fairly common throughout the breeding season (m.obs.). A nice tally of 8 Great Crested Flycatchers was made at Silvercreek MP on 7 June (BL). Eastern Kingbirds were common.

Purple Martins were found in low numbers along Lake Erie. This is certainly a species in dramatic decline when compared to 20 years ago. Active nest houses were reported from Geauga (CH, LR) and Lorain Counties (NK). Northern Rough-winged Swallows were common. A sizeable colony of 200+ Bank Swallows was found at Silver Creek MP on 21 June (BS). Fledgling Cliff Swallows were noted at West Branch SP on 5 July (CH). A migrant was at Lakeshore Park on 4 July (JP).

The Red-breasted Nuthatch at Hinckley on 15 Aug. was the only report that raised the suspicion of nesting (RHL). Brown Creepers summered at Paine Falls (JP). Carolina Wrens have taken over areas in Twin Lakes where House Wrens formerly were common (LR). Marsh Wrens were at their usual inland haunts. A singing bird at Shipman Pond 1-12 July was slightly unexpected (EB, RH, LR). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were fairly common in the CVNRA (DAC, TL).

Eastern Bluebirds and Veeries were as expected. A Swainson's Thrush was late at Lake Isaac on 8 June (RHL). Wood Thrushes were conspicuous. A Northern Mockingbird was seen behind Moreland Courts



Common Black-headed Gull - Welland, Ontario  
by Larry Roache

apartments on 8 June (CK). Once again they were presumed to be nesting near the Coast Guard Station at Gordon Park. Four Brown Thrashers were at Silvercreek MP on 7 June (BL). Thrasher numbers in Portage County have returned to pre-1980 levels (LR).

White-eyed Vireos were reported from Furnace Run MP on 3 June and 1 July (MR). They were common at Lake Rockwell (LR). None were found in Lake County (JP). Solitary Vireos were noted at traditional breeding areas such as Stebbins Gulch (RHL, EP) Hell Hollow, River Road Park (JP), Swine Creek Reservation (LR), and the CVNRA (DAC). Yellow-throated Vireos were fairly common. A bird in the Rocky River Metropark on 10 July was good news for the area (WNK). Warbling Vireos were widely distributed. A Philadelphia Vireo was late at Lakeshore

Park on 4 June (JP). On 1 July, 44 Red-eyed Vireos were counted at Hinckley (RHL). This total was representative of the numbers of our most numerous vireo.

Spring warbler migration lingered nicely into the first third of June. Thirty species were reported for the season. The last Tennessee Warbler observed was on 2 June at Lakeshore Park (UP). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was at Silver Creek MP on 7 June (BL). One was at Big Creek Park on 12 June (DB) Another was in the CVNRA on 13 June (RHL). They were rare to uncommon in Portage Co. along the Cuyahoga River (BS, LR). They were presumed nesting at Lakeshore and River Road Parks (JP). Migrants were widespread by mid-August. Four territorial male Magnolia Warblers at Hinckley was an unexpected number for the site (RHL). A

bird feeding a cowbird at Lakeshore Park on 13 July was out of habitat (JP). A Black-throated Blue Warbler was late at HBSP on 7 June (EB, RH). An even later bird was at Hidden Valley Park on 8 June (JP). Black-throated Green Warblers were as expected in Geauga and Lake Counties. The 10-15 pairs at Hinckley Metropark constituted a record number (RHL). A Blackburnian Warbler was felt to be on territory at North Chagrin on 7 June (RHL). A pair nested and fledged at least 3 young in North Perry (JP). A Pine Warbler was at Chapin Forest on 12 June (JP). Prairie Warblers nested in Madison Township along Dewey Road (JP). Kopka found none at the usual location in Peninsula. Cerulean Warblers were common along the Cuyahoga and Grand Rivers. A Black-and-white Warbler was on territory at Russell Park during June (LR, BS). No nest was found. Another apparent territory was at Chapin Forest (JP). A bird was early at Lake Isaac on 27 July (RHL). A southbound migrant had reached Firestone Metropark by 16 Aug. (EP). American Redstarts were abundant in preferred locales. Prothonotary Warblers were common along the Cuyahoga River above Mantua (LR, BS). The birds at the usual Pinery Narrows location were slightly more difficult to find (DAC). Bob Lane found one in the Long Lake Swamp on 28 June. A bird along Arcola Creek on 15 June provided a new Lake County site (JP). Hinckley harbored 11 Ovenbirds on 1 July (RHL). Up to 3 Northern Waterthrushes were found

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## **Prairie Warblers nested in Madison Township ...**

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along the Upper Cuyahoga River in June (LR, BS). A single was at River Road Park on 14 June (JP). Louisiana Waterthrushes were common along the Grand River. Up to 4 Kentucky Warblers were reported at Hinckley on 1 July (RHL). A late Mourning Warbler was at Hinckley on 3 June (RHL). Three were at HBSP on 7 June (RH). Four were at Donald Gray Gardens the same day (RH, WNK). Wilson's Warblers lingered at Lakeshore Park through 4 June. Canada Warblers summered at River Road and Hell Hollow Parks (JP). A Yellow-breasted Chat was at Silvercreek MP on 7 June (BL). They nested at Hidden Valley Park (JP).

Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were in excellent numbers. A count of 15 at Silvercreek MP on 21 June was indicative (BS). Indigo Buntings, Rufous-sided Towhees, and Field Sparrows were common. Contrary to this, Vesper Sparrows were scarce. A Grasshopper Sparrow was at Hinckley on 3 June (RHL). Another was at Burke Airport on 10 June (RHL). Six were at Silvercreek MP on 7 June (BL). Dark-eyed Juncos were holding their own at Stebbins Gulch and Little Mountain (RHL, EP). Dan Best reported that they nested near Big

Creek Park. A singing bird was out of place at HBSP on 28 June (EB, RH). A Lincoln's Sparrow was exceptionally tardy at Donald Gray Gardens on 7 June (RH). Bobolinks were in fair numbers but nesting success was unreported.

Orchard Orioles were scarce. A migrating female at the Gordon Park Impoundment on 21 Aug. was the first August report in 13 years (LR, RH, TL). Northern Orioles were common throughout the region. Purple Finches were as expected. An exception was a bird at Lake Isaac on 15 June (RHL). Pine Siskins nested in North Perry (JP). Six at Best Lake on 9 Aug. were out of season (AJF).

### **NOTEWORTHY RECORDS**

**Least Bittern** - A calling bird was at Shipman Pond 6 June and 12 July (Hannikman).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** Pogacnik found an adult in Kirtland Hills on 12 June.

**Snow Goose** - An adult white phase bird was record late at Lake Isaac on 5 June (Harlan).

**Bald Eagle** - An immature with a white tag and the number 79 was seen in Avon Lake on 11 July. The bird was found to have hacked in Tennessee earlier this year (Black River Audubon). The pair at Lake Rockwell were never seen in the summer after Ohio Wildlife officials climbed the nest tree. An adult was seen at Hogback Ridge Park on 3, 27 July (Pogacnik). Dan Best reported an adult at Lake Kelso in Aug.

**Northern Harrier** - The first nesting in the recent history of the region was closely monitored by the Klamm's at the Gordon Park Landfill. As many as 6 birds, including 4 juveniles, were seen on 18 July and thereafter. Although no attempt was made to find a nest Bill and Nancy felt that all accepted criteria for breeding were fulfilled.

**Peregrine Falcon** - One bird was seen intermittently in the downtown Cleveland area most of the period (Klamm, m.obs.).

**Upland Sandpiper** - Three birds were in Fairport Harbor on 3 July (Pogacnik).

**Ruff** - A handsome black and white male (molting) provided the second record of this species in the region. It was video-taped and documented at the Gordon Park Landfill 24 and 25 Aug. (Klamm, LePage, m.obs.).

**Laughing Gull** - An adult was documented at Headlands Beach SP on 4 June (Metcalf). It was seen there and in Fairport Harbor intermittently through 7 July (Pogacnik).

**Little Gull** - Both first and second summer birds (maximum 3) were seen at Headlands Beach SP from 25 July through the period (Hannikman, LePage).

**Winter Wren** - A bird was in North Chagrin on 7 June (Harlan). Three were in Stebbins Gulch on 20 June (Harlan, Pierce). River Road and Hell Hollow Parks were two new summer locations for this species (Pogacnik).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** - up to 3 individuals were seen at Hinckley 3 June - 15 Aug. No evidence of young was found (Harlan). A male was seen at Hogback Ridge Park on 21 June and 2 July (Pogacnik).

**Hermit Thrush** - Males summered at Paine Falls and River Road Parks (Pogacnik).

**Golden-winged Warbler** - A male was seen near Stebbins Gulch on 20 June (Harlan). A migrant was at Lakeshore Park on 7 July (Pogacnik).

**Brewster's Warbler** - A bird was regularly seen along Station Road in the CVNRA 13-25 June (Chasar).

**Northern Parula** - A male was singing at Hinckley on 3 June (Harlan). A nest with young was found on 16 June at Hell Hollow Park (Pogacnik). This was the first report of a nest in the history of the region.

**Cape May Warbler** - This species, never before reported locally in June, was at Hell Hollow Park from 25 June - 2 July (Pogacnik).

**Yellow-throated Warbler** - The birds at Brecksville and Pinery Narrows were seen through the period by many observers. A bird was at Hidden Valley Park 15 June - 5 July (Pogacnik).

**Palm Warbler** - An extremely tardy or misguided bird was well described in the CVNRA on 13 June (Osborne).

**Mourning Warbler** - A bird was seen at Hinckley on 3 June (Harlan). Bill Osborne found one along Akron-Peninsula

Road on 20 June. Rosche had one in Bath Township on 21 June. He noted a territorial male in Shalersville Township from 4 June to 7 July. Pogacnik reported that they summered in Leroy and Madison Townships in Lake County and along Dewey Road in Geauga Co.

**Connecticut Warbler** - A spring migrant was at Headlands Beach SP on 1 June (LePage).

**Summer Tanager** - A female was studied at length as it fed in privet bushes at Holden Arboretum on 10 Aug. (Elder, Tisdale).

**Henslow's Sparrow** - An unspecified number of birds were present all summer at Girdled Road Park (Pogacnik).

**Le Conte's Sparrow** - Unprecedented in our files for the time of year and age of the bird, a juvenile was fully documented by 3 observers at the Gordon Park Landfill on 22 Aug. (Hannikman, Harlan, Rickard).

**White-throated Sparrow** - A late bird was at Headlands Beach SP on 4 June (Metcalf). Another was at Donald Gray Gardens on 6-7 June (Hannikman). A bird at Lakeshore Park on 21 July was totally out of season (Pogacnik).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** - A female or immature was seen with a flock of Red-winged Blackbirds in Lorain County on 11 Aug. (Kraps).

## FIELD NOTES

### The Cleveland Area Breeding Bird Survey - 1992 *by Robert Harlan*

The Cleveland Area Breeding Bird Survey (CABBS) entered into its fourth year in 1992. A cooperative effort of the Kirtland Bird Club, the CABBS is conducted to gather data concerning the population status of breeding birds in north-eastern Ohio. CABBS is patterned after the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey, with minor differences. A complete discussion of CABBS methods is described in The Ohio Cardinal 12(4) and The Cleveland Bird Calendar 85(3).

A total of 7935 birds was tallied along the 12 roadside routes scattered throughout the 7 county Cleveland area in 1992. This represents an average of 661.25 individuals per route, up from 586.0/route in 1991, 601.4/route in 1990, and 643.1 /route in 1989. In terms of individuals per route, 1992 represented the highest overall population level in the four years of the study. In addition to higher overall numbers, the 108 species discovered in 1992 represents the highest species total thus far. The highest previous number of species found was 103 in 1990, with the 3-year average being 101.33 species per year. The 7 species new to CABBS routes in 1992 (American Black Duck, Wild Turkey, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Northern Parula, Magnolia

Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, & Pine Warbler) bring the grand total up to 120 species found over the 4 year study.

The table lists the 25 most numerous species in order of abundance. When compared to the baseline year of 1989, 14 of the current top 25 species show increases in average number of individuals per route, 10 show decline, and it has remained the same. This upswing is in contrast to 1991, when 17 of the then current top 25 showed declines when compared to 1989, and 1990, when 19 of 25 showed declines. It should be noted that two species that show marked increases in the table, Canada Goose and Bank

Swallow, are both flocking species. As such, these particular data must be viewed cautiously, since observers may easily locate a flock one year, and miss it the next, thus distorting any true population trend.

Concerning the top 50 species, 3 species have shown increases every year, or have at least remained at the same number of individuals per route. The same number of species has also shown the opposite trend. The increasing species are as follows: Great Blue Heron (avg. 1.5/route in 1989, 1.67/route in 1990, 2.25/route in 1991, and 3.67/route in 1992; N. Flicker (1 .0, 1.67,

**Table**  
**Top 25 Species In Order of Abundance**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Avg/Rt</b>	<b>%Change since 1989</b>
European Starling	723	60.25	8.4
Red-winged Blackbird	589	49.08	-33.3
American Robin	425	35.42	-6.8
Common Grackle	404	33.67	19.4
American Crow	386	32.17	9.1
House Sparrow	356	29.67	-2.4
Canada Goose	341	28.42	45.0
Song Sparrow	300	25.00	0.0
Mourning Dove	284	23.67	3.4
Northern Cardinal	283	23.58	-17.8
House Finch	274	22.83	11.4
American Goldfinch	270	22.50	87.5
Bank Swallow	211	17.58	162.4
Chipping Sparrow	143	11.92	28.2
Red-eyed Vireo	142	11.83	13.8
Common Yellowthroat	142	11.83	-12.4
Chimney Swift	137	11.42	42.8
House Wren	134	11.17	-3.7
Yellow Warbler	132	11.00	6.8
Indigo Bunting	130	10.53	-13.4
Gray Catbird	127	10.50	18.9
Tufted Titmouse	126	10.50	-16.0
Barn Swallow	100	8.33	14.1
Blue Jay	100	8.33	-22.9
Black-capped Chickadee	91	7.58	-10.8

1.92, 2-5): and Scarlet Tanager (1.8, 2.5, 2.5, 2.67). On the other hand, the 3 decreasing species are: Killdeer (4.2, 3.92, 3.92, 3.5); Eastern Wood-Pewee (4.8, 4.25, 4.17, 3.58); and Cedar Waxwing (12.0, 10.67, 9.33, 6.92). These species groupings obviously have very little in common, so any overall conjecture regarding their status is impossible.

Much concern has been shown recently for neotropical migrants. With this in mind, 13 species that nest in Ohio but essentially leave the U. S. during the winter were examined for possible trends. All 13 are currently in the top 50 or have fallen within the top 50 in past years. These species are: Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow warbler, Hooded Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, and Northern Oriole. By comparing the combined totals of these 13 species, we find that an average of 66.0 individuals per route were found in 1989, 57.92/route in 1990, 61.08/route in 1991, and 65.92/route in 1992. So, by comparing 66.0/route in 1989 to 65.92/route in 1992, we see that we have achieved the most unlikely result of essentially no change in individuals per route. Individually, however, 6 of these species have shown decreases, while 7 have shown increases, when comparing 1989 to 1992. These findings underline the importance of evaluating the trends of each species individually, rather

than lumping various species together under nebulous headings such as "Neotropical migrants".

Each year this survey generates new, valuable information regarding the breeding birds of northeastern Ohio. I am grateful to all of the following who, in addition to the author, participated in this survey in 1992: Anders Fjeldstad, Andy Fondrk (plus assistants Duane Ferris, Muggsi Hahn, & Bob McCullough), J. P. Harlan, William & Nancy Klamm, Tom LePage, and Larry Rosche. Their continued support is much appreciated.

## DESCRIPTION OF A JUVENILE LE CONTE'S SPARROW

*by Robert Harlan*

**Date:** 22 August 1992

**Location:** Gordon Park Impoundment, Cleveland, Ohio.

**Time:** Seen intermittently between 12:00 noon and 2:30 p. m.

**Weather:** Warm, clear.

**Other observers:** Found by Ray Hannikman earlier in the morning, seen with Ray until we left at 2:30. Also observed by Dick Rickard in the morning.

**Habitat:** Inside Gordon Park Impoundment, at the base of a large dike. Much of the floor of the impoundment was covered with a layer of fresh mud, sev-

eral inches deep, from dredging operations. Previously grown weeds of various heights (from ground level to well over our heads) were emergent from this fresh mud. The bird worked within the weedy growth along the base of the dike, spending most of its time about 10 to 20 feet in, away from the dike. Most of the vegetation consisted of phragmites, cattail, smartweed, purple loosestrife, etc.

**Length of observation:** The bird was seen approximately 5 times while I was present, roughly 30 seconds to 1 minute per observation. The bird spent most of its time concealed within the vegetation. On the occasions when seen, it perched in fairly open situations, but not all parts of the bird could be observed at once. It was also seen taking several short flights, low over the vegetation.

### DESCRIPTION:

**Shape:** A very small, flat headed sparrow, a typical ammodramus sparrow. Tail short. In flight, the wings also appeared short. When seen, it kept its neck stretched out, not pulled in.

**Soft parts:** Bill large and thick, pink on both mandibles. Eye dark. Legs were light, in some cases almost appearing to have a bluish tinge.

**Voice:** Several times the bird emitted a weak "tsip", much softer than the calls of the adjacent Song Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat.

## PLUMAGE:

**Overall:** Buffy, not as buffy as alternate male Smith's Longspur, but much buffier than juvenile Grasshopper Sparrow.

**Head:** Dark brown crown separated by white median crown stripe, extending from above the bill back to the nape. A clear, buffy eyebrow was very prominent, also extending to the nape. A dark brown line extended posteriorly from the eye. Since the neck was always extended, this line took an elongated shape, and swept up to its conclusion at the nape. Except for an indistinct dark smudge just below this line behind the eye, the remainder of the face was buffy. There was no rear demarcation to the auriculars, nor was there any malar line. A thin but distinct white eye-ring was evident around the posterior half of the eye. The nape was essentially unmarked and buffy.

**Back:** The back appeared slightly darker than the rest of the bird, with the upper back streaked (appearing as dark on light), not scalloped. The tertials were fringed with white. The tail was tan and very short.

**Wings:** The wings did not have any distinguishing marks. If present, the wing bars must have been very pale. The remainder of the wings appeared similar in coloration to the rest of the upperparts.

**Undersides:** The throat was a whitish-cream, lighter than the buffy face and upper breast.

The breast was noticeably buffy, and had very thin dark vertical streaking on the upper breast, which extended along the flanks. In the flank area the streaking became somewhat heavier and more obvious. I believe the remainder of the undersides were a pale cream or whitish, but this was not scrutinized clearly.

## Extirpation Extinction ...and Shrikes

*by Rich Stallcup*

**M**any people feel sad at the death of any individual animal, but the death of a species, even locally, "is like ripping up the foundational planks of the universe itself." That's what my friend, mammalogist Lloyd Ingles, said in sadness about the extirpation of grizzly bears in California, and many small species are following the big bruin into the cave of emptiness.

Reasons for extirpation and extinction vary but can almost always be tracked back to human causes - violence or thoughtlessness directed at animals themselves or at their habitats. Grizzly bear was (is) too big, too scary, and was eliminated from most of its range by gun and poison.

Passenger Pigeons were too easy. Though numbering perhaps five billion, their gregarious nature caused a greedy slaughter by netters and gunners in the 1800s. The last individual of the species, a female named Martha (after Martha Washington), died in the

Cincinnati Zoo on September 1, 1914, at age 29.

Carolina Parakeet was too pretty (and liked to eat apples). Though common in the southeastern U. S. into the mid-1800s, it was gone in the wild by 1910, killed so its feathers could fancy ladies' hats (and for eating apples). The last individual died like its cellmate, the Passenger Pigeon, at the Cincinnati Zoo in September 1914 ... a dark time for wildlife in America.

The Great Auk was flightless but safe on Canadian islands until man arrived in boats and bludgeoned every last one with rocks and clubs.

For most other American bird populations known to be in steep decline, we can thank habitat destruction and forest fragmentation, nest parasitism by cowbirds (whose ranges have broadly expanded because of agriculture and the huge presence of domestic grazing animals), nest cavity stealing by starlings, beach-bashing by humans, dogs, and motor vehicles, and introduction of nonnative mammalian predators like red foxes (in places) and house cats.

Do we want a world of only human things, lined and paved, with motors droning everywhere, malls, housing developments, industrial sprawl, zillions of humans, cats, rats, and starlings? Or do we want to retain a more peaceful place with singing birds, flowers, and trees, chorusing frogs, and large tracts of wild land, leaving room for all the

native plants and animals to continue living?

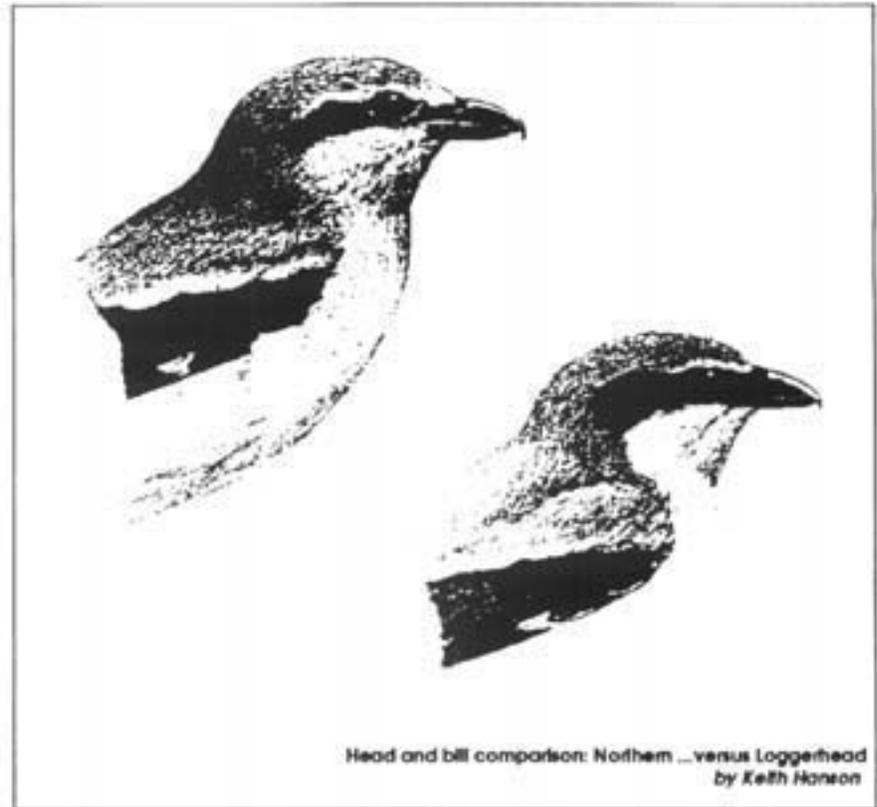
Those who wish the latter case must insist that the U. S. government maintain and strengthen (never weaken) the Endangered Species Act, which is designed to protect and save plants and animals showing grim prognosis. It is the only fail-safe we have against "incidental" extermination of nature...and sterilization of good old Mother Earth.

If the Endangered Species Act is weakened, we can expect to eulogize at least 28 U. S. birds in the next few decades. Many of these are well known, well documented, and well publicized; others are not. Loggerhead Shrike is on the list. The shrike plank is loose and shaky.

### A Vanishing Act

Loggerhead Shrikes have vanished from much of Canada, the northeastern United States, and large parts of the midwest in the last 30 years. There used to be lots of them in these regions: now there are none. Experts agree that the reasons are unknown.

Here in the west, shrike populations seemed unharmed into the 1970s, but now the birds are obvious by their absence in many areas. The point Reyes Christmas Bird Count averaged almost 40 shrikes per year into the mid-1970s, but there have been fewer than ten per year in the last ten years. On the 1991 count, there were six! The decline is real, as each year has more thorough coverage



by birders. The crash is similar throughout California.

Because shrikes often live near roads (because there are good hunting perches there) and fly low, one guess at their demise is that they are victims of collisions with an ever increasing number of cars and trucks. While true, in part, the fact that other "prairie" species (ones that don't rely on roadside habitats so much) - like Burrowing Owl, Say's Phoebe, and Grasshopper Sparrow - are suffering similar reductions argues against that notion. All of these birds eat insects and arachnids; could it be that low levels of insecticides are catching up with them as high level poisons such as DDT caught up with Peregrines and Brown Pelicans 25 years ago? Could it be that soil aridifica-

tion has severely dried up their prey base?

Whatever the cause, it is now important to pay special attention to shrikes and treasure each one. In spots where they still breed (they are known to be loosely colonial in places) or winter, count them year after year! The shrike has been hovering in the definition "species of special concern" (no funding) for quite a while, and it is important that it be allowed to perch in the agency's "threatened" category as soon as possible, so that protective and investigative action may begin.

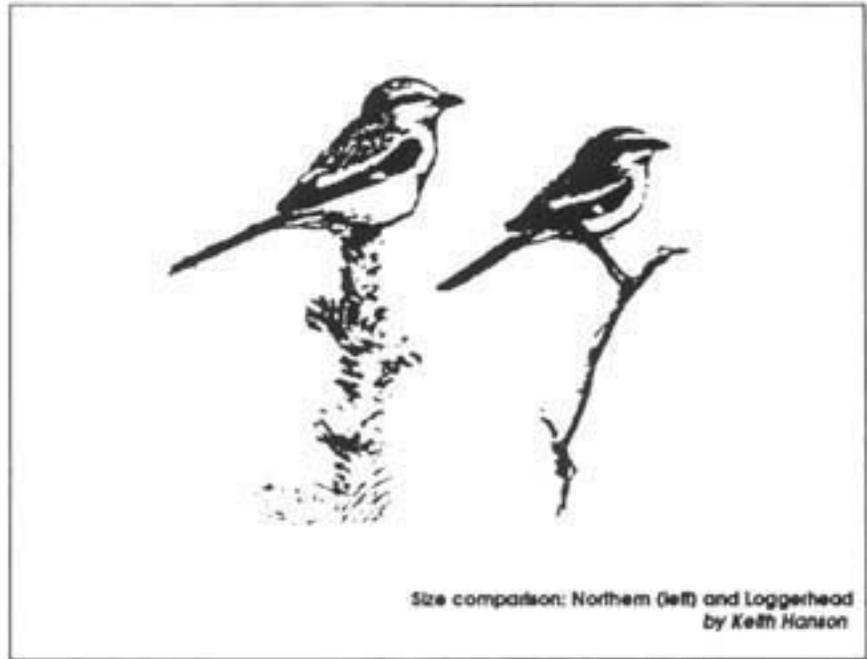
### Songbird Raptors

although shrikes are truly songbirds, their attitude and methods of feeding are

more like those of a hawk. They will sometimes attack prey as big as or bigger than themselves--even some that will fight back. Their hawk-like bills are designed for pounding and tearing, but they have simple, perching feet. Since the feet are no good for grasping, prey is usually carried in the bill to a locality where it may be secured (impaled) on a branch, barb, or spine; there it is disassembled. "Hanging" prey is a trick shrikes developed to make up for the lack of talons. It is not sinister trophy boosting but is what earned them the demeaning nickname "butcher bird".

When available, insects make up the bulk of shrikes' food, but many species of birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians have been recorded in their diet. Northern Shrikes have been seen killing big birds like Hairy Woodpeckers and Blue Jays. Shrikes will also eat carrion. In January 1880 in Iowa, a Northern was seen repeatedly "flying across the brown, frozen prairie to a carcass of a cow, where it lit on one of the ribs and greedily tore off shreds of flesh." (Those of us who have handled wild shrikes know that they also seem to relish chewing upon human fingers.)

Loggerhead Shrikes feed on fare similar to Northern's, but they usually select smaller creatures, such as Horned Larks, pocket mice, and fence lizards. Several encounters with rather large snakes have also been described. One bird was seen carrying a live snake in its bill, flying with difficulty



but finally making it to the top of a telephone pole, and there a real battle took place. Feeling sorry for the snake, the observer threw a dirt clod, scaring the shrike into dropping the snake to the ground. It proved to be a rough green snake, 16.5 inches long! It was not weighed but.. I know that the shrike was handling much more than its own weight".

### Two Shrike Species

Any Shrike seen in California (or any of the other 48 contiguous states) from mid-April through mid-October is a Loggerhead. During winter, Loggerheads spread out, and a few Northern Shrikes scatter into the northern part of the state, most east of the Sierra Nevada in the Great Basin. Uncommon at best, it is always a thrill to see "the big one."

Field guides mostly do a good job showing differences between the two, with the Master Guide to Birding being

the best; in four photographs, it displays two adults and two juveniles. In addition to showing the relative paleness of Northern's, these photos depict the differences in the shape of the black mask (narrow in Northern, the shape of the bill (blocky, with a bigger "nail" in Northern); smaller, more conical, with a smaller "nail" in Loggerhead), and color of the forehead (white in Northern and black in Loggerhead).

Shrikes are special, smart and bold, and unique in what they do. If they are to exist into the future, we must now figure out what it is we've done to them, turn it around ... and nail down the shrike plank.

The above article was reprinted from the Observer with permission of the author and of Point Reyes Bird Observatory 4990 Shoreline Highway Stinson Beach, CA 94970 Telephone (415) 868-1221

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**Invitation:** The Kirtland Bird Club meets the first Wednesday of the month except July and August at 7:45 P.M. in The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

**Field Study:** On the first Sunday of each month a census is conducted at Headlands Beach State Park. The purpose is to study the long term occurrence patterns of migrant and resident birds of the Grand River and Fairport Harbor section of the region. For more information call Larry Rosche at 678- 9408 or Ray Hannikman at 261- 4047.

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**Inquiries** regarding subscription to The Cleveland Bird Calendar should be addressed to Joan M. Palmer, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 1 Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. The annual subscription rate is \$7.50.

**Field reports**, artwork, papers, and photographs should be directed to Larry Rosche, 7473 Sylvan Drive, Kent, Ohio 44240.