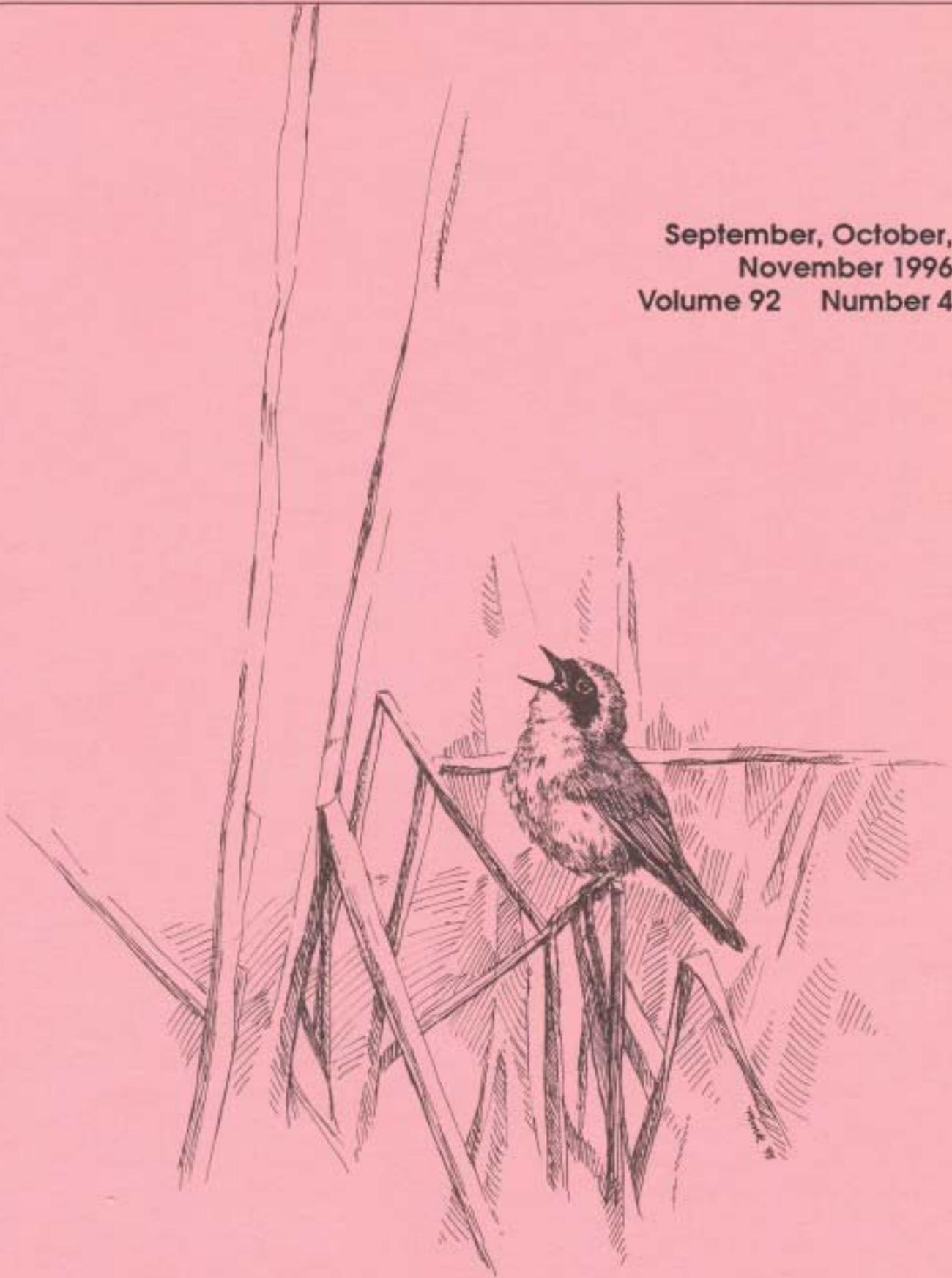


September, October,  
November 1996  
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**The Cleveland Bird Calendar** was founded in 1905 by Francis H. Herrick of The Western Reserve University. The purposes of the publication are to provide information on the movements of birds through the Cleveland 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:

**March 5 - Winter Season**

**June 5 - Spring Season**

**September 5 - Summer Season**

**December 5 - Autumn Season**

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by Margret Krister, 1995.

September, October, November 1996

Volume 92 Number 4

# The Cleveland Bird Calendar

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## THE WEATHER

### Autumn 1996 by Dwight Chasar

**September:** Temperatures averaged 64°, just about normal. The high was 83° on the 3rd, and the low was 45° on the 25th. Lake Erie was 74° on the 1st and dropped to 66° on the 30th. While sunshine occurred 44% of the time, this was the rainiest September on record. Rain occurred over 14 days and totaled 11.05 in., 7.61 in. above normal. Rainfall totaled 5.24 in. on the 6-7th, the wettest 24 hrs. on record, due to Hurricane Fran.

**October:** Temperatures averaged 54°, 1.2° above normal. The high was 76° on the 1st, and the low was 32° on the 31st. Sunshine prevailed 58% of the time possible. Rain occurred over 11 days and totaled 4.65 in., 2.11

in. over normal. The greatest 24 hr. rainfall was 2.07 in. on the 18-19th. Lake Erie water had dropped to 58° by the end of the month.

**November:** Temperatures averaged 36.3°, 6.3 below normal. The high was 70° on the 7th, and the low was 14° on the 15th. Sunshine was a meager 26% of the time. Precipitation was distributed over 15 days and totaled 5.03 in., 1.86 in. above normal. The greatest 24 hr. fall was 1.19 in. on the 9-10th. The persistent northerly winds enabled the warm waters of Lake Erie to manufacture snowfall at a tremendous pace. This was the snowiest November on record, with 23.4 in. The greatest depth at the airport was 9 in. on the 12th, but over 50 in. covered some eastern suburbs. Lake Erie cooled to 44° on the 30th.

## REFLECTIONS

**THIRTY YEARS AGO - A Blue Grosbeak** was at a feeder in Lorain on Sep. 2, 1996 (Dolbear). A **Prothonotary Warbler** was at Hampton Hills Park on Sep. 28 (Szabo). A **Yellow Rail** was found alive inside Mentor Mall on Oct. 17 (Bole). An immature **Harris' Sparrow** was at Grovewood Park on Oct. 23 (Newman). The region's first November record of **Harlequin Duck** was at Clifton Beach on Nov. 13 (Klamm).

**TWENTY YEARS AGO -** On Sep. 11, 1976, a **Lawrence's Warbler** was at Donald Gray Gardens (LePage). A **Red-necked Phalarope** delighted many at White City on Sep. 22 (Hannikman). On Sep. 25, a **Plegadis Ibis** was seen at Mentor Marsh (Hammond). A flock of 47 **Snow Geese** flew over Mentor Marsh on Oct. 23 (Rickard). On Oct. 30, the rare **LeConte's Sparrow** was photographed at E. 55th St. (Hoffman, Klamm).

**TEN YEARS AGO - A Marbled Godwit** visited the Gordon Park landfill on Sep. 13, 1986 (Corbin). Observers were treated to an in-the-hand comparison of **Red** and **Red-necked Phalaropes** at Gordon Park on Sep. 20 (Talkington). Two **Hudsonian Godwits** lounged at Burke Airport Oct. 14-28 (Klamm). A **Red-necked Grebe** was at LaDue Reservoir on Oct. 18 (Peterjohn). Our latest **Stilt Sandpiper** was in Barber-ton on Oct. 23 (Rosche). Our only record of an adult **Black-legged Kittiwake** was at Edgewater Park on Nov. 16 (Peterjohn). A **Northern Gannet** remained in Lorain Nov. 23-27 (LePage, Klamm).



# AUTUMN 1996

## COMMENT on the SEASON by Larry Rosche

The fall 1996 season was remarkable in many ways. Birders got to enjoy almost every order and in decent if not spectacular numbers. Even though rarities were reported (and large numbers of Snow Geese), the only group which seem reluctant to participate in the good news was waterfowl. All of our regularly occurring hawks were found. Numerous Merlins and Peregrines were the highlights. The 33 species of shorebirds turned in, provided the region with some much deserved local respectability. I have forgotten the last time we had all three phalaropes in the fall. Did anyone see a Long-billed Dowitcher? Gulls were represented by at least 10 reliably documented species. Thrush movement was very noticeable. Warbler migration was best summed up by Hannikman, who wrote "The best fall I have experienced at HBSP. Rarities, wave days, diversity, you name it, Headlands had it." Birders from Tuscarawrus County once again discovered many species of sparrows at the Gordon Park Landfill in October. Their patience and vigor for walking through that burr infested jungle is to be admired.



For the year, we received sighting reports on 287 species. Very few times in the history of the region has that total been topped. I received word that some of our trusted Lorain County observers will no longer be able to report. If you are in Lorain County, please keep good tallies for our records. A special thanks to Kevin Metcalf for his sketch of the murrelet many of us saw at Beaver Creek Reservoir. For those readers who want to know, this former subspecies of Marbled Murrelet has been given full species status. The trouble is taxonomists have yet to decide on a name for it. Also thanks to Ray Froelich for his picture of the Rufous Hummingbird so many of us enjoyed. Mary Gustafson's knock-out photo of an adult Ross' Gull in this edition should give everyone something to dream about. Good birding in 1997!

**T**he first **Common Loon** was noted on Sep. 15 at HBSP (RH, KM). Numbers afterwards were mostly disappointing. The high tally (97) came from Wellington Reservoir on Nov. 9. Another 94 loons were at Chippewa Lake on the same day (FG). Along the lake, the high count was only 32 at Huntington Beach on Nov. 7 (TLP). These reports suggest a more westerly movement of loons this year. **Pied-billed Grebes** moved fairly well. Highs were in the 20-30 range at expected inland sites. **Horned Grebes** were scarce. The high tally was a mere

30 at Huntington on Nov. 18 (TLP). **Double-crested Cormorants** were simply too abundant to count. **Great Egrets** were fairly common. Up to 7 lounged at LaDue Reservoir mudflats into October. (VW, M.obs.). **Green Herons** were reported from few locales. A bird in the CVNRA on Oct. 12 was late (DAC). Reports of **Black-crowned Night-Herons** easily bettered the previous species. Four were at Shaker Lakes on Sep. 16 (RR). A max of 5 was found at Lorain on Sep. 15 (CH). Up to 31 could be found along the Cuyahoga River near Merwin St. in late Nov. (PL).

Although widespread, **Tundra Swans** showed up in smaller than expected flocks. Flocks of up to 50 were at LaDue, East Branch, and Best Lake (DB). Contrary to swans, the largest flocks of **Snow Geese** since 1955 showed up on Nov. 3rd. A group of 45 was noted off Lakeshore MP (JP), and 64 cruised by HBSP (RH, EB). A 'blue' was at Best Lake on Sep. 18 (DB). Other Geauga County sightings included 7-10 in Hambden Township and 3 at Headwaters Park on Oct. 13 (*fide* DB). One was observed at North Chagrin on Oct. 4 and Nov. 6 (KM).

The latest **Wood Duck** was a lucky female who waited until the last hunter had left the breakwall at HBSP to fly over (LR, NB). Nothing special was heard on **Green-winged Teals**. **American Black Ducks** were slow in arriving, but by period's end they were relatively common along the shore of Lake Erie. **Northern Pintails** were found in small numbers away from Lake Erie. The flock that passed by Lakeshore MP was an exception (See Table 1). The **Blue-winged Teal** outlook remains dismal. The high count (9) was made at HBSP (of all places) on Sep. 14 (RH). **Northern Shovelers** were found in much better than average numbers. The 40 at HBSP on Nov. 2 at HBSP was a local high (RH). **Gadwalls** were felt to be in better than average numbers by local hunters (*fide* WS). The high tally for **American Wigeons** was 30 at the Pekin Road Marsh on Nov. 1 (*fide* DB).

I think that most hunters would agree the diving duck move-

ment into the region was minimal. Very few flocks of scaup were found by the end of Nov.

**Canvasbacks** were scattered about in small numbers throughout the region. The maximum was 10 at Wellington on Nov. 9 (FG). The high count of **Red-heads** was 85 at Wellington on Nov. 11 (FG). **Ring-necked Duck** numbers were fairly high, but they seemed to have left some of their former haunts, most notably Lake Rockwell. The high tally there was a measly 200 on Nov. 10 (CH). Less than a mile away, at Lafarge Lake in Shalersville Township, 655 were

*Bald Eagles continue to be found regularly throughout the region.*

counted on Nov. 8 (VW). Best Lake continued as the Geauga County stronghold for "ringers." Best counted 400+ there on Nov. 5-6. An **Oldsquaw** was very cooperative for state listers at Oberlin for most of November (TLP, M.ob.). Three 'squaws' were at HBSP on Nov. 23 (LR, RH, NB). Two **Black Scoters** were in Bay Village on Nov. 29 (JLD, ST). A **Surf Scoter** was slightly early at HBSP on Oct. 14 (RH, KM). Eight at Oberlin Reservoir on Oct. 20 was the high inland count (TLP). On Nov. 3, 14 flew by Eastlake (CH, LR, VW). The same day Duane Ferris found one at Headwaters Park. Up to 7 lounged off the usual west locales the last half of Nov. (PL). Up to 3 **White-winged Scoters** were off Rocky River Park on

Nov. 15-17 (TLP, BF, PL). One was at HBSP on Nov. 23 (RH, LR, NB). **Common Goldeneyes** now seem to gather only off Sims Park. Sims Park is one of the few lakefront sites where no hunting has been observed. Any correlation? **Buffleheads** were below expected totals. The **Hooded Merganser** flock at Lake Rockwell grew to 440 on Nov. 25 (VW). Unlike last year, **Common Mergansers** were late in arriving. **Red-breasted Mergansers** were seen in flocks of 4,000-10,000 along various lakefront sites (M.ob). **Ruddy Duck** numbers were truly impressive. As many as 900 were reported from

Oberlin. The high at Mogadore was 608. The high for LaDue was 240. Along the lake, 300 were seen off Lakeshore MP.

**Ospreys** were in expected totals. I would not be surprised if the following species now outnumbers its

congener. One was in Lorain on Sep. 1 (TLP). Birds were at HBSP on Sep. 9 (KM) and Sep. 22 (RH). One spent the first half of Sep. at Lake Medina (CW). One flew over Valley City on Sep. 28 (FG). There were 3 reports from Geauga County, including a fairly late bird at W.C. Best Wildlife Preserve on Oct. 19 (*Fide* DB). **Bald Eagles** continue to be found regularly throughout the region. It's not often that we can say that about many of our local species, is it? An immature was at Eastlake on Nov. 2 (AJF). One was watched at LaDue on Nov. 24 (AJF). A pair was observed irregularly at Headwaters Park in Oct. and Nov. (DB). Adults and immatures were regularly seen at Lake Rockwell. **Northern Harriers** were fewer

## November 1996 Waterbird Survey for Lakeshore MP

Date	11/1	11/11	11/12	11/13	11/14	11/27
Common Loon	47	11	3	3	8	23
Pied-billed Grebe	•	1	1	•	1	•
Horned Grebe	3	1	1	2	•	•
Double-crested Cormorant	12	•	5	2	1	•
Tundra Swan	34	6	•	•	•	•
Green-winged Teal	•	3	•	•	7	11
American Black Duck	3	2	12	68	56	6
Mallard	8	8	70	190	181	36
Northern Pintail	•	•	2	58	•	•
Northern Shoveler	•	•	2	•	•	•
Gadwall	1	•	4	4	3	•
American Wigeon	•	4	6	1	2	•
Canvasback	•	65	•	•	2	129
Redhead	5	12	•	•	4	7
Greater Scaup	•	34	•	18	•	62
Lesser Scaup	37	472	128	166	41	166
Oldsquaw	•	•	4	•	•	5
Black Scoter	•	41	26	1	1	•
Surf Scoter	3	•	118	23	2	15
White-winged Scoter	•	•	•	1	•	1
Common Goldeneye	8	23	8	4	11	23
Bufflehead	6	61	3	8	13	•
Hooded Merganser	4	27	15	11	29	5
Common Merganser	11	•	•	7	31	33
Red-breasted Merganser	3450	2300	1205	2184	1135	1525
Ruddy Duck	•	56	305	70	68	16
Pomarine Jaeger	•	2	•	4	•	•
Parasitic Jaeger	•	6	2	4	1	•
Bonaparte's Gull	8500	990	720	4130	5740	269
Ring-billed Gull	1700	6400	9950	6450	5750	5320
Herring Gull	220	1480	890	380	431	81
Great Black-backed Gull	25	197	119	27	67	14

Table 1

than in recent autumns. One was at Wellington on Oct. 20 (TLP). Another was along Hayes Road in Geauga Co. on Nov. 12 (VW). The highlight of the harrier reports was 5 at Spencer Lake SWA on Nov. 9 (FG). A **Cooper's Hawk** was interrupted as it dined on a long-tailed rat at Donald Gray Gardens on Nov. 6 (PL). **Red-shouldered Hawks** continue to be conspicuous in the eastern half of the region. A **Broad-winged Hawk** drifted over Wildwood SP on Sep. 3

(TK). **Red-tailed Hawks** received little mention. Geauga County provided the lion's share of **Rough-legged Hawk** reports. Middlefield and Claridon Townships hosted several birds in late Nov. (fide DB). Dark morphs were exciting finds at Fairport Harbor on Nov. 23 (RH, LR, NB) and LaDue on Nov. 24 (AJF). **American Kestrels** are in an awful state of affairs in my neck of the woods. I regret not having kept better records on this formally common roadside war-

rior. Perhaps then, I could print evidence of decreased numbers to convince contributors to keep better tabs on kestrels. Only Greenland reported seeing them in expected numbers. Augustine saw singles in eastern Geauga County fairly often, but he, too, knows of their local demise.

**Ring-necked Pheasant** reports are always noteworthy. Two were at Findley SP on Nov. 3 (FG). Two **Wild Turkeys** were seen in eastern Geauga Co. on Sep. 20 (JA). Bob Faber commented to Best that 12 were at Russell Park on Dec. 5. **Northern Bobwhites** went unreported. I imagine that most contributors missed bobwhite for the year. **Soras** were noted at Lorain on Sep. 4 & 7 (TLP). A **Common Moorhen** was still at the Weaver Road marsh on Sep. 15 (VW). I don't know why, but I rarely write about **American Coots**. Numbers this year exceeded my wildest dreams. The 32 coots at E. 55th St. Marina on Nov. 17 indicates that they were far more numerous than expected along the lake (BF, PL). Inland, Holt counted 770 on the Akron Lakes Nov. 10. He added 150 at Mogadore the same day. Tallies reached above 400 at LaDue, 250 at Lake Rockwell, and 200 at Wellington. Anyway you look at it, that's a lot of mudhens.

A flock of 16 **Black-bellied Plovers** was at Burke Airport on Oct. 20 (CH). Black-bellieds were regular at HBSP through Nov. 11. **American Golden-Plovers** were scarce. Six were at Burke Airport on Sep. 9 (PL). Three were in Lorain on Sep. 15 (CH). Two were at HBSP on Sep. 22 (RH, PP). A bird in Wellington Township on Oct. 27 was exceptional (CH). **Semi-**

**Totals for Selected Migrants  
banded at Lakeshore Metropark  
August - November 1996**

Golden-crowned Kinglet	52
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	52
Veery	48
Gray-cheeked Thrush	53
Swainson's Thrush	117
Hermit Thrush	80
Wood Thrush	10
Gray Catbird	113
White-eyed Vireo	3
Solitary Vireo	0
Warbling Vireo	1
Philadelphia Vireo	1
Red-eyed Vireo	20
Tennessee Warbler	6
Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Nashville Warbler	22
Yellow Warbler	45
Chestnut-sided Warbler	4
Magnolia Warbler	66
Cape May Warbler	4
Black-throated Blue Warbler	18
Yellow-rumped Warbler	28
Black-throated Green Warbler	2
Blackburnian Warbler	1
Palm Warbler	2
Bay-breasted Warbler	8
Blackpoll Warbler	4
Black-and-White Warbler	3
American Redstart	24
Ovenbird	34
Northern Waterthrush	2
Mourning Warbler	15
Common Yellowthroat	67
Hooded Warbler	12
Wilson's Warbler	13
Canada Warbler	5
Yellow-breasted Chat	1

Table 2  
Data from J. V. Pogacnik's field report

**palmated Plovers** were in expected numbers. A bird was a little tardy at West Branch SP on Oct. 5 (CH, VW). A gathering of 70 **Killdeer** at Nathan Hale Park Oct. 22 was unique (RHL, SW). Two **Greater Yellowlegs** lingered at LaDue through Nov. 4 (KM). **Lesser Yellowlegs** were unusually uncommon. A **Solitary Sandpiper** was tardy at HBSP on Oct. 6 (LR, M.ob.) A **Spotted Sandpiper** was fairly late at Oberlin on Oct. 27 (CH). **Ruddy Turnstones** provided an interesting occurrence comparison. In all of the hours that LePage put in at Lorain, he saw none. Kellerman found 4 at Wildwood SP on Sep. 8. Hannikman found up to

8 regularly at HBSP most of Sep. **Sanderlings** were simply abundant at HBSP. Counts ranged to 62 on Sep. 7 (RH). **Semipalmated Sandpipers** remained common at Lorain into early Sep. **Western Sandpipers** were as expected in Lorain. A bird at Burke Airport on Oct. 20 was more unusual (CH). **Least Sandpipers** numbers were very low. A juvenile **White-rumped Sandpiper** was in Lorain on Sep. 29-Oct. 2 (CH, RHL, SW). **Baird's Sandpipers** were fairly widespread and at the worst uncommon. Several birds were noted in Lorain through the 15th when 3 were there. West Branch harbored 1 on Sep. 9-11 (CH). HBSP provided a brief stopover

for Baird's on 3 occasions. The high count was 2 on Sep. 8. LaDue again provide the latest **Pectoral Sandpiper** sighting on Oct. 20 (LR, VW). **Dunlins** seldom elicit much response from this desk, but the 600 that passed by HBSP on Nov. 2 has to be one of the most remarkable November tallies in the history of the region (RH). Two were at North Reservoir on Nov. 10 (CH). **Stilt Sandpipers** continued in small numbers in Lorain into the middle of Sep. **Short-billed Dowitchers** were poorly represented at Lorain. Only one was spotted flying by HBSP on Sep. 17 (RH). **Common Snipes** were scarce. Five enjoyed the mudflat at LaDue on Oct. 5 (CH). **American Woodcocks** passed through undetected.

**Little Gulls** were in fair numbers and more widely distributed than in the past few years. An adult was at Eastlake on Nov. 23 (AJF). Another adult was in Lorain on Nov. 29-30 (JLD, ST, BF, ES). **Bonaparte's Gulls** returned to expected totals this fall. Early September build-ups of molting adults and juveniles at Lorain and HBSP ranged to 2000. These gulls largely disappeared by mid-Sep. By November, as many as 12,000 had returned to fish the CEI plant waters in Eastlake. Another 8-10,000 frequented the mouth of the Grand River. No comments on November Bonaparte's numbers were received from the mouth of Black and Cuyahoga Rivers. (I miss Bill and Nancy Klamm's meticulous tallies from the West Side.) **Thayer's Gulls** were reported only off Lakeshore MP. **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were found to be increasing in numbers. The first was a juvenile found at HBSP on Sep. 9-16 (KM, LR). An adult was at the traditional Eastlake haunt

on Sep. 15 (NB). Metcalf and others noted 4 there on Nov. 18. Four were in Lorain on Nov. 30 (ES). One was at Avon Lake on the same day (ES). A lesser at Oberlin Reservoir on Nov. 3 was very noteworthy, adding to our growing list of inland reports (FG). A melanistic **Herring Gull** was in Lorain on Nov. 30 (ES). A **Glaucous Gull** was at HBSP on Nov. 22 (RH). **Great Backed Gulls** peaked at 350+ on Nov. 25 at Eastlake (KM). A bird thought to be a **HerringxGreat Black-backed Gull** was at HBSP Sep. 6 (KM).

**Caspian Tern** numbers were very disappointing. The high tally was a paltry 23 at Lorain on Sep. 2 (TLP). The most Hannikman found at HBSP was 4! **Common Terns** moved well in early September. A late bird was in Lorain on Nov. 11 (RHL, SW). **Forster's Terns** were generally absent. An adult at HBSP on Nov. 10 was quite tardy (RH, LR).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were at Wildwood and Euclid Beach SPs on Sep. 8 (TK, PL, BF). The majority of **Common Nighthawks** had moved out of the region by Sep. Two late birds were at HBSP on Sep. 29 (LR). On Oct. 13, an exceptionally late bird was observed along the Shoreway in Cleveland (BF, PL). **Chimney Swifts** moved as expected; no late October stragglers got caught in the arctic blasts. The last **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** reported was on Sep. 23 (KM).

**Red-headed Woodpeckers** and **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** were reported in average numbers. **Northern Flickers** moved fairly well along the lake. This was verified by the 16 banded at Lakeshore MP. Lake Medina

hosted 21 on Sep. 29 (CW). Of the many woodpeckers causing enjoyment in the CVNRA, none were more stunning than the two **Pileated Woodpeckers** at Fawn Pond Road on Oct. 16 (BAT).

The only **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was at Nathan Hale Park on Sep. 25 (RHL, SW). **Eastern Wood-Pewees** were numerous through Sep., then abruptly departed. **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were in good supply. One was at Euclid Beach SP on Sep. 11, and 3 were at Chagrin River Park on Sep. 14 (TLP). **Least Flycatchers** were numerous through September. **Eastern Phoebes** did not repeat last year's spectacular performance. **Great Crested Flycatchers** and **Eastern Kingbirds** were conspicuous by their absence. The last **Purple Martins** were at HBSP on Sep. 15. No large gatherings of **Tree Swallows** were noted this year. A **Barn Swallow** set the late record date at LaDue on Nov. 4 (KM). This record was rather short-lived. Rickard saw it there the next day. In addition, Inez Beck found a 'Barney' at the Rittman Sewage Plant less than a mile south of the region. It remained there until the frigid night of Dec. 19.

A "solid white" **American Crow** turned some heads in Munson Township in Nov. (fide DB). **Black-capped Chickadees** and **Tufted Titmice** did not move noticeably along the lake this fall. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were barely noticed anywhere.



Ross' Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) - November 1996  
Indian River Inlet, Delaware by Mary Gustafson

**Brown Creepers** put in a better than average showing. **Carolina Wrens** were slightly improved in most areas. In Portage County they remain fairly common. A bird was in Medina on Nov. 11 (CW). A **House Wren** was late at Lorain on Nov. 9 (RHL, SW). **Winter Wrens** were common as expected. **Marsh Wrens** moved in timely fashion. One was in Lorain on Sep. 20 (TLP). Two were at HBSP on Oct. 12 (LR). Another was detected at Donald Gray Gardens on Oct. 17 (FG). There were fewer **Golden-crowned Kinglets** than normally pass through the region. Lakeshore banding totals reflected this assessment. **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** put in a good showing. On Oct. 11, 100+ were counted at HBSP. This included 20 in one tree (KM)! **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** were found only on the east side and in miniscule numbers. The high was a disappointing 3 at Euclid Beach SP on Sep. 21 (BF, PL).

Thrush migration was stellar by our standards. Reading the field reports, I find that passage of veeries and woodies along the lake is over by mid-Sep. Gray-cheekeds and Swainson's are gone by the end of Sep. Hermits are well documented into late Nov.

**Gray-cheeked Thrushes** were conspicuous at HBSP. On Sep. 15, 10 were tallied there (KM). One was at Euclid Beach SP on Sep. 25 (TLP). As expected, **Swainson's Thrushes** were fairly common most of September. **Hermit Thrushes** were in very good tallies along the lake. On Oct. 14, 10 were found at Donald Gray Gardens (FG, PL). Birds lingered well into November. Two were at Lakeshore on Nov. 16 (JLD, LR, ST). **Wood Thrushes** moved as expected. Chasar had a count of 20 in the CVNRA on Sep. 21. These birds were probably summer residents bulking up for their southward flights. A **Gray Catbird** lingered at HBSP through Nov. 10. **Northern Mockingbirds** were rare. One was along North Marginal on Nov. 30 (DAC). **Brown Thrashers** were about average along the lakefront. **American Pipits** were widespread in small numbers. A bird photographed in a tree at HBSP on Nov. 10 was unique (LR, RH, VW). A small flock of 6 was at LaDue on Oct. 4 ([fide DB](#)). Another 8 graced Nathan Hale Park on Nov. 10 (RHL, SW).

**Solitary Vireos** were found at Euclid Beach SP on 3 occasions. A bird was at HBSP on Oct. 10. **White-eyed Vireos** put in an above-average showing along the lake. One was at Chagrin River Park on Sep. 16 (TLP). Birds were noted at HBSP on Sep. 21 & 29 (RH, LR). **Philadelphia Vireos** were as numerous as ever. At least 2 could be found at Euclid Beach SP Sep. 11-21 (TLP, PL). On Sep. 16, 4 were at Chagrin River Park (TLP). Lake Isaac was a safe haven for 5 on Sep. 14 (NK). At HBSP, they appeared daily from Sep. 13 through early October. The high was an astonishing 10 on Sep. 21 (EB, RH, LR). A **Red-eyed**

**Vireo** was slightly tardy at North Chagrin on Oct. 10 (KM).

**W**arbler migration was special this fall. Numbers of Tennessees, Nashvilles, Northern Parulas, Bay-breasteds, Black-throated Greens and Blues, Ovenbirds, Mournings, Maggies, and Redstarts were all up. In some instances, Northern Parulas, for example, numbers defied all previous expectations. It seemed amazing that 20 species of warblers could be found at Headlands each of the last 3 weekends of September. September 21 had to be one of the biggest wave days in my memory. Inland, 11 species of warblers were recorded at Lake Medina on Sep. 22. If you have ever been there, you might understand what an accomplishment that was. Warblers must really have been moving that day.

As expected, **Blue-winged Warblers** had all but disappeared by early September. The latest inland blue-wingeds were at Oak Hill on Sep. 21 (NK). **Tennessee Warblers** were numerous. The high was 13 on Sep. 15 (RH). More **Orange-crowned Warblers** were reported than usual. Metcalf had 5 sightings. Birds were at HBSP on Sep. 21, 23, 30, and Oct. 10, 12 (RH, LR, BF). Birds were at Nathan Hale Park on Sep. 24 and Oct. 22 (RHL, SW). A single was in Valley City on Sep. 28 (FG). One was at Euclid Beach SP on Oct. 14 (TLP). Orange-crowns were at Donald Gray on Oct. 16-17 (FG, PL). An unprecedented fallout of **Nashville Warblers** occurred between Sep. 19 and Sep 23. On Sep. 21, 30 were tallied at HBSP (RH). Reporters found **Northern Parulas** in very good

numbers. One was at Wildwood SP on Sep. 15 & Sep. 29 (TK). At HBSP the totals were 4 on Sep. 14, 1 on Sep. 19, 2 on Sep. 21, 3 on Sep. 29, and 2 on Oct. 6 (EB, RH, LR). One was at Euclid Beach SP on Sep. 15 (BF, PL). On Sep. 16 one was at Chagrin River Park (TLP). One was singing at Rocky River MP on Sep. 18 (RHL, SW). Lake Medina hosted a foraging bird on Sep. 22 (CW). Two were at Nathan Hale Park on Sep. 24 (RHL, SW). Birds were at Donald Gray on Sep. 15-26 (FG, PL). September **Yellow Warblers** were well represented. Singles at Lorain on the 8th and 6 at HBSP on the 14th show a wide distribution. **Chestnut-sided Warblers** were common. The high was 18 at HBSP on Sep. 21. **Magnolia Warblers** topped out at 30+ on Sep. 21. **Cape May Warblers** were phenomenal at HBSP. On Sep. 14, 26 were estimated to be at HBSP (EB, RH, LR). By Sep. 29, 13 still were found there. **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were widespread throughout the month of September. Seven were at Rocky River MP on Sep. 18 (RHL, SW). A pair was observed feeding at a sapsucker well at Euclid Beach SP on Oct. 6 (BF, PL). Two were located at Donald Gray on the late date of Oct. 17 (FG). These reports certainly indicated a prolonged BTWA migration. **Yellow-rumped Warblers** put in a solid, but not spectacular showing. The high was a rather low 75+ at HBSP on Oct. 11 (KM). **Black-throated Green Warblers** were in very good numbers. While considered a common species, they are rarely found in double figures at a given site as they were this year. Ten birds were at Nathan Hale Park on Sep. 24 (RHL, SW). A bird lingered at HBSP until Oct. 21 (EB, LR, VW). **Blackburnian Warblers**

in above average totals. The high count was 10 on Sep. 14 at HBSP. A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was in the CVNRA on Sep. 1 (DAC). **Pine Warblers** went undetected at HBSP. One was found at Rocky River MP on Sep. 18 (RHL, SW). **Palm Warblers** bucked the trend of the other Dendroicas and were in below-average numbers. The high was only 25 at HBSP on Sep. 25 (LR). **Bay-breasted Warblers** were more abundant than any autumn I can recall. The high was 20 on Sep. 21 (RH, LR). **Blackpoll Warblers** mirrored Bay-breasted in expected higher numbers. The high at HBSP was 30 on Sep. 21 (EB, RH, LR). **Cerulean Warblers** are rarely noted after July. A bird at Chapin Forest on Sep. 18 was especially noteworthy (AJF). A bird at HBSP on Sep. 29 was equally impressive (EB, LR). **Black-and-white Warblers** were as expected. **American Redstarts** were common. It was good to see that **Ovenbirds** were widespread in small numbers. **Northern Waterthrushes** were also widespread. **Mourning Warblers** were very well reported. Banding totals from Lakeshore reflected an excellent passage. One was at Wildwood SP on Sep. 8 (TK). Headlands Beach SP hosted 2 on Sep. 14 and another on Sep. 21 (LR). **Mourning Warblers** were found in fair numbers along the lake. Inland, a bird was at Judge's Lake in Hinckley on Sep. 5 (NK). A late male was at Donald Gray Gardens on Oct. 7 (PL). A **Hooded Warbler** was an unexpected surprise at HBSP on Oct. 2 (RH). The high tally for **Wilson's Warblers** was 12 at HBSP on Sep. 14. **Canada Warblers** were as expected along the lake. A bird at Lake Medina on Sep. 22 was a bit of a surprise.

Small numbers of **Scarlet Tanagers** and **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** moved along the lake through the first two-thirds of Sep. Few **Indigo Buntings** were reported. One was at Gordon Park on Oct. 5 (ES). **Eastern Towhees** lingered well into Nov. at HBSP.

**S**parrows were well documented in solid totals. The first wave occurred on Oct. 5th when large numbers of sparrows were detected at the overgrown (and practically impenetrable) thicket at Gordon Park. Another feature unique to this fall, was the early Nov. blizzard, which forced many tardy migrant sparrows to uncharacteristically show themselves along roads and feeders.

**American Tree Sparrows** came in later than usual but their numbers were as expected. A **Chipping Sparrow** was late at Shaker Heights on Nov. 9 (PP). One was seeking sustenance along the roadside in Perry on Nov. 16 (JLD, LR, ST). A **Field Sparrow** was unexpected at Mentor Lagoons on Nov. 3 (LR, CH). Two **Vesper Sparrows** were found at Landerbrook on Oct. 25 (NB). One was at Lake Medina on Oct. 14 (CW). A **Savannah Sparrow** was forced to use Hannikman's feeding areas on Nov. 16-17. Three were at Landerbrook on Nov. 13 (NB). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was an outstanding find at Gordon Park on Oct. 6 (RHL, SW). (It's hard to imagine that the Schlabach party missed this one). **Fox Sparrows** were in above-average numbers. A high of 6 was reached at HBSP on Nov. 10 (LR). Up to 150 **Song Sparrows** were at Gordon Park on Oct. 5. Twenty-five **Lincoln's Sparrows** were tallied at Gordon Park on Oct. 5. One was rather

late in the CVNRA on Nov. 2 (DAC). Lakefront location reports indicated that **Swamp Sparrows** were in excellent supply. Greenland and Lozano found over 200 **White-throated Sparrows** at Donald Gray on Sep. 28. Schlabach conservatively estimated 300 at Gordon Park on Oct. 5. The largest tallies of **White-crowned Sparrows** were 300 at Gordon Park on Oct. 5 (ES) and 200+ at HBSP on Oct. 10 (LR). A gathering of 600+ **Dark-eyed Juncos** at HBSP on Nov. 10 seemed odd for the time of year. We expect them much earlier.

**Snow Buntings** were common along Lake Erie. Flocks of 30-60 were regularly seen throughout November. Six **Lapland Longspurs** were at HBSP on Oct. 28 (KM). Another 'lappy' was there on Nov. 2 (RH). One flew by with Snow Buntings at Fairport Harbor on Nov. 23 (LR, NB). In Lorain, 1-2 were seen on Oct. 6 (RHL, SW, CH) & Oct. 27 (CH). **Bobolinks** fared poorly. **Baltimore Orioles** were scarce after August. A male **Purple Finch** continued to visit a feeder in Brecksville through Nov. (BAT). One was at Furnace Run MP on Sep. 3 (RHL, SW). Five were at Carlisle Reservation on Nov. 10 (BF, PL). One visited a Streetsboro feeder on Nov. 17 (VW). The only **Common Redpoll** report came from Lakeshore MP on Nov. 10-11 (JP).



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**EARED GREBE** - Our only fall report was of a basic plumaged bird at Nimisila Reservoir on Nov. 11 (Holt).

**NORTHERN GANNET** - An immature flew by Lakeshore MP on Nov. 13 (Pogacnik).

**AMERICAN BITTERN** - A bird was seen at Oak Hill Pond through Sep. 21 (Kotesovec).

**LEAST BITTERN** - On Nov. 12, a wounded bird was brought to the Lake Erie Science and Nature Center. Efforts to save it failed, and it expired on Nov. 17. This, unequivocally, establishes a new late date for the species (Gary Fowler file Chasar).

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** - An immature bird was at the Duck Pond in Lorain Co. on Oct. 3-5 (Kraps). This establishes a new late date for Little Blue Heron.

**TRICOLORED HERON** - A bird, most likely aided by hurricane Fran, flew by a lucky threesome at Headlands Beach SP on the record late date of Sep. 8 (Hannikman, Bacik, Rosche).

**BRANT** - A remarkable total of 69 was reported from Lakeshore MP on Nov. 3 (Pogacnik). A more cooperative Brant at Gordon Park Nov. 15-17 helped add to many a year list (LePage).

**HARLEQUIN DUCK** - The only reports for the year came from Lakeshore MP on Nov. 13, 14, & 27 (Pogacnik). A belated report

from Portage County raised this editor's eyebrows. On Nov. 8, 1995, Ky Kraus and a fellow hunting party bagged two immatures at West Branch SP. He called me then and said he had photos to back it up. Being a bit skeptical of the report, I waited for him to prove it. After 6 months, he finally remembered to bring his battered photographs to our golf league. I looked at them and said, "Wow, two immature males!" Ky looked at me and replied "That's what Gido Tori said, too! How can you tell?" This was the first and only inland record of the species in the history of the region.

**MERLIN** - Birds were at Lakeshore MP on Sep. 23 (Pogacnik) and Oct. 13 (Rosche, Weingart). One was in Lorain on Sep. 8 (Holt). Another was seen there on Sep. 20 (LePage). One was badgering migrants at Gordon Park on Oct. 5 (Schlabach). A bird streaked by Fairport Harbor on Oct. 8 (Rosche). Unbelievably, a bird had returned to the Bath wintering area again. A male was seen there on Nov. 26 (Rosche).

**PEREGRINE FALCON** - Immatures were at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 6 & 30 (Metcalf). An immature graced Burke Airport on Sep. 15 (Holt). One was in Lorain on Sep. 14 (Harlan, Wagner) and on Oct. 7 (LePage). A bird cruised the Gordon Park landfill on Oct. 5 (Schlabach). Birds were reported from Lakeshore MP on 3 dates (Pogacnik). A belated report mentioned that a bird was at Wildwood SP on Aug. 28 (Kellerman).

**SANDHILL CRANE** - Rickard observed one at LaDue Reservoir on Oct. 31.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** - One was in Lorain on Sep. 28 (LePage). Four flew by Lakeshore MP on the late date on Oct. 31 (Pogacnik).

**WILLET** - Numbers at Lorain continued into September. Nine were there on Sep. 2 (LePage, Finkelstein, Lozano). One briefly paused at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 8 (Bacik, Hannikman, Rosche).

**WHIMBREL** - One was in Lorain on Sep. 5 (Harlan, Wagner).

**HUDSONIAN GODWIT** - LePage was fortunate to find 2 in Lorain on Oct. 15-16.

**MARBLED GODWIT** - A single bird was in Lorain on Sep. 5 (Harlan, Wagner). The Fjeldstads reported another bird at Lorain on Oct. 20.

**RED KNOT** - One put in a cameo appearance at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 10 (Metcalf).

**PURPLE SANDPIPER** - One flew by Eastlake on Nov. 3 (Holt, Rosche). One was in Lorain on Nov. 8-9 (Chasar, LePage). A bird was at Headlands Beach SP on Nov. 11 (Hannikman). Another was found at the mouth of the Chagrin River on Nov. 24 (Pogacnik).

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** - Birds were in Lorain on Sep. 1 & Sep. 4 (LePage). The high tally for the year was 5 at Burke Airport on Sep. 10 (Finkelstein, Lozano).

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE** - One was in a flooded field in Avon Lake on Sep. 7 (Pogacnik).

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE** - One-three juveniles spent the first third of September in Lorain (LePage, Rickard, M.ob.).

**RED PHALAROPE** - A bird was at Headlands Beach SP on Nov. 2 (Hannikman, Bacik). At Lakeshore MP, 1-2 were seen Oct. 31-Nov. 12 (Pogacnik).

**POMARINE JAEGER** - One-two birds were at Headland Beach SP on Sep. 8 (Bacik, Hannikman, Rosche). Three-five were there on Nov. 10 (Hannikman, Rosche, M.obs.). 'Poms' continued to make their presence known well into November. One was at Eastlake Nov. 23-24 (Barber, Pogacnik). Starting on Oct. 19, 1-4 'poms' were seen off Lakeshore MP on 5 occasions (Pogacnik).

**PARASITIC JAEGER** - At Headlands Beach SP, birds were seen on Sep. 8, Nov. 2, 10 (5+), & 11 (Hannikman, M.ob.). Juveniles were noted at Eastlake on Nov. 9 & 17 (Hannikman). Up to 6 Parasitics were seen off Lakeshore MP on 4 early November dates (Pogacnik). One was in Lorain on Nov. 28 (Harlan, Wagner).

**LAUGHING GULL** - A juvenile was at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 8-21 (Hannikman, Rosche, M.ob.).

**FRANKLIN'S GULL** - One was in Lorain on Sep. 4-7 (LePage). A bird was seen at the mouth of the Rocky River on Oct. 26 (Dunn, Rosche). Another first winter bird was at Eastlake on Nov. 3 (Rosche, M.ob.).

**SABINE'S GULL** - An immature was in Lorain on Sep. 6-7 (LePage, M.ob.). A bird was at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 12 (Hannikman).

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** - An immature was seen from Lakeshore MP on Oct. 31, Nov. 11, and Nov. 13 (Pogacnik). Dunn and Tackett saw one rest-

ing there on Nov. 16.

**BLACK TERN** - One was in Lorain on Sep. 6-7 (LePage). Headlands Beach SP hosted 1-10 birds Sep. 8-15 (Hannikman). An exceptionally late bird was there on Nov. 2 (Hannikman, Bacik).

**SNOWY OWL** - Few birds generate lakefront birding excitement as this species. This year, snowies did not disappoint. An immature was found in Fairport Harbor on Nov. 16 and remained into the winter (Rosche, M.ob.). A bird was found in Lorain on Nov. 17 and also remained through the season (Harlan, Wagner, M.ob.).

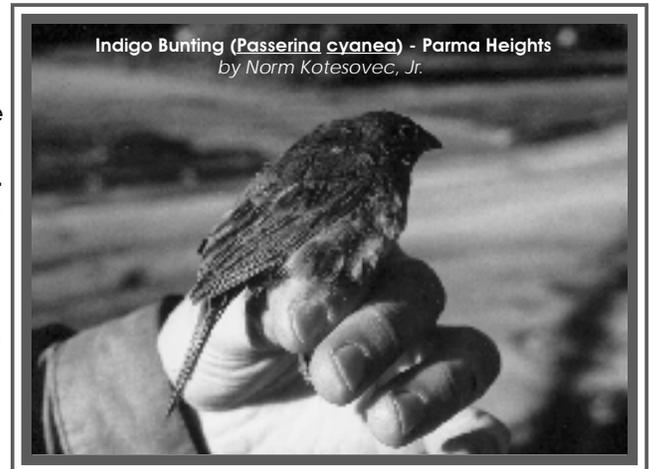
**SHORT-EARED OWL** - One was seen at dusk at Oberlin Reservoir on Nov. 16 (Greenland).

**NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL** - A bird was at Headlands Beach SP on Nov. 9-10 (Barber, Hannikman). Lakeshore MP provided safe haven for one on Nov. 12 (Pogacnik). A saw-whet was at Donald Gray Gardens on Nov. 16 (Chasar).

**SEDGE WREN** - One was difficult to corner at Headlands Beach SP on Oct. 12-13 (Rosche, Bacik, Missig).

**WAGTAIL SPECIES** - See Field Notes.

**NORTHERN SHRIKE** - The Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area provided good hunting for one on Nov. 30 (Chasar).



Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*) - Parma Heights  
by Norm Kotesovec, Jr.

**GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** - A male was at Lake Isaac on Sep. 14 (Kotesovec).

**PRAIRIE WARBLER** - A bird was at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 14 (Bacik). Another was at Lake Medina on Sep. 22 (Witt).

**WORM-EATING WARBLER** - Extremely rare in the fall, one was skulking at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 14 (Rosche, Bacik).

**CONNECTICUT WARBLER** - The only sighting away from the Lakeshore MP Banding Station was at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 21 (Bacik).

**INDIGO BUNTING** - Not usually a species to make the "Noteworthy Reports" list, a male was mist-netted and banded in Parma Heights on Nov. 29. This broke the late date record for the species by a month (Kotesovec).

**DICKCISSEL** - One was at Gordon Park on Oct. 5 (Schlabach).

**CLAY-COLORED SPARROW** - Rickard tallied one at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 18. Barber noted one at Landerbrook on Sep. 29. The Schlabach party found this rare sparrow species at Gordon Park on Oct. 5.

**LECONTE'S SPARROW** - A bird was minutely described by Schlabach and others at the Gordon Park Landfill on Oct. 5.

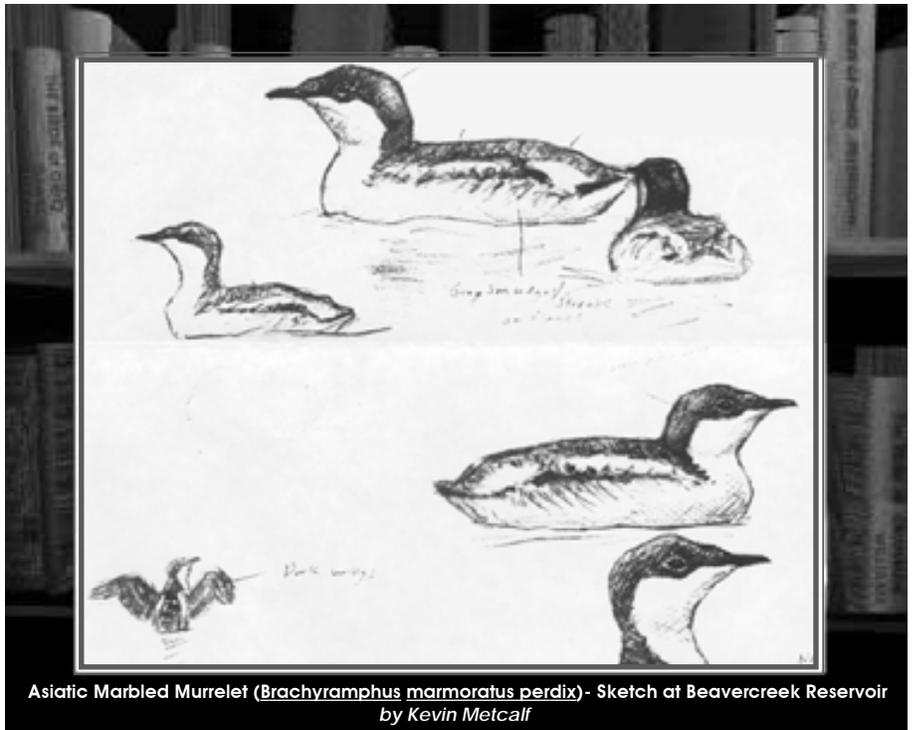
**NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW** - The first was at Headlands Beach SP on Oct. 4 (Ton-eff). Reminiscent of days gone by, 3 were found at the Gordon Park landfill on Oct. 5 (Schlabach). One was in Lorain on Oct. 6-7 (Harlan, Holt, Wagner, Pogacnik). Bacik and Missig located one at Headlands Beach SP on Oct. 12. A sickly bird was in Lorain on Nov. 17 (Harlan, Wagner).

**EXOTICS** - It is noteworthy to report that an immature male Tufted Duck was seen by many at Shipman Pond on Oct. 28. Observers noted a leg band on this bird, which they watched for a long period of time. This indicates that the bird was in all likelihood not wild. The Bird Calendar thanks Kevin Metcalf for his caution and details on this sighting.



**Notes on Spotted Towhee Identification - (with comments on a Seneca County sighting)**  
by H. Thomas Bartlett

During the spring of 1996, the AOU released its revised list of bird species for North America. On this list was a split of the Rufous-sided Towhee into two new and separate species. What was once known as the eastern race was to be called



Asiatic Marbled Murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus perdix*) - Sketch at Beaver Creek Reservoir by Kevin Metcalf

the Eastern Towhee. The male shows a black head, back, and tail with white belly, rufous sides, and red eye. This is the towhee which we in Ohio are familiar with and expect. The western race of the 'Rufous-sided Towhee' is now a new species known as the Spotted Towhee. It is very similar in appearance, except for the fact that it has rows of spots along the back, scapulars, and coverts. The range of this new towhee species is Rocky Mountains west. One feature that I have noticed in Spotted Towhees is that the rufous of the sides does not meet cleanly with the black hood. There frequently appears to be a little white, which 'leaks' in between the two.

On the morning of May 4, 1996, I was at my bird-banding station at Springville Marsh State Nature Preserve in southwestern Seneca County. Several Heidelberg College students were assisting my regular team. As

daylight began, my regulars were setting up the nets, while I was explaining the research project to the students. The marsh was alive with birds singing like crazy.

Around 9:00 AM, Paula, my wife, Laura, my daughter and several friends showed up. Laura and her friends raced off down the boardwalk. The rest of us talked and banded birds. We would end the day with 74 birds banded and 6 recaptures of 23 species. About 10:30 AM, my daughter and her friend were moving back towards the parking lot when they flushed a bird down the boardwalk. I watched it fly into the net next to the parking lot. .... As I started to remove the bird, I couldn't believe my eyes. The bird rolled in the net and I could see that it was a Spotted Towhee. The adrenal began to flow. I yelled out that it was a Spotted Towhee. Holding the bird in my hands, I walked up to the

group. Several people could see that it was a towhee but thought it looked no different than usual. Then, I held the bird by its legs so they could see its back. Mouths dropped and then everyone went running for cameras.

The bird was measured, weighed, and banded. Then, at least 100 photographs were taken. These included some by people who had never seen our normal towhee. The bird weighed 45.6 grams, had a wing chord of 87 millimeters, a culmen of 10.5, and a fat measure of 4 (maximum on my scale). The underside was white and the sides were rufous, but somewhat broken. The head, back, and tail were black, but dusted in brownish-orange. The scapulars and back had white



by H. Thomas Bartlett

spots/lines running down them. The eye was an orange-red color. Because of the eye color and the dusting of the plumage, the bird was



by H. Thomas Bartlett

determined to be a second year male. It was banded with a size 2 band # (942-69921) and finally released. The bird was heard and observed the following Sunday (May 12) by me and several others. What else could show up in Seneca County?

(Ed. Note) Yeah Tom, what else could show up in Seneca Co? A Marbled Murrelet maybe?

### Wagtail (Motacilla Sp.) Documentation for Headlands Beach State Park

by Kevin Metcalf

**1** This section is directly from field notes: Sept. 9, 1996 Notes on wagtail sp. sighting: 1 hr. after sighting Headlands Beach S.P. Lake Co. OH - at swimming beach. Written notes after sighting, while still at Headlands (9:20) before field guides consulted. Weather: mostly cloudy, diffuse light - not bright - light fairly good.

Optics: 8 x 42 Leica. Distance: (with bins) 125 ft. Bird flying away down shoreline to the west. 1) Heard call note of a passerine overhead - unfamiliar - (a liquid full "seetit/seep"?) high up - heard only one note and not well-heard (Do wagtails give a 1-note call? I have heard 2-noted calls), Undulating flight - very trim, long-tailed, long (not conical bill). Field marks visible were that bird was pale underneath - no color noted, may have been whitish, cream, or other pale color and the bird flashed a white/whitish patch on upperwing. It may have had white in tail and outer edges of some feathers.

Flycatchers generally do not have an undulating flight. Shape reminded me of a mimid (catbird-like) but even more trim. Too trim, wrong bill, and head shape for phoebe, Horned Lark, mockingbird Shape and flight unlike any passerine besides a wagtail (I have seen numerous wagtails [Japan] and 1 in N. America [Cal.]).

**2.** Circumstances of Sighting: Overcast--wind was southerly--shifting from southeast to southwest. Windy and cloud covered--the remnants of hurricane Fran. As I was scanning through the gulls on the swimming beach, a call note overhead caught my attention. I looked up, maybe 50-75 feet overhead, and located the bird I got my binoculars on it as it flew away down the beach to the southwest. It was strikingly long-tailed (tail length seemed about as long as the body length) and very trim. Tail appeared squarish at the end. Whitish belly, maybe more grayish/dirty white on flanks. The bird was flying away, and I could not see the breast and head when the bird was at its closest to me.

As I watched the bird fly, it had a deeply undulating flight that was almost goldfinch or woodpecker-like, but even more exaggerated. There almost seemed to be more up and down motion in the flight than forward progress. The wingbeats and flight gave the impression of a bird bigger than a warbler, smaller than a robin. The bird turned toward the shore, and I saw a profile of the bird's shape, which was faintly reminiscent of a catbird, but trimmer. (Up until this point I had only had the bird in my binoculars for a few seconds). Shape was almost warbler-like, but much longer-tailed than any warbler. I then recognized this bird as a wagtail, as the "mimid-like" tail proportions were what had first impressed

me about a wagtail that I had seen in California on Oct. 1, 1989. (See American Birds, Spring 1990, Vol. 44, No. 1, page 158).

As the bird flew farther away, it was mostly silhouetted; but as the bird changed course, I caught a white/whitish flash on the upperside of the wing. Otherwise, the bird appeared grayish. No other colors and patterns were noted.

The bird continued away to the southwest, at some points looking as if it were going to fly over

*There are four main points to my identification of this bird as a wagtail.*

the lake and then veering back shoreward, but never landing. The more I watched it the more I realized that the strongly undulating flight, combined with the size and shape, is what makes a wagtail look unlike any other bird. The bird's flight path favored the shore. It did not look as if it were going to fly inland. I watched the bird until it disappeared from view.

When I arrived home, I telephoned several birders and told them to start looking for a wagtail. I conservatively reported this as a "probable" wagtail at first, as I wanted to give myself time to do some research and eliminate every other possibility.

**3.** Comments and elimination of other species: My main objective here is to have written documentation on file with the Ohio Bird Records Committee. In this circumstance, I wish we had an official "hypothetical" list for these kinds of records. I know how difficult this will be to review. I welcome any and all comments.

Having seen many in the field, I find there are few birds that are shaped like and fly like a wagtail. No other species came to mind as I observed this bird (except the aforementioned mimids)

There are four main points to my identification of this bird as a wagtail. 1) The trim, long-tailed, pointed-billed shape, 2) the deeply undulating flight 3) the call note and the white on the

top of the wing, and 4) "circumstantial evidence," I submit the bird's seeming preference for the shore, since many wagtails seem to prefer waterside habitats, and the potential vehicle of transport--hurricane Fran.

Of the birds that come closest to fitting my description (trim, long-tailed passerines), some of the flycatchers could be similar, but none in this group of birds has a strongly undulating flight or would flash extensive white on the upperwings. Flycatchers also fly fairly level with some erratic side to side movements and a flicking" wing motion. The same is true for birds in the thrush family, which also have a fairly level flight, and are stockier ("chestier") and much

shorter-tailed. None of the thrushes or flycatchers would flash obvious white on the upperwing or give the call note that I heard.

Of the mimids, only the mockingbird fits some of the characteristics of this bird; however, the mimids fly fairly fast and have direct, shallowly undulating movements. Mimids have broader, rounded wings, quite unlike a wagtail. Cover-loving mimids could also be expected to head for vegetation, not wanting to remain over water parallel to the shore. In addition, this bird was much trimmer and dainty, compared to our mimids, with which I am very familiar.

A few other birds as long-shots that have longish tails are the orioles, shrikes, yellow-breasted chat, and some of the finches. I believe that all are fairly easily eliminated by the above-mentioned characters. I am very familiar with all of our regularly occurring species. Shrikes, for example, have a fast, direct flight, a hooked bill and rounded tail, are usually silent in flight, and are stockier.

In habits, flight style, and general shape, the pipits and Horned Lark are somewhat like a wagtail. I am very familiar with the high-pitched, "squeaky-wheel" calls of Horned Larks and the high "pip-pit" calls of American Pipits. I would have recognized these calls immediately. The call that I heard did not have the quality of either a pipit or Horned Lark. These species also do not flash

white on the top of the wing. For anyone familiar with wagtails, the larks and pipits are much shorter-tailed than a wagtail. Pipits and larks undulate in flight, but not as much as the wagtails. \*(Later in the season I carefully watched larks and pipits in flight, and there really is no way to mistake them for a wagtail).

Given that the bird did not have a short, conical bill, I can confidently eliminate the finches, sparrows, buntings, etc. With this, I run out of options.

*Several species of wagtails are migrating this time of year in Europe ...*

**Possible species:** Several species of wagtails are migrating this time of year in Europe and Asia, some of which fly south to Africa and Southern Asia from August through October. I would assume this was a migrant blown off course from Europe by hurricane Fran or by the NE winds that were associated with Fran's remnants as that system moved north. Five species are possible, all of which have been recorded in North America: Black-backed (*M. lugens*), White (*M. albanus*), Gray (*M. cinerea*), Yellow (*M. flava*), and Citrine (*M. citreola*).

**Yellow Wagtail:** I am fairly confident that this species can be eliminated since it lacks extensive white on the upperwing. However, first-year birds do

have whitish wing bars and can lack extensive yellow. Their call is described as "tsee-e."

**Black-backed/White Wagtail:** This bird did not have the bold wing pattern of an adult black-backed wagtail. Black-backs have a duller immature plumage that is gray on top and whitish below, with white wing bars that can appear as a white patch. This plumage is very difficult to separate from an immature white wagtail. An adult white wagtail is also a strong possibility. My first

thought was that this was probably a Black-backed/White wagtail, but I did not hear the double call note that I have heard before. The call note is described as "tchi-zik" or "tchik" in Black-backed, and in White Wagtail as a cheery "pee-vit" or "tslee-vit"

(Jonsson, 1992), Peterson, 1990, attributes (mistakenly?) an 'abrupt tchik' to White Wagtail. The shorter "tchik" call could have been what I heard. If I were to describe the call again, I would probably not use the term "liquid." I think that is not quite accurate. The bird I heard simply gave a full, quick note unlike the thin, high calls of larks and pipits.

**Gray Wagtail:** Seems unlikely, since they have some bright yellow in the underparts in all plumages. However, they can show a white wing-stripe and have a call described as "sttit," which could match one of my call descriptions.

**Citrine Wagtail:** Immature is whitish below, gray on top, and

has white wing bars. Flight call is described as a straight, sharp "srreep," often similar to yellow wagtail. This could also fit one of my call descriptions. There is only one North American record of this species (to my knowledge).

The White/Black backed Wagtails still seem most likely in my mind, given the amount of white that I saw on the upper wing and that these species seem most likely as vagrants in Eastern North America. (There is a previous Michigan record). In addition, Louisiana recorded its first state record of Black-backed/White Wagtail this fall.

It is interesting that many of the calls of wagtails could match what I heard--further evidence that this bird was, in fact, a wagtail. Unfortunately, I cannot be more precise in my description, mostly because it was only heard once, (if it called more, I was not focused on the call, but was intensely looking) and it was not anything that I was expecting to hear at the time. I was definitely thrown a curve!

## The Belcher Bird Library

by Dwight Chasar

Email.. The Internet.. Electronic bulletin boards.. Gophers.. World Wide Web.. Home pages.. The information superhighway.. With a personal computer, communication software, a modem and phone line, information can be accessed in minutes from all over the world. I find using my PC particularly useful in

searching library card catalogs for reference books on birds. It was through such a search that I discovered the Belcher Bird Library that exists at the University of Akron.

Paul Belcher has lived in Akron since 1922 when he arrived with a freshly-minted degree in chemistry from Ohio University. Having looked futilely for employment with one of the tire companies, he took a job in banking. Years later, he retired as an attorney and as the chairman of the board of The First National Bank of Akron. Paul became interested in birds at the early age of four and birded the rest of his life, both in the United States and abroad. In between, he collected books about birds and birding; recently he donated his 1700 volumes to the University to be used as a reference collection.

This collection of books can be accessed through a modem by calling (330)972-6820, which will directly connect to the University's library system. Alternatively, access to OHIOLINK, to one of the many Ohio state university or college libraries, or to the World Wide Web (the University of Akron has a Web home page) will allow you to connect into the library card catalog. To access the Belcher collection, type for a title search "belcher bird library" and then scan the

titles for an adventure. If you are searching for a specific title or author, then search the catalog without going into the total Belcher collection.

The subjects of the books range as widely as the book title Audubon to Xantus, for which I was originally searching, implies. Books on birds in very limited locales of the US, in individual states, and in numerous countries abound. Topics are as specific as individual bird species, such as the robin and house sparrow, and broaden progressively to birds of the world. Physiology, eggs, migration, art, sport, extinction, bird houses--almost every conceivable topic can be found. The ages date as far back as the mid-1800s, including the 1895 AOU checklist, and up to the present. One can find some of the early landmark works by Bendire, Coues and Baird. Most of the books are in English, but some are in German, Spanish, and French.

I talked briefly with the Dean of University Libraries, Delmus Williams. He indicated that a small endowment has been established for purchasing additional books for the collection and that the University would welcome other bird book collections into the Belcher library, thus attempting to establish the University as a

major repository for scholarly bird books for research purposes. For more information about the collection, one can contact Mr. John Miller in the library archives. The collection is available for use between 8am-5pm daily. 

*One can find some of the early landmark works by Bendire, Coues and Baird.*

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**Notice:** All reports to The Cleveland Bird Calendar are archived in the The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

**Rare Bird Hotline: (216) 381-8325 (TEAL)** The hotline is sponsored by the Kirtland Bird Club. In cases of extreme rarities (i.e. Western Grebe, Mew Gull, Varied Thrush, Harris Sparrow, etc.) please contact the editors as soon as possible.

**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 330 - 678- 9408 or Ray Hannikman at 216 - 261- 9552.

**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.

**Changes of Address:** Contact Jean Loes, at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, (216) 231 – 4600

**Field reports,** artwork, papers, and photographs should be directed to Larry Rosche, 7473 Sylvan Drive, Kent, Ohio 44240. e-mail lorofs@aol.com