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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.

The Cleveland Bird Calendar is published quarterly by The Kirtland Bird Club and The Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

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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**THIRTY YEARS AGO:** Three Red Crossbills visited a Brecksville residence on Apr. 16, 1967 (Hostetler). Two *Little Blue Herons* were at North Chagrin Reservation on Apr. 23 (Surman, Jr.). On Apr. 30, an adult *Yellow-crowned Night-Heron* was in the Rocky River Valley (Klamm, Stasko). A 'Lawrence's Warbler' was in Waite Hill on May 1 (Flanigan). A *Piping Plover* graced White City from May 8-11 (Surman, Jr.).

**TWENTY YEARS AGO:** The earliest *Scarlet Tanager* ever in our files was at the old Brooklyn Airport on Mar. 29, 1977 (Bacik). A *Barn Owl* was at Donald Gray Gardens on Apr. 21 (Hoffman, Klamm). A *Clay-colored Sparrow* was at Shaker Lakes on May 8-10 (Peskin). A *Cattle Egret* was at Burke Airport on May 14 (Hannikman). A *Snowy Egret* was discovered at Becker Road Pond on May 29 (Hoffman). A *Red Phalarope* was studied at length at Shaker Lakes on May 22 (Hoffman).

**TEN YEARS AGO:** Ohio's only record of a *Brambling* visited a Bath feeder Mar. 31-Apr. 7, 1987 (Harger, Rosche). Our only Apr. record of a *Black-headed Gull* was at East 72nd St. on Apr. 5 (Hannikman). The first spring record of *Marbled Godwit* since 1880 occurred at Gordon Park on May 2 (Harlan). A *Snowy Egret* was at Gordon Park on Apr. 10 (LePage). A *Tricolored Heron* was in Barberton on May 5 (Rosche). *Red Knots* graced Gordon Park on May 24 & 28 (Klamm, LePage). An immature *Summer Tanager* was at Sims Park on May 25 (Hannikman). A male *Blue Grosbeak* was along Lost Nation Road on May 30 (Talkington).

**SPRING 1997**

*by Dwight W. Chasar*

**MARCH:** The temperature averaged 38.8°, 1.5° above normal. The highest temperature was 69° on the 28th; and the lowest, 17° on the 7th. Lake Erie rose from 35° to 40° on the 31st. Sunshine was scarce at 37% of the time possible. Precipitation totaled 3.26 in. over 16 days, .35 in. above normal. The greatest fall for a 24-hr. period was .72 in. on the 13-14th. Snowfall totaled 5.3 in., with the greatest amount being 2.0 in. on the 5th. Snow depth never exceeded 2 in. on the ground.

**APRIL:** The temperature averaged 45.2°, 2.4° below normal. The highest temperature was 74° on the 6th; and the lowest, 20° on the 10th. Sunshine prevailed 63% of the time possible. Snowfall was scarce with only .8 in over two days. Precipitation totaled 2.20 in., .94 in. below normal. The greatest fall for a 24-hr. period was 1.08 in. on the 12th. Lake Erie water temperature moved to 48°.

**MAY:** The temperature averaged 52.9°, 5.1° below normal. The highest was 78° on the 19th; and the lowest, 34° on the 2nd. Sunshine occurred 52% of the time possible. Lake Erie rose to 55° by the 31st. Rain totaled 4.21 in., .72 in. above normal. The greatest fall for a 24-hr. period was .94 in. on the 31st. Leafing of vegetation was at least a week late.
Spring seemed as if it would never arrive. When it did, it showed up with a flurry of avian activity. Preparing this issue was monumental because of the stacks of paper and email. I would like to take time to thank each of the reporters. It is heartwarming to notice that many of you were doing the same fine job 20 years ago. The advent of the personal computer has made for great strides in neatness. New places appear to be making inroads into reports, River Styx Park and Cascade Metropark, to name two. Of course, old standbys, like Shaker Lakes, North Chagrin, and Headlands, continue to produce their share of noteworthy sightings. No place, though, can compete with the data received from Lakeshore Metropark. In the past five years it seems that more species have been seen there than any other place in the region. Constant vigilance must be the key. I’ll let Hannikman sum up the spring at Headlands.

“Spring at Headlands--Open water in March led to a tremendous duck movement on Mar. 22. Three thousand Red-breasted Mergansers and 2500 Lesser Scaup were observed at Headlands. Shorebird highlights had to be two different Piping Plovers, 2 Whimbrels, 2 Red Knots, and a record-early White-rumped Sandpiper. Bad weather in late May produced flocks of 10-20 Semipalmated Sandpipers. More Common Snipe than usual were noted around the small pond in the nature sanctuary, undoubtedly because of the wet conditions. Flycatchers were, as everything else at HBSP, late. A strong influx of Alder Flycatchers, along with Willows and Leasts, was detected on May 31. Great Crested Flycatchers were about 10 days late. A strong and steady movement of warblers was noted on May 18, May 24-26, and May 31. Total numbers were highest during May 24-26, with American Redstarts, Magnolia Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats being the most numerous. Indicative of the very late warbler migration were the 19 species recorded on May 31. After the slow start in early May, I found the warbler migration very satisfactory and enjoyable.”

Ray
So it was. Good birding!

Common Loons were very unspectacular. The high inland count was only 7 (DJB). A Pied-billed Grebe straggled at Firestone MP on May 23 (BS). High totals for Horned Grebes were 50 on the Akron Lakes on Mar. 16 and 49 at LaDue Reservoir on Mar. 23 (CH). Double-crested Cormorants continued to occur in large numbers. Great Egrets were fairly common along the lake. Inland, 5 were in a group over Geauga Co. on May 18 (JA). Green Herons were found in small numbers. Black-crowned Night-Herons far outpaced the preceding species along the lake. The maximum reported was 85 along the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland on Apr. 14 (PL). A bird at Ira Road (CVNRA) on May 5 was unusual for the location (TMR). Over 20 were seen at St. Ignatius High School on Mar. 18 (NB).

Waterfowl migration along Lake Erie was vastly different from a year ago. Little ice deterred the migrants that passed through early. Inland, Lane had solid numbers of the regularly occurring diving ducks.
at Berlin Reservoir in March. A flock of 18 Tundra Swans flew over Fairport Harbor on Mar. 2 (KM, LR). A Snow Goose was at Springfield Lake on Mar. 16 (CH). Puddle duck numbers were below average. Seeing 18 Northern Pintails at LaDue on Mar. 23 was one of the few bright spots (CH). A flock of 180 Canvasbacks was at Berlin on Mar. 15 (BL). A group of 150 Redheads was there the same day (BL). A gravel pit pond in Shalersville provided another high tally (85) on Mar. 16 (CH). The high count for Ring-necked Ducks was 2100 in Portage Co. on Mar. 31 (LR). Large numbers of Scaup appeared and left in late March along the lake. One Old-squaw was at Oberlin Reservoir on Apr. 10 (DJH). Black Scoters were reported from HBSP on Apr. 6 & 26 (EB, RH). Two were off Lakeshore MP off Lakeshore MP on Mar. 22 (JP). Surf Scoters were off Lakeshore MP on Mar. 30 (JP). An estimated 5000 Red-breasted Mergansers were along the Cleveland lakefront on Mar. 16 (DJH).

Turkey Vultures moved well along the lake. Ospreys were noticeably absent. They were noted at Lake Medina on only 3 occasions (CW). Chasar saw them only twice in the CVNRA. Lake Rockwell had only one report. A late bird was over Acacia Country Club on May 26 (NB). Bald Eagles were reported widely. It seems odd that such a magnificent creature could become an expected sight anywhere in the region. The Snow Lake nest apparently failed. Wildlife officials feared that one of the Lake Rockwell pair had died because their eagle spotter found only one bird at the nest. Diligent birders, however, found the eagles with 3 young in a new nest a short distance away from the old one (VW, M.obs.). Over 30 reports of Bald Eagles were received from all reporting counties. Northern Harriers were fairly scarce. A Sharp-shinned Hawk spent the afternoon of Mar. 14 around the Hoffmans’ yard in Cleveland Heights. “It was especially interesting, as it retained the brown back with white spots of an immature, while having molted to adult body plumage, thus showing the red-barred underparts and dark crown with slightly tawny face. The head was noticeably small, compared to the Cooper's Hawks we more normally see, though it was fairly large been looking for a place to nest (CH). A Common Moorhen was at HBSP May 3. While the occurrence was not unexpected, the fact that it was found 15 feet up in a tree was quite bizarre.

Shorebirds received good reviews. While the numbers are not extraordinary, it was good to receive encouraging reports from along the lake and inland. An extremely early Black-bellied Plover passed by Headlands Beach State Park on Apr. 6 (EB, RH). Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs were in small numbers,
high count of **Short-billed Dowitchers** was 20 at Berlin on May 12 (BL). **Common Snipes** were as abundant as in recent memory. A flock of 47 huddled together in Streetsboro on Mar. 31 (CH). From Apr. 8 through May 11, as many as 72 could be found foraging in the flooded field near Mantua (VW, CH, LR). **American Woodcocks** were much more conspicuous than expected at HBSP.

The Department of Agricultural officials counted 8615 nesting pairs of **Ring-billed Gulls**, on Dock 20 (PL). The high count of **Bona parte’s Gulls** was 2000 at Lorain on May 4 (TLP). A flock of 200 at Mantua on Apr. 12 was impressive for the site (VW). A **Thayer's Gull** was at Edgewater SP on Mar. 16 (TLP) An adult **Iceland Gull** was at HBSP on Mar. 8 (RH). One was at Wildwood SP on May 22 (RH, SW). A second year **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was at Eastlake on Mar. 24 (KM). **Glaucous Gulls** were at Edgewater SP on Mar. 16 (TLP) and at HBSP on Apr. 29 (EB, RH, KM). **Caspian Terns** peaked at 181 in Lorain on May 2 (TLP). Inland, the high was 5 at Lake Rockwell on Apr. 17 (VW). Once again, **Common and Forster’s Terns** staged well in Lorain. On May 17 LePage noted 500+ terns in Lorain. A Common was very early there on Apr. 6 (TLP).

Both **Black-billed** and **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were found at Firestone MP on May 28 (BS). Three Black-billeds were at Berlin on May 17 (BL). Another Black-billed was at Wildwood SP on May 11 (TK). One was at Herrick Fen on May 24 (BAT). Two were together at Jaite on May 26 (DAC). The arrival of **Common Nighthawks** averaged 10-12 days late. The one exception was in the CVNRA on May 10 (DAC).

On Apr. 9, Metcalf had 7 species of woodpeckers in A. B. Williams Woods. **Yellow-bellied Sap-suckers** were in expected numbers. **Northern Flickers** were in very good totals along the lake. The 150 at HBSP on Apr. 5 was a conservative estimate (NB, LR). **Pileated Woodpeckers** were doing well. **Olive-sided Flycatchers** were found in the CVNRA on May 17 (DAC), at Brecksville on May 20-23 (DAC, TMR), at Baldwin Lake on May 28 (TMR), at Sims Park on May 28 (DJH), and at Lakeshore MP on May 31 (JP). **Eastern Wood-Pewees** peaked at 30 on May 25 at HBSP. Many **Yellow-bellied Flycatchers** were reported from lakefront sites. The high was 5 at HBSP on May 25. **Acadian Flycatchers** were late in arriving, but abundant at the end of the period. An **Alder Flycatcher** was at Gott Fen on May 24 (BAT). Eight were tallied at HBSP on May 30. **Willow Flycatchers** were common. Two **Eastern Phoebes** were early in the CVNRA on Mar. 23 (DAC). Over 125 **Cliff Swallows** were present at Berlin on May 31 (BL).

**Brown creepers** seemed to be abundant in the CVNRA (DAC). Best and Metcalf found them regularly in expected numbers. Many reports indicated that **Carolina Wrens** seemed to have rebounded locally. **Winter Wrens** moved well. A **Marsh Wren** was a good find at Shaker Lakes on May 13 (DL). Birds were reported from Lorain on May 7 & 17 (TLP). **Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were well reported, as were **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers**.

The peaks for **Veerries** were 24 on May 18; **Gray-cheeked**, 9 on May 31; **Swainson’s**, 86 on May 24; and **Hermit**, 53 on Apr. 5. **Thrushes** were all noted at Lakeshore MP (JP). The high tally for **Wood Thrushes** at HBSP was 20 on May 11 (RH, LR). **Gray Catbirds** were abundant. **Northern Mockingbirds** were fairly widespread. One was at Villa Angela on Apr. 13 (BF, PL). Whiskey Island hosted up to 3 (FG, PL). Best reported that Eric Faber had one in Munson township on May 15. **Brown Thrashers** were late, but in expected numbers. A few singles of **American Pipits** were reported here and there. A tally of 2640 **Cedar Waxwings** at Lakeshore MP on May 31 was simply staggering (JP).

**White-eyed Vireos** were not as common as expected. **Solitary Vireos** showed well along the lake. **Yellow-throated Vireos** chose to stay in preferred inland habitats. A **Philadelphia Vireo** was an unexpected occurrence in Brecksville on May 2 (BAT). Two were at River Styx Park on May 18 (CW). **Warbling Vireos** were plentiful.

Warbler movement elicited com-
ments from many observers. It is impossible to list each sighting of a particular species. Kotesovec and Zadar noted a large wave day at Hinckley MP on May 9. Their findings included 30 Nashville and 50 Black-throated Greens! Augustine noted that May 18 was a great day for migrants in Geauga Co. During a 45 minute lunch break Chasar found 13 species near a small pond on the B. F. Goodrich property in Brecksville on May 20. Finkelstein, Landefeld, and Lozano found 22 warbler species at Shaker Lakes on May 21. On May 23, Szabo counted 20 species of warblers at Firestone MP. Along the lakefront, 21 species were found by Kellerman at Sims Park on May 24. At Headlands BSP and Lakeshore MP similar numbers were reported.

Blue-winged Warblers were far more noticeable along the lake than expected. Tennessee Warblers put in an excellent, albeit very late showing. Kellerman had an Orange-crowned Warbler at Wildwood SP on May 11. Nashville Warblers were common. Northern Parulas were in good numbers. The Hoffmans found 3 at Shaker Lakes on May 21. Two were at Brecksville on May 13 (TMR). Another two parulas were at Shaker Lakes on May 27 (TMR). One was early at Ira Road on Apr. 24 (DJB). One was in Valley City on May 15 (FG). On May 21, Harlan and Wagner found an impressive total of 10 in Cuyahoga Co.

Cape May Warbler numbers far outpaced last year’s. Black-throated Blue Warblers were plentiful. Like its other con-
geners, Yellow-rumped Warblers lingered later than usual. Black-throated Green and Blackburnian Warbler were in excellent numbers. Yellow-throated Warblers were at expected locations along the Lower Cuyahoga River. Early Pine Warblers were at Brecksville on Apr. 2 (DAC). One was at Holden Arboretum on Apr. 18 (RR). Others were found at North Chagrin (NB), Hinckley (RHL, SW), Shaker Lakes (M.obs.), and Lakeshore MP (JP).

Palm Warblers were late in arriving, but in solid numbers. Bay-breasted Warblers were very common. The high of 30 at HBSP on May 25 was conservative. Blackpoll Warbler numbers were impressive. The high at HBSP was 30 on May 25. Cerulean Warblers were absent along the lake. Black-and-white Warblers were in good numbers. American Redstarts were abundant. On May 25, 50 were estimated to be in the dunes area at HBSP. Reports indicated that Prothonotary Warblers were relatively simple to find along the Towpath in Brecksville (M.obs.). Ovenbirds were average. Waterthrushes were as expected. Kentucky Warblers went unreported. The last third of May produced too many Mourning Warbler reports to enumerate. Wilson’s and Canada Warblers put in an excellent late May showings. A Yellow-breasted Chat was in Valley City on May 9 (FG).

Scarlet Tanagers were very late, but conspicuous by late May. Up to 8 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks visited a feeder in Valley City (FG). In another unusual occurrence, an Indigo Bunting visited a feeder in Geauga Co. (JA).

A Vesper Sparrow was in Mantua on Apr. 13 (LR). Along the lake, Vespers were at HBSP on Apr. 5 & Apr. 30. A Grasshopper Sparrow was at HBSP on May 3 (M.obs.). A high count of 16 Fox Sparrows was made at HBSP on Apr. 4. A total of 8 was found at Villa Angela on Apr. 13 (BF, PL). A Lincoln’s Sparrow was tardy at Nathan Hale Park on May 30 (RHL). White-crowned Sparrow numbers were as expected. Dark-eyed Juncos peaked at 210 at HBSP on Apr. 4. A total of 378 Lapland Longspurs were reported off Lakeshore MP on Mar. 21 (JP). Over 200 Bobolinks moved by HBSP on May 18 (EB, RH, LR).

Orchard Orioles were in excellent numbers. Three were at Mill Hollow on May 16 (NB). Baltimore Orioles seemed to be everywhere by mid-May. Best received reports of orioles monopolizing hummingbird feeders in Geauga Co. Only LePage felt that there were fewer orioles than expected.

Purple Finches put in a rather strong showing. There were many feeder reports, the high being 6 at a Streetsboro through the period (VW). A Pine Siskin flew over HBSP on May 12 (KM).
EARED GREBE - A molting bird was at Nimisila Reservoir on Apr. 1-2 (Tonoff, Rickard). A bird was off Lakeshore MP on Apr. 11 (Pogacnik). One was at Headlands Beach State Park on May 5 (Bacik, Missig, Hannikman).

AMERICAN BITTERN - An early bird was at Mentor Lagoons on Apr. 13 (Rosche). One was at Pinery Narrows on Apr. 27 (Chasar). Singles were at Headlands Beach SP on Apr. 27 & May 8 (Hannikman). Two were there on May 3 (M.obs.). One was at Hidden Valley Park on Apr. 28 (Pogacnik).

LEAST BITTERN - A female was at Headlands Beach SP on May 24 & 26 (Hannikman, Metcalf).

SNOWY EGRET - One flew close to shore at Huntington Reservation on May 6 (Forsgren).

HARLEQUIN DUCK - A male was found near Muny Light on Mar. 16 (LePage, Lozano, Finkelstein). Three were at Headlands Beach State Park on Apr. 12 (Bacik, Missig, Hannikman). Another was at Gordon Park on Apr. 14 (LePage). A late female was reported off Lakeshore MP on May 18 (Pogacnik).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - Two migrated eastward over Fairport Harbor on Mar. 2 (Rosche, Metcalf).

OSPREY - The pair at Berlin Reservoir had returned by Mar. 29. They were busy feeding young by the end of the period (Lane, Weingart).

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - An adult was reported from Lakeshore MP on Mar. 28 (Pogacnik).

MERLIN - Birds were at Headlands Beach SP on Apr. 4, 5, 19, 20 and 27 (Bacik, Barber, Hannikman, Metcalf, Missig, Rosche). One was along the Shoreway on Apr. 14 (Barber). A late female was there on May 26-27 (Bacik, Missig, Hannikman). A single was in Cleveland on Apr. 20 (Holt). One was oblivious to jaeger watchers at Whiskey Island on Apr. 26 (M.obs.).

PEREGRINE FALCON - One whizzed by Shipman Pond on May 18 (Hannikman, M.obs.). One of the Cleveland birds was seen soaring downtown on May 18 (Hoffman). Two reports were received from Lakeshore MP (Pogacnik).

SANDHILL CRANE - Best reported a pair produced a series of sightings in a corn field off SR 44 near Stafford Road in late April. Best had a very close look on the Upper Cuyahoga River by a large beaver lodge in a riverside wetland known locally as Fleming Meadows on May 2. Andy Fondrk saw a pair there on May 13. Bob Faber saw a pair farther down river on May 22. No sightings reported since. Additional single bird fly-over reports included one on Apr. 3 over Muggsie Hahn’s house in Newbury Township and one Apr. 8 over Troy Township (Duane Ferris). Two flew by Headlands Beach State Park on Apr. 7 (Bacik, Hannikman). Three flew over the Haley’s Akron home on May 13.

PIPING PLOVER - In what may have been a modern-day record for this endangered species, a total of 4 birds was reported. Two were meticulously described and photographed birds at Headlands Beach State Park on May 3 & 4 (Hannikman, Bacik, Missig), and two individuals were seen at Lorain on May 2 & 7 (LePage, M.obs.).

UPLAND SANDPIPER - Up to 2 were found at Fairport Harbor from May 3 through the period (Hannikman, M.obs.).

WILLET - A flock of 9 was off Lakeshore MP on May 7 (Pogacnik).
WHIMBREL - Two passed by Headlands Beach State Park on May 31 (Bacik, Barber, Hannikman).

RED KNOT - Two were at Headlands Beach State Park on May 26 (Bacik, Hannikman, Hoffman, Missig).

SANDERLING - On May 25, a flock of 120 was noted in Lorain (Holt, LePage). This, in all likelihood, is the largest gathering in the history of the region.

WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER - A breeding plumage bird was record-early at Headlands Beach State Park on May 3 (Bacik, Hannikman, Missig, Rosche).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - A pair was in Mantua Township on May 9 (Weingart, M.obs.). On May 20 two females graced the same flooded field (Rosche, M.obs.).

POMARINE JAEGGER - Paula Lozano described her discovery as follows: “After birding the woodlot, I walked over to the beach to scan the area west of the harbor entrance. I noted a “different” looking dark gull-like bird floating on the water not too far out. Suspecting that it was a jaeger, I made a quick sketch. As I was doing this, a small boat came by, and the jaeger moved a short distance. As soon as it landed, another jaeger flew in and joined the first one. I knew it was time to head back to the office and make a few calls! One of the first was to Tom LePage, who was home and immediately came downtown to look for the birds. Later he called to tell me that he had seen four birds!”

LAUGHING GULL - A breeding plumage bird with a peculiar bill was at Edgewater State Park on May 9-16 (Lozano, M.obs.). One was off Lakeshore MP on May 23 (Pogacnik). Another adult was in Lorain on May 29 (LePage).

CALIFORNIA GULL - An adult was documented at Wildwood State Park on Mar. 20 (Munson).

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL - Always an outstanding inland report, one was at Oberlin Reservoir on Apr. 10 (Hoffman).

BLACK TERN - Single birds were noted at Headlands Beach State Park on May 3, 10, and 17 (Hannikman). Off Lakeshore MP, birds were seen on May 18, 19, and 23 (Pogacnik).

BARN OWL - One was at Lakeshore MP on Apr. 6 (Pogacnik).

LONG-EARED OWL - Five birds were reported from Lakeshore MP (Pogacnik).

SHORT-EARED OWL - A bird was in Lorain on Mar. 23 (Pogacnik). One put in a cameo appearance at Headlands Beach State Park on Apr. 5 (Hannikman).

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL - Six were reported from Lakeshore MP (Pogacnik).

WHIP-Poor-WILL - A singing bird was detected in eastern Geauga County on May 13 (Augustine). One was at Lakeshore MP the same day (Pogacnik).

SEDGE WREN - One surprised the Greenlands in Valley City on May 9. A skulking migrant was at Headlands Beach SP on May 11 (Rosche, Bacik, Missig). A singing bird was at Frame Bog on May 14-15 (Rosche, Holt).

NORTHERN SHRIKE - A bird was in Fairport Harbor on Mar. 9 (Barber, Metcalf, Rosche).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER - A male was at the Meyer Nature Center on May 16 (fide Best). A male brightened Shaker Lakes on May 20 (Landefeld, Rickard, M.obs.). A singing male was at Pinery Narrows on May 21 & 22 (Harlan, Wagner, Kotesovec, Zadar). One was at Sims Park on May 24 (Kellerman). There were 3 reports from Lakeshore MP (Pogacnik).

PRAIRIE WARBLER - A male was at Lower Shaker Lake on May 20 (Landefeld, Finkelstein, Lozano). A female was at Headlands Beach State Park on May 26 (Hoffman, M.obs.).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - A male was at Lake Median on May 18 (Witt). Another was at Sims Park on May 24 (Kellerman). A single male delighted all 7 birders at Headlands Beach SP on May 24 (Rosche, M.obs.). A female was at North Chagrin on May 26 (Rickard, Metcalf).

There were 4 reports from Lakeshore MP (Pogacnik).
SUMMER TANAGER - A male was at Ira Road on May 15 (Brumfield).

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - One was at Headlands Beach State Park on May 10 (Rosche, M.obs.). One was at the Kirtland Playground off South Marginal on May 12 (Greenland). Another was at Wildwood SP on May 18 (Kellerman).

HENSLOW'S SPARROWS - At least 3 visited Huntington Reservation on May 5-6 (Forsgren). One was an excellent find at Sims Park on May 24 (Kellerman). A bird was in Madison Township on May 9 (Pogacnik). One stopped by Lakeshore MP on May 11 (Pogacnik).

LECONTE'S SPARROW - Todd Forsgren documented a bird from Huntington Reservation on May 5. The bird had first been found by naturalist Larry Richardson.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACK-BIRD Never to be outdone, Lakeshore MP harbored one on Mar. 29 (Pogacnik).

Ohio's First Boreal Owl
(Aegolius funereus),
An Up-Close Meeting
by John Pogacnik

The quiet solitude of Saturday, April 5, 1997, ended abruptly for Judy Reimer of Concord Township in Lake County, as a noisy group of crows chased a small owl into her window. After picking up the stunned owl up, she noticed it was still alive, whereupon she carefully put it into a box and took it to the Lake Metroparks Wildlife Center at Penitentiary Glen. There, Judy turned it over to the staff, who put it into one of their rehab cages. Two of the volunteer assistants, Chris Kelly and Terrie Howe, noticed that the bird didn't look quite right to them to be a Northern Saw-whet Owl. They decided to wait until Monday to get some second opinions.

On Monday morning I happened to be at Penitentiary Glen for a meeting. When I walked into the room, two of the staff naturalists, in an effort to identify the mystery owl at the wildlife center, were using one of the bird programs on the computer to compare the Northern Saw-whet and the Boreal Owl. Since both were familiar with Saw-whet Owls that are occasionally brought in, I began to get excited about viewing the bird after the meeting.

The meeting was short, but it seemed to last forever. We walked over to the Wildlife Center to see who our visitor was. The owl was being kept in one of the small plastic travel cages used for small animals. It had a towel draped over the front to keep the bird calm. When I lifted the towel, I immediately knew that I was staring face to face with Ohio's first Boreal Owl.

I went back to my office and made a few phone calls to let others know about the bird. I was then told that several members of the media were heading over to cover the bird and that I should go over to assist. When I arrived, the owl had been put into a large flight cage. Upon examination, it was determined that the owl had suffered a slight concussion. The staff felt that the bird was ready to go into a larger flight cage to prepare it for release. The media, including The News Herald, The Plain Dealer, and Channel 5, all did stories on Lake County's rare visitor.

It was decided that the bird would be ready for release within a day or two. However, because of cold, windy weather, we decided that the owl should be released on Wednesday, April 9, at Lakeshore Park in North Perry. Lakeshore Park was chosen because of the park's location along Lake Erie and because it frequently hosts migrating owls. The park also has large numbers of conifers and grape tangles.

Monday and Tuesday the owl ate just about anything left out for it. On Wednesday it was decided that she was ready to be released. At about 7:00 PM Wildlife Center manager, Jill Hunter brought the bird over to my house. She had weighed the bird before coming over and found it to weigh 195 grams, just slightly underweight. We measured the bird's wing chord at 180 mm, well within the range for female Boreals which are 164-184 mm. The bird's tail was 96 mm, again within the range for a female. A check of feathers and feather wear showed that the bird was less than one year old, or in banding talk, a second year female. The bird was then banded and was now ready for release. I carried the bird over to the park in the travel cage, while Jill met with the people who had come to see the release. At 7:30 PM the door to the cage was opened, and the owl immediately flew to the nearest tree, where it sat for about 5-10 minutes, as if to let everyone admire her. She then flew into a row of dense cedars.
The following morning I went to see if she might still be around and if she were doing all right. There was a single pellet under the cedars, where we had left her the previous evening. As I walked around the park, I heard several Golden-crowned Kinglets scolding something. They were in a dense grape tangle about 75 yards west of the cedars. When I looked into the tangle, there she was, with a half-eaten Song Sparrow in her talons. It was 6:45 AM Thursday; and it was the last known time that she was seen at Lakeshore, but not the last time she would be seen.

On Saturday, April 12, at about 11:30 AM, I received a phone call from a couple that knew me from the bird walks I lead. They said that they were driving near Geneva State Park at about 9:00 in the morning when they noticed a bird sitting in a pine close to the edge of the road. When I looked into the tangle, there she was, with a half-eaten Song Sparrow in her talons. It was 6:45 AM Thursday; and it was the last known time that she was seen at Lakeshore, but not the last time she would be seen.

Pomarine Jaegers
(Stercorarius pomarinus)
April-May 1997--
A Personal Account
by Jean & Dick Hoffman

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Pomarine Jaegers (5)
Cleveland harbor west of Cuyahoga River, as seen from Whiskey Island Marina, Cleveland, Ohio April 16, 1997
10:30 - 12:30.

We began at the wall behind the Westerly sewage treatment plant, but were told that we would be allowed into the marina, where we could get a much better view. Having already seen one of the four Jaegers reported yesterday (two found by Paula Lozano and the additional birds located by others later in the afternoon), we headed for the marina. After learning that Tom LePage and Dave LeGallee, as well as Mike Stasko, had already seen three earlier that morning, we entered the marina, where we readily spotted the 3 jaegers. The light wasn’t especially good, but the
birds were sometimes rather close; eventually, though, we had good looks at them. Initially, we were aware of three birds, each quite different in plumage, which we will describe later.

After a while and also at lunch time, when Paula Lozano and another birder were there, we continually saw four birds; but we had one occurrence when five jaegers all converged on the fish dropped by a gull and we could see five all together. Whenever any were together, it was clear that, despite plumage differences, morphologically, they were the same. The harbor was full of Red-breasted Mergansers, over 100 Double-crested Cormorants, good numbers of Bonaparte’s, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, a smattering of Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, American Coot, Great Black-backed Gulls, and Caspian Terns. Most of the time none of these birds paid any attention to the jaegers. Once in a while a Herring Gull would dive at a resting jaeger. The jaegers seemed to harass only the Herring and Ring-billed Gulls. The Herring Gulls were definitely larger, but the Ring-billed Gulls sometimes seemed to be the same size and sometimes possibly slightly larger than the jaegers.

The jaegers were about the size of the Ring-billed Gulls, looking much larger than the Red-breasted Mergansers that were resting on the water with them. All were dark brown with white shafts showing in the primaries of the upper wings and large swaths of white at the base of the primaries in the underwings. The bills were not heavy like the Herring Gull’s, but were not slender like a Bonaparte’s. They were pale colored with dark tips. The wings were pointed but broad at the body. The tails were broad, most with no apparent extensions; but at least one had longer central rectrices to create a wedge-shape to the tail. The extensions, however, were not pointed. The body profile in flight was very round-bellied. Flight was strong, direct, fast and agile, but more gull-like than tern-like. None had tawny tones to the plumage. All were barred on the underparts when close enough to tell.

The three distinct plumages were as follows: 1. An all dark bird. The head, nape and breast were very dark, almost a blackish brown. In flight this bird still had a rump lighter than the tail, but it was a dark brown in contrast to a blackish-looking tail, which had no apparent central extensions.

2. A bird with a cap slightly darker than the nape and breast. This bird was overall lighter than the previous and had a fairly light rump and not obviously longer central rectrices.

3. The lightest bird’s head, nape and breast were all a buffy color, in contrast to the dark brown back. The rump had a lot of white in it and looked white at a distance. The tail was wedge-shaped and, in one view, it was apparent that the central rectrices were longer and blunt-ended.

(This, or one like it, is probably what we saw April 10). The belly of this bird was a little paler in the center and overall lighter than the other birds.

We were looking for the second white “flash” on the underwings, at the base of the coverts. At first we did not see it, but as we became more accustomed to seeing the birds, it became apparent that it was almost always visible on some of the birds, or at some angles, and we began seeing it a lot of the time that the underwing was visible. Unless you have considerable jaeger watching experience, we are not sure this is a good way to separate jaegers.

We watched the birds for a long time, using 10X binoculars and, when possible, a zoom lens scope. They were at all angles from us with cloudy skies to rain with the light origin mostly at our backs. The closest approach was probably 100 feet, but mostly farther away.

Based on the confluence of several features, we believe these are all Pomarine Jaegers. The size, shape, flight and behavior are all what we expect from this large jaeger. The presence of the white at the base of the primary coverts of the underwing is helpful; and based on Lars Jonsson’s European guide, we believe the fact that, in all their variations, the rump was lighter than the nape is also a key. These were big, chunky, bold hunters, not sly acrobats.
harass only the Ring-billed and Her­ring Gulls, but today one made a sally at a Bonaparte’s Gull. Surpris­ingly, a few times Caspian Terns went after one of the jaegers and chased it away, all quite unprovoked. When one of the gulls has been forced to drop its fish, one of the jaegers will try to catch the fish in the air, but mostly they have to land on the water to get it, quite interesting when three or more are all there at once.

[4] May 7, 1997. There was concern on Monday when Paula Lozano couldn’t find the Pomarine Jaegers, but she had four again yesterday. Today we saw three of them, the two intermediate in color and the dark one not missing flight feathers. I still think these non-breeding age birds with a steady food supply from the nearby gull colony have no reason to leave any time soon, but increasing boat traffic in the harbor may cause them to seek quieter waters.

[5] May 10, 1997. From the Perkins Beach overlook, we found one of the Pomarine Jaegers, the dark one - not missing flight feathers.(This was our last observation.)
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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 (330) 678-9408 or Ray Hannikman at (216) 261-9552.

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