

THE CLEVELAND

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BIRD CALENDAR



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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 Kevin Metcalf, 1997.**

The Cleveland Bird Calendar

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On The Inside:

The Weather

Dwight A. Chasar

Reflections

Comment on the Season Spring 1998

Noteworthy Records

by Larry Rosche

Field Notes

Early Nesting Golden-crowned Kinglets at Hinckley Metropark

by Norman J. Kotesovec, Jr.

Confirmed Nesting of Red-breasted Nuthatch in Brecksville Reservation

by Dwight & Ann Chasar

Next Issue:

Summer 1998

Remembering

by Larry Rosche



Having been the editor of The Cleveland Bird Calendar for 10 years, I have found the "Reflections" column somewhat repetitive. This season, with the help of Nancy Klamm, I am able to publish some photographs of rare birds which few have been privy to see over the years. Each of the photographs featured here was taken in 1963 by the legendary William Klamm. The Rock Wren was at Edgewater Park in December. To date, this remains the only Ohio record for this species. The Parasitic Jaeger photograph was taken at Gordon Park in September. These are undoubtedly the best photographs for this species ever taken in Ohio. Early field guides did not address jaeger identification very thoroughly and identifying the exact species was very difficult at the time. I am sure the diagnostic white on the tips of the primaries was an unknown field mark in 1963. Note, too, the

single flash of the underwing. This field mark did not become well-known until the early 1980s. This mark also aids in eliminating the similarly plumaged Pomarine Jaeger.

The Weather

Autumn 1998

by Dwight W. Chasar

SEPTEMBER: Temperatures averaged 67.0°, 11° above normal. The high was 91° on the 26th, and the low was 45° on the 24th. Lake Erie was 77° on the 1st and eased down to 71° by the 30th. Sunshine occurred 55% of the time possible. Rain occurred over 6 days and totalled only 1.20 in., 2.24 in. below normal. The greatest 24 hr. rainfall was .38 in. on the 8-9th.

OCTOBER: Temperatures averaged 53.5°, just .7° above normal. The highest was 81° on the 6th, and the lowest was 32° on the 31st. Sunshine was again scarce at 53% of the time possible. Rain occurred over 9 days and totalled 2.36 in., a departure of .18 in. below normal. The greatest 24 hr. fall was 1.08 in. on the 7-8th. Lake Erie water cooled to 59° by the 31st.

NOVEMBER: Temperatures averaged 44.9°, 2.3° above normal. The highest was 71° on the 10th, and the lowest was 26° on the 22nd. Sunshine was rare at a meager 31% of the time possible. Occurring over 8 days, rain totalled 1.59 in., 1.58 in. below normal. The greatest 24 hr. fall was .82 in. on the 10th. Snow was essentially absent. Lake Erie temperature dropped to only 51° by the end of the month.



by Larry Rosche

I hope that readers were able to experience the birding this past fall. The season was nothing short of miraculous. The number of migrant landbirds was outstanding, with Oct. 9 being mentioned as one of the days of big movement. Shorebirding continued to be the highlight of Lorain. Rarities started with a Long-tailed Jaeger in early September and lasted with a female Rufous Hummingbird through November. In between we had other shockers. We added two new birds to the Bird Calendar files--Spotted Towhee and Ross's Gull. The outstanding feature of this fall's rare birds was a good number hung around to be seen by many. Naturalist aides were most helpful at the Seiberling Naturealm in enabling over a 100 people to see the Harris's Sparrow. The Red-throated Loon at Lake Medina for over a month and the Rufous Hummingbird in North Perry helped fill in some holes in many birders' state lists. A violent storm in the Upper Great Plains in early November pushed numerous Franklin's Gulls into the region. The total numbers of Franklin's Gulls reported were eye-popping.

The year ended with 290 species, about 7 above our 10-year average. As I glanced through the list, there were some surprising absentees. Perhaps because we received no information from the Sunday Morning Bird Walk leaders, we had no Prairie Warblers reported for the year. Other birds missing this year that we have come to expect (albeit they are rare) included Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Piping Plover, Barn Owl, Snowy Owl, and Varied Thrush. If anyone has a sighting of any of these, I will add them in the next issue. Best wishes in the New Year, and keep up the good work!



Common Loons were fairly easy to find most of October and November. The high tally was 124 at HBSP on the blustery morning of Nov. 14 (RH, LR). Two **Great Egrets** were at Best Lake on Sep. 4 (fide DB). Another twosome was at LaDue Reservoir on Sep. 16-17 (fide DB). The latest **Green Heron** was at Shaker Lakes on Oct. 6 (PL, BF, RR). Only 1 **Black-crowned Night-Heron** was seen at Shaker Lakes Sep. 8-11 (LD, PP) when there are normally many. The high tally for Black-crowneds along the west bank of the Cuyahoga was only

8 on Oct. 23 (PL). Up to 4 immatures used the police dock east of Burke Airport as a roost in late Nov. (DJH). Adults and immatures were seen regularly in Lorain. The latest immature remained there on Nov. 30 (JHa). Surprisingly, several **Turkey Vultures** were reported at the end of the period (EE, RHL, SW, JWo).

Tundra Swans were widely reported in decent numbers. A dozen passed over Lake Medina on Nov. 4 (EE, TLP). Forty passed over Lake Rockwell on Nov. 7 (CH). The biggest southward thrust was Nov. 13-15 in Geauga Co. where several hundred were tallied (fide DB). A **Snow Goose** flew over

Eastlake on Nov. 8 (LR, VW). One was with Canadas at Best Lake on Nov. 30 (fide DB). An impressive count of 65 **Wood Ducks** was made at Shaker Lakes on Oct. 6 (RHL, SW). **Gadwall** and **American Wigeons** were in very low numbers. **Blue-winged Teal** were as expected, with as many as 60 in Lorain in early Sep. **Northern Shovelers** put in an above-average performance. Numbers were low, but they occurred widely in the region. A **Northern Pintail** graced a Kirtland pond from Nov. 12 through the period (CK). High counts for **Green-winged Teals** were 20 on Sep. 27 at Gordon Park (RHL, SW) and in Lorain (CH). The high count of **Canvasbacks** was 30 at Wellington Reservoir on Nov. 7 (FG). **Redheads** topped out at 60 at Wellington on Nov. 15 (FG). For 35 days in the period the Geauga Co. Park district received data on the occurrence patterns of **Ring-necked Ducks** at Best Lake. The first flock arrived on Sep. 22 and eventually built to 160 by Oct. 30. Most birds left, but then the flock jumped to 250 on Nov. 8. Another exodus occurred that night, leaving only a few stragglers at the end of the period (fide DB). Ringers were in good supply elsewhere. The high at Wellington was 265 on Nov. 15 (FG). Ring-neckeds built up to 450 at LaFarge Lake in Shalersville on Nov. 11 (LR, VW). A female **Greater Scaup** was at Veterans Park on Oct. 9 (RH, LR). Much to the gunners' chagrin, **Lesser Scaups** were slow to arrive, with a high of only 50 at LaDue on Oct. 29 (CH). **Surf Scoters** put in a decent showing along the lake. At HBSP, up to 16 were seen in a single day (m.obs.). East of HBSP, at Lakeshore MP, a remarkable count of 212 was made on Nov.

On October 11, an updraft above my property in Kirtland brought a large mixed kettle. In it were 50 Herring Gulls, 3 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 immature Bald Eagle (above the kettle by a good height), 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, and a few Turkey Vultures. The eagle sailed through without hesitation. The others were here for at least an hour--rising-falling (sometimes quite low) --seemingly searching for the updraft an easy track for altitude. Interestingly, the eagle was heading northwest.
Charles Klaus

4 (JP). One lounged off Sims Park on Nov. 22 (TK). Nine **White-winged Scoters** were seen at Eastlake on Nov. 22 (KM). Two were off HBSP on Nov. 24 (RH, LR). Two **Black Scoters** were off Rocky River Park on Nov. 26 (PL, BF, TG). The 4 which hung around LaDue during early Nov. were rather surprising (CH, KM, LR). The high tally (85) was from Lakeshore MP on Nov. 4 (JP). An **Oldsquaw** passed by HBSP on Oct. 29 (LR). The upland reservoirs of Lorain County offer some of the best chances for seeing Oldsquaws each fall. One was at Oberlin Reservoir Nov. 11-15 (FG). Another was at Wellington on Nov. 14 (JHa). Up to 3 Oldsquaws were seen off Lakeshore MP on Nov. 13 & 20 (JP). The high count of **Hooded Mergansers** was 350 at Lake Rockwell on Nov. 20 (LR). **Red-breasted Mergansers** staged impressively. As many as 25,000 used Eastlake as a feeding ground in Nov. (TLP). **Common Mergansers** were scarce along the lake. Inland, fair numbers had reached Lake Rockwell by late Nov. An interesting observation was provided by Duane Ferris and Bob McCullough at LaDue on Nov. 11.

They watched a group of 15 Common Mergansers line up with some on the surface and the rest diving under to herd fish toward the shore. They repeated this cooperative effort 3 times (fide DB). High counts for **Ruddy Ducks** at Wellington were 500 on Nov. 3 (JT) and 600 on Nov. 27 (FG). Mogadore hosted 750 Ruddies on Nov. 2 (LR).

Ospreys were found in fair numbers. Several visited HBSP, with 3 seen there on Sep. 13 (RH, KM, PP). One was at East Branch Reservoir on Sep. 8 (fide DB). Another was seen at LaDue on Oct. 4 (CH). An Osprey was fairly late at Lake Kelso on Oct. 24 (DB). Lake Medina hosted at least two different Ospreys during Sep. and Oct. (CW). **Bald Eagles** were in excellent numbers. LaDue Reservoir and Lake Rockwell continued to provide expected sightings. Some of the other sightings included imma-



American White Pelican -Shaker Lakes - Oct. 13 , 1998
 by Larry Rosche

tures at Wildwood SP on Nov. 8 (TK) and at Eastlake on Nov. 22 (TK). Along the lake, **Northern Harriers** were found in expected numbers. Birds were also noted in Portage Co. on Nov. 1 & 6 (LR, VW). **Sharp-shinned** and **Cooper's Hawks** were in good numbers. A **Red-shouldered Hawk** was unexpected at Veterans Park on Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). A **Broad-winged Hawk** was quite tardy (for our region) on Oct. 3 at Lake Medina (CW). **Rough-legged Hawks** were in the eastern sector more than expected. On Oct. 27 a mini-hawk movement was noted at Veterans Park. Four light-morph Rough-leggeds passed over in a brief span (RH, LR). Another Rough-legged drifted over Fairport Harbor on Nov. 1 (NB, LR). One was seen behind Cleveland Public Power plant on Nov. 19 (DJH). **American Kestrels** were thought to be doing better in the eastern sectors of the region (JA, LR).

Local gamebirds (except Wild Turkeys) have fallen on hard times in recent years. Receiving reports on all upland species was a surprise to this editor. **Ring-necked Pheasants** were represented by a female in Parma on Oct. 15 and by a male and female at HBSP on Oct. 18 (NB, RH, LR, RR). A **Ruffed Grouse**



Northern Bobwhites - Parkman
by John Augustine

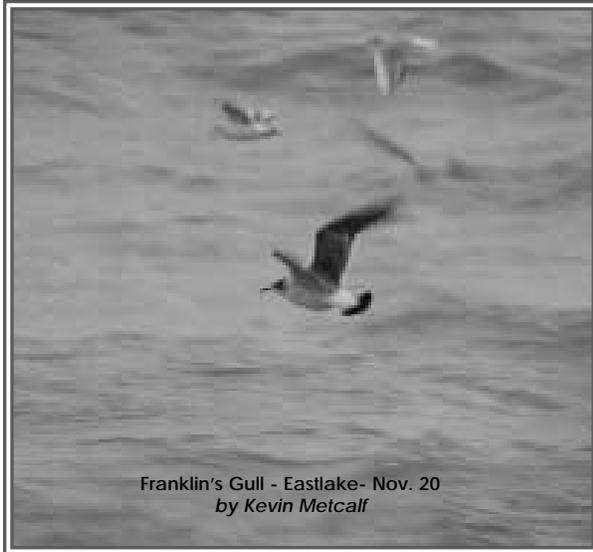
casually crossed Stafford Road in Geauga Co. on Oct. 30 (*vide* DB). Two **Wild Turkeys** were just north of LaDue on Nov. 2 (DJH). Seven were observed jumping up and knocking feed out of a Lodi feeder on Nov. 12 (CW, SS). A flock of 40 or so was at the far eastern end of Geauga Co. on Sep. 18 (JA). Another 35+ were in Chester Twp. on Nov. 11 (KM). A **Northern Bobwhite** was in Valley View on Sep. 1 (*vide* DAC). A bobwhite was also a road kill in Geauga Co. in Nov. (KM). Three **Soras** were in Lorain on Sep. 28 (DJH). Up to 500 **American Coots** were seen at Wellington Reservoir on Nov. 3 (JT). Elsewhere, they were almost as abundant.

Shorebirds were well-studied in Lorain for most of September. Dredging operations rendered the mudflat impassable for birders, and shorebirding came to an abrupt halt at the end of the month. Up to 8 **Black-bellied Plovers** were a daily Sep. occurrence in Lorain (CH, TLP). An **American Golden-Plover** passed by HBSP on Sep. 13 (NB, RH, LR). One was at West Branch SP on Oct. 4 (CH, VW). In Lorain, small numbers were seen most of Sep. Two **Semi-palmated Plovers** dawdled at LaDue until the late date of Oct. 27 (LR). **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs** moved through in expected numbers. The last **Solitary Sandpiper** was in Twin Lakes on Oct. 9 (LR). **Ruddy Turnstones** were relatively scarce. They were noted only twice at HBSP (RH) and but 3 times in Lorain (TLP). A turnstone at West Branch SP on



Baird's Sandpiper- HBSP- Sep. 6
by Kevin Metcalf

Sep. 4 was noteworthy (CH). Up to 8 **Red Knots** visited Lorain Sep. 2-21 (TLP, EE, CH, m.obs.). **Sanderlings** were regular at Lorain through the first two-thirds of Sep. The high count was 38 on Sep. 2 (TLP). **Western Sandpipers** found Lorain to their liking in mid-Sep. The high count was 3 on Sep. 18 (DJB). The only **White-rumped Sandpiper** was in Lorain on Sep. 1 (TLP). **Baird's Sandpipers** were found at Lorain on 4 dates in Sep. (TLP, DJB). One lingered at HBSP Sep. 6-9 (KM, LR, RH). Another was at LaDue on Sep. 27. This provided one of the very few records from Geauga Co. (RR). A remarkable passage of **Dunlins** occurred on Oct. 25. An estimated 570 moved by HBSP (RH). Inland, Dunlins were found in small numbers at LaDue (DJH), Mill Stream Run (DK, SZ), LaDue (VW), and at Lake Rockwell (LR, VW). **Stilt Sandpipers** remained in good supply in Lorain through mid-Sep. The high tally was 24 on Sep. 18 (DJB). **Short-billed Dowitcher** numbers dwindled from August, but 40 on Sep. 18 in Lorain was a decent sum (DJB). The high tally for **Common Snipes** was 11 at Lake Rockwell on Nov. 11 (VW).



Franklin's Gull - Eastlake- Nov. 20
by Kevin Metcalf

Bonaparte's Gulls were slow to gather this year. The 3500⁺ at HBSP on Nov. 15 represented the only sizable report received. A first-winter **Thayer's Gull** was in the HBSP vicinity after Oct. 26 (RH, NB, m.obs.). One was at Eastlake on Nov. 17 (LR). **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were found all across the lakefront counties. The earliest reports were at HBSP on Sep. 9 & 16 (RH, KM). An adult was at Avon Lake on Nov. 4 (JHa). One or two could be found in Lorain after Nov. 6 (TK, JHa, m.obs.). Eastlake hosted the usual numbers of lessers. A first-winter bird was detected in Fairport Harbor on Nov. 11 (LR).



First-winter Thayer's Gull - Fairport Harbor- Nov. 1
by Larry Rosche

The earliest **Glaucous Gull** was at Eastlake on Nov. 14 (JP). A first-winter bird was in Fairport Harbor on Nov. 21 (LR). Once again, **Caspian Terns** were in very low numbers. A **Common Tern** was late at E. 55th St. on Nov. 14 (DJH). One remained through the period in Lorain (m.obs.). **Forster's Terns** were remarkably absent. A small flight of 16 **Common**

Nighthawks flew over Euclid on Sep. 7 (RH). A group of 50[±] was seen in Sagamore Hills on Sep. 11 (DAC). Another 20 passed over Aurora on Sep. 12 (CH). A juvenile **Red-headed Woodpecker** was at Chagrin River Park on Sep. 27 (PL, BF). Two were at North Chagrin on Oct. 21 (RR). A **Pileated Woodpecker** graced Shaker Lakes on Oct. 27 and Nov. 3 (LD).

A late **Olive-sided Flycatcher** was at North Chagrin on Sep. 26 (KM). A **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** was at Veterans Park on Sep. 9 (LR). Several were found at

HBSP Sep. 19-27 (RH). One was at Shaker Lakes on Sep. 22 (RR). Three **Acadian Flycatchers** lingered in Brecksville on Sep. 25 (DAC). The last **Alder Flycatcher** was reported at Lakeshore MP on Sep. 3 (JP). The only **Willow Flycatcher** reported was at HBSP on Sep. 16 (LR). **Least Flycatchers** were in good numbers. Up to

4 late **Eastern Phoebes** were at HBSP on Oct. 23-24 (RH, KM). Five **Great Crested Flycatchers** lingered at Hinckley MP into early Sep. (JT). The only **Eastern Kingbird** reported was at Lakeshore MP on Sep. 7 (JP).

All six species of regularly occurring vireos were found in higher than expected numbers at HBSP. Rarely found at HBSP, **White-eyed Vireos** were seen there on several Sep. dates. The high was 3 on Sep. 29 (RH, m.obs.). A stunning tally of 11 **Blue-headed Vireos** was in the HBSP vicinity on the "wave day" of Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). A **Yellow-throated Vireo** put in a cameo appearance at HBSP on Sep. 20 (RH, NB). **Philadelphia Vireos** put in a good showing. One was in the CVNRA on Sep. 7 (DAC). A bird was seen at Edgewater SP on Sep. 11 (NB). HBSP hosted 1-2 most of Sep. (RH, LR). Two were at Shaker Lakes on Sep. 14 (RR). One was in the CVNRA on Sep. 19 (PL, BF). Another was spied at Shaker Lakes on Sep. 25 (RR). **Phillies** were found at HBSP on 7 Sep. dates (RH, KM).

In somewhat of an oddity for the site, **Tree Swallows** staged in good numbers at HBSP in early Oct. (RH, NB). A late bird was there on Oct. 23 (RH). A **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** was late at HBSP on Oct. 7 (KM). **Brown Creepers** were in expected totals. A single **Red-breasted Nuthatch** was found in the Natural Area of HBSP on Sep. 19-20 (RH, NB, KM). **Carolina Wrens** continue to improve locally. **House Wrens** passed through at expected times and in decent numbers. **Winter Wrens** staged nicely. The high mark for the species was 32 at HBSP on Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). **Marsh Wrens**

moved through the region in fair numbers. One was at Ira Road on Sep. 28 (TMR). Up to 3 were seen on Oct. 9 at HBSP (DJB, NB, LR). The high tally for **Golden-crowned Kinglets** at HBSP was 120 on Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). Another 100+ **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** were there the same day (DJB, LR). **Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** put in a decent showing this fall.

Thrush migration was very noticeable along the lake. **Eastern Bluebirds** were found to be flourishing away from the lakefront. A **Veery** was a unique find in Twin Lakes on Sep. 15 (LR). **Swainson's Thrushes** were common, but no large groups were noted. Early **Gray-cheekeds** were at Lorain on Sep. 4 (EE, TLP) and at Chagrin River Park on Sep. 6 (PL, BF). As many as 8 could be found at HBSP in mid-Sep. (RH, NB, LR, KM). The high tally for **Hermit Thrushes** was 20 at HBSP on Oct. 24 (RH). The latest **Wood Thrush** reported was at Lakeshore MP on Oct. 8 (JP).

Northern Mockingbirds have apparently increased their domain. Birds were found regularly along the expected lakefront locales, like Whiskey Island and Cleveland Lakefront SP. Others were found at University Circle on Oct. 26 (NB), at I-77 and Rockside on Nov. 20 (NB), along Rogers Road in Euclid on Nov. 16 (RR), and "Old Unreliable" along Fairport Nursery Road on Oct. 17 (RH). Perhaps the most unique bird was reported from Merriman Valley in Akron. One Mockingbird has inhabited a single patch of multiflora rose for over 3 years. You almost have to shake the bush to get it to come out (WS). **Gray Catbirds** moved well in Sep. **Brown Thrashers** peaked at 10

...a better light on the lateness of Louisiana Waterthrushes

at HBSP on Sep. 13 (LR). **American Pipits** were widespread. A bird was early at HBSP on Sep. 8 (LR, VW). Usual sites like LaDue and Lake Rockwell provided numerous sightings. A flock of 75 in Medina Co. on Nov. 11 was somewhat unexpected (FG). The 250+ **Cedar Waxwings** at Ira Road on Sep. 7 must have been an awesome sight (TMR).

The latest **Blue-winged Warbler** was in the CVNRA on Sep. 14 (DAC). **Tennessee Warblers** put in a strong September showing. **Orange-crowned Warblers** were seen on 9 dates at HBSP. (m.obs.). Birds were at Nathan Hale Park on Oct. 7 & 9 and at Gordon Park on Oct. 15 (RHL, SW). **Nashville Warblers** mirrored Tennessees in numbers. The latest Nashville was at North Chagrin on Nov. 2 (KM). **Northern Parulas** always elicit comments from field observers. This fall there were sightings from Lorain on Sep. 20 (RHL, SW), HBSP on Sep. 19 (KM, LR), again at HBSP on Oct. 4 & 25 (RH), and Lakeshore MP on Sep. 6 & Oct. 8 (JP). **Chestnut-sided** and **Magnolia Warblers** were as expected. **Cape May Warblers** put in a fairly strong showing at HBSP, with a high of 12 on Sep. 20 (RH, NB). **Black-throated Blue Warblers** were in excellent totals. The high tally was 10 at HBSP on Sep. 16 (LR). A late bird was at Gordon Park on Nov.

1 (RHL, SW). **Yellow-rumped Warblers** passed through in astounding numbers. At Nathan Hale Park over 100 were counted on Oct. 9 (RHL, SW). The same day, 350+ were tallied in the HBSP area (DJB, LR). A count of 15 **Black-throated Green Warblers** was made at HBSP on Sep. 19 (KM). **Blackburnian Warblers** were more noticeable than expected along the lake. The last report of the CVNRA **Yellow-throated Warblers** was Sep. 7 (DAC). A **Pine Warbler** was at Rocky River Nature Center on Sep. 5 (TMR). Two were at Shaker Lakes on Sep. 7 (PP). Another was at the old pine stand long the Fort Hill Trail in Rocky River MP on Sep. 23 (RHL, SW). One was at Lakeshore MP on Sep. 21 (JP). Two **Palm Warblers** were very early at North Chagrin on Sep. 8 (KM). **Blackpoll Warblers** were numerous and had a prolonged migration. The high count was 50+ at HBSP on Sep. 19 (RH, KM, LR). The latest bird was at HBSP on Oct. 27 (RH, LR). A first-fall female **Cerulean Warbler** was studied thoroughly at HBSP on Sep. 24 (LR, VW). As with most warblers, **Black-and-white Warblers** made an above-average showing. **Ovenbirds** were widespread in expected numbers. Two **Northern Waterthrushes** were at Shaker Lakes on Sep. 1 (LD). Ongoing censuses in the CVNRA are shedding a better light on the lateness of **Louisiana Waterthrushes**. A total of 6 were found there on Sep. 30 (DAC). This is considerably later than Don Newman or I had noted in the previous publications on local bird distributions. Hannikman saw **Mourning Warblers** at HBSP on Sep. 5, 20, & 22. The high for **Wilson's Warblers** was 20 at HBSP on Sep. 16 (LR). Four **Canada Warblers** were at HBSP on Sep. 7 (RH).

Sparrows are among my favorites to monitor in the fall. Their movements along the lake in early October are legendary. This year didn't disappoint, as 21 species (due to recent taxonomic reclassification) were found in October. On October 9, large numbers moved through HBSP and vicinity. No reports were received from Gordon Park, but one can only imagine it was a sparrow-infested paradise that day. A **Rufous-sided Towhee** lingered at Ira Road until Nov. 9 (TMR). One was at the Meyer Center feeding area on Nov. 17 (DB). One caused "spotted fever" at Chester Commons in early November. **Vesper Sparrows** were good finds at HBSP on Oct. 10 (RH, KM) and at Gordon Park on Oct. 15 (RHL, SW). A **Savannah Sparrow** was rather late at Wildwood SP on Nov. 15 (TK). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** was at Girdled Road MP on Oct. 16 (JP). There were 2 **Fox Sparrows** at Shaker Lakes on Oct. 29 (LD). Another 2 were seen at Ira Road on Oct. 26 (TMR). One was in Kirtland on Nov. 5 (CK). Along the lake they were noticeably absent from reports. **Song Sparrows** were numerous. A high count of 35 was made at HBSP on Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). **Lincoln's Sparrows** did not disappoint and were far more numerous than expected. A tally of 7 at Jaite on Oct. 23 was indicative of their surprising abundance (DAC). Up to 5 could be found at HBSP in Oct. A total of 22 **Swamp Sparrows** at HBSP on Oct. 9 reflected a good passage (DJB, LR). **Field Sparrows** moved well, with a local high of 22 reached at HBSP on Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). An estimated 200 **White-throated Sparrows** were at HBSP on Oct. 9 (DJB, LR). **White-crowned Sparrows** were numerous, but

far fewer than White-throated. **Dark-eyed Juncos** were as expected--abundant. **Lapland Longspurs** were fairly numerous (for the species) along the lake. The high tally was 12 at HBSP on Nov. 26 (RH). **Snow Buntings** were even more impressive than their congeners, their numbers reaching triple digits.

A female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was rather late at Shaker Lakes on Oct. 18 (PL, BF, TG). An **Indigo Bunting** was at Chagrin River Park on Oct. 3 (NB). The latest Indigo was at Jaite on Oct. 16 (DAC, EE, TLP). Eight **Eastern Meadowlarks** were at Wellington on Nov. 14 (NB). Six were in Medina Co. on Nov. 22 (FG). Dan Best described the evening gatherings in Geauga Co. of **Common Grackles** as a large smoke plume during most of October. A group of 1500-2000 grackles feasted in a Kirtland lawn on Oct. 22 (CK).

Purple Finches were few and far between. A small flock of **Common Redpolls** was noted at Wellington Reservoir on Nov. 1 (RHL, SW). **Pine Siskins** were very sporadic and in miniscule numbers.



RED-THROATED LOON - The normal occurrence standard for this species was blown away with higher than expected numbers. An adult was in Shalersville on Oct. 22 (Holt, Rosche). An immature cooperated marvelously at Lake Medina Oct. 29-Nov. 30 (Witt, Sprengnether, m.obs.). At Headlands Beach SP, loons were seen on Nov. 6 (Metcalf, Rosche) and Nov. 21 (Hannikman, Rosche). Off Lakeshore MP, birds were noted Nov. 13 & 22 (Pogacnik).

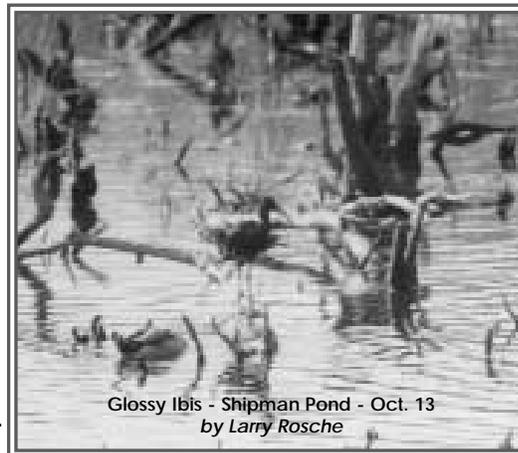
RED-NECKED GREBE - Our only reports were from Lakeshore MP on Oct. 30 & Nov. 11 (Pogacnik).

NORTHERN GANNET - A juvenile was in Lorain on Nov. 27 (Pogacnik).

AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN - An immature bird arrived at Shaker Lakes on Oct. 4 and remained through the period (Deinger, Peskin, m.obs.).

AMERICAN BITTERN - Our only report was from Lakeshore MP on Nov. 11 (Pogacnik).

LEAST BITTERN - Remarkably, two birds were found this fall. One was flushed from the small pond at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 20 & 22 (Rickard, Hannikman). Another was seen along the Grand River in Fairport Harbor on Oct. 4 (Hannikman). One was reported from Hidden Valley Park on Oct. 5 (Pogacnik).



Glossy Ibis - Shipman Pond - Oct. 13
by Larry Rosche

GLOSSY IBIS - On Oct. 13, at approximately 10:00 AM, Ray Hannikman and I simultaneously barked out "ibis." A dark ibis flew in from the east and circled about several times before landing on the back of a Canada Goose. During these fly-bys at no more than 50-100 feet the dark bare parts and brown eye could be seen. After a short ride on the goose, the ibis moved to the shoreline. This is when we first noticed the thin whitish-gray lines extending upward from the lore area to the crown. The bare parts were dark. The only pink we could detect was on the bottom of the lower mandible near the base. The head was lightly speckled with gray on the dark feathering. This is why we felt it was an adult rather than an immature. The body was dark brown with a greenish cast to the back. Later it was verified by Bob Finkelstein, Dave LeGallee and Kevin Metcalf. It was seen at least through the 14th (Weingart).

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE - Our only reports were from Lakeshore MP with 2 on Nov. 11 and 9 on Nov. 13 (Pogacnik).

BRANT - One was seen in Fairport Harbor on Oct. 30 (Kellerman).

HARLEQUIN DUCK - An immature was at Headlands Beach SP on Nov. 15 (Barber, Rosche). One was reported from Lakeshore MP on Nov. 19 (Pogacnik).

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - One was observed hunting over Gordon Park on Nov. 1 (Harlan, Wagner). Another was at Big Creek Reservation Nov. 9 (Zadar).

PEREGRINE FALCON - Nesting pairs continued to be seen at or



Juvenile Red Phalarope- HBSP- Sep. 9
by Kevin Metcalf

near aeries (see Field Notes for updates). Migrants were reported from Painesville on Sep. 20 (Pogacnik), at Mentor Marsh on Sep. 27 & Oct. 13 (Rosche), and at Landerbrook on Oct. 2 (Barber). An adult and an immature were at Wildwood-Villa Angela area of the Cleveland Lakefront SP on Sep. 27 (Lozano, Finkelstein). An immature of the tundrius race was at North Chagrin, on Sep. 11 (Metcalf, Rickard). In Headlands Beach SP area, Peregrines were seen on Sep. 27, 29, Oct. 8, 10, & 13 (Hannikman, Metcalf, Rosche). Immatures were seen in Lorain on Sep. 11 & 25 (LePage).

MERLIN - It is hard to believe this species has become so noticeable. The list of Merlin sightings is long, but each is noteworthy. Once again a single bird has return to winter in Bath (Harlan, Wagner). A bird was at Brecksville the last half of September (Chasar, Gardella). Birds zipped by Lakeshore MP on Sep. 13, Oct.



Juvenile Red Phalarope- HBSP- Sep. 9
by Kevin Metcalf

2 & Nov. 20 (Pogacnik). Others were noted at Penitentiary Glen on Sep. 22-23 (Pogacnik). One was allowed close study at LaDue Reservoir on Oct. 16 (Rickard, Zadar). At least 6 Merlins visited Headlands Beach SP during the period (Bacik, Hannikman, Rosche). Metcalf wrote, "At North Chagrin, Merlins were seen on Sep. 12, 14, 26 (2), Oct. 2, 4, 10, and Nov. 29. Some of the September sightings may have been of the same bird, but two were seen together there on Sep.26. A lot of merlins!"

YELLOW RAIL - Unexpected anytime, one was flushed at Penitentiary Glen on Sep. 22 (Pogacnik).

SANDHILL CRANE - Two birds delighted many at LaDue Reservoir most of Oct and Nov. (Elder, LePage, Zadar, m.obs.)

AMERICAN AVOCET - Birds were seen at Lorain on various Sep. dates (LePage, Harlan, m.obs.). A female was on the Coast Guard Beach in Grand River on Sep. 19 (Hannikman). One was in Lorain Sep. 1-27 (LePage, m.obs.)

UPLAND SANDPIPER - One graced Burke Airport on Sep. 7 (Pogacnik).

WHIMBREL - One flew by Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 1 (Metcalf).

PURPLE SANDPIPER - Three were noted on the breakwall off Fairport Harbor on Nov. 20 (Pogacnik). On Nov. 28, one was at Headlands Beach SP (Gilliland, Lozano, Finkelstein).

BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER - One-two were in Lorain Sep. 4-11 (LePage, Elder, m.obs.). A juvenile was along the shore at

Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 7 (Hannikman, Bacik).

LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER - The only birds reported were seen in Lorain, where 1-10 were identified from Sep. 5-12 (LePage, Brumfield, m.obs.).

WILSON'S PHALAROPE - As many as 3 used the Lorain mud-flat as a stopover Sep. 3-8 (LePage, Holt, Brumfield, m.obs.).

RED-NECKED PHALAROPE - A bird lingered for many birders to add to their yearly list in Lorain Sep. 2-8 (LePage, Holt, m.obs.).

RED PHALAROPE - A juvenile was seen at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 9 (Metcalf, Rosche). Metcalf wrote, "This was one tough bird and an early date for this species. We reviewed the phalarope photos I took, and, with Paul Lehman's input, concluded that it was a red, as opposed to red-necked. The pinkish-yellow leg color was favorable for red, as was the back color--molting into a plain gray color, without distinct stripes. The bill shape seemed intermediate, but not quite needle-like enough for Red-necked."

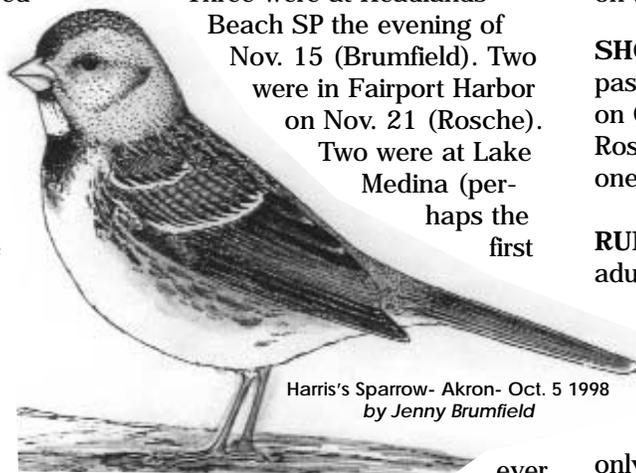
LONG-TAILED JAEGER - Once again, fierce north-west winds in early September provided the region with yet another report from Headlands Beach SP of this highly-sought species (see Field Notes). On Sep. 9, a second-year or adult bird spent 5+ minutes off shore. This allowed prolonged viewing and convinced yet one more conservative observer of the possibility of this occurrence in the region (Metcalf, Rosche).

PARASITIC JAEGER - Birds were reported from Chagrin River Park on Oct. 14 and from Lakeshore MP on Oct. 20 and Nov. 11 (Pogacnik).

LAUGHING GULL - A second-winter bird was observed at Eastlake on Nov. 6 (Conlon).

FRANKLIN'S GULL - Remarkable numbers of this species invaded the entire eastern half of the country. Ohio was not left out. As far as the region goes, I doubt if more Franklin's Gulls have ever been seen here. A total of 111 was reported from Lakeshore MP between Nov. 12 and Nov. 22. High tallies for the site were 38 on Nov. 14 and 47 on Nov. 21 (Pogacnik). Elsewhere, smaller numbers were found, but still in higher than expected totals. A first-winter bird was at Eastlake on Nov. 8 & 20 (Hoffman, Rosche, Metcalf). On Nov. 14, an adult was there (Hammond).

Three were at Headlands Beach SP the evening of Nov. 15 (Brumfield). Two were in Fairport Harbor on Nov. 21 (Rosche). Two were at Lake Medina (perhaps the first



ever for Medina Co.) on Nov. 22 (Sprengnether, Witt). Seven were at Wellington Reservoir the same day (Harlan, Wagner).

LITTLE GULL - One was off Lakeshore MP on Oct. 31 (Pogacnik). A first-winter bird was at Headlands Beach SP early on Nov. 6 (Rosche). Eastlake hosted

one on Nov. 14 (Pogacnik). One adult was at Lorain on Nov. 19 (Peterjohn). A first-winter bird was there on Nov. 30 (Hammond).

CALIFORNIA GULL - A second-year bird was at Eastlake on Nov. 11 (Pogacnik). An adult rested off the Fairport Harbor Marina on Nov. 21 (Rosche). A first-year bird was in Lorain Nov. 29 (Pogacnik).

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE - A juvenile-plumaged bird was off Lakeshore MP on Nov. 20 (Pogacnik).

ROSS'S GULL - A 2nd-winter or an adult still molting into basic plumage (see Field Notes) was studied at length at Headlands Beach SP on Nov. 15 (Rosche, Hannikman, m.obs.).

SABINE'S GULL - A first-year bird was at Lorain on Nov. 19 at the old hot waters area for a few minutes and then disappeared out on the lake. (Peterjohn).

SHORT-EARED OWL - A migrant passed over Headlands Beach SP on Oct. 9 (Barber, Brumfield, Rosche). Lakeshore MP hosted one Oct. 7 (Pogacnik).

RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD - An adult female was banded, and measured at Lakeshore MP from Nov. 24 through Dec. 2 (Pogacnik, m.obs.).

NORTHERN SHRIKE - Our only report was at Girdled Road MP on Oct. 26 (Pogacnik).

SEDGE WREN - One was seen well at Headland Beach SP on Oct. 3 (Barber, Hannikman).

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER - A male was discovered in a sumac at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 12 (Hannikman).

CONNECTICUT WARBLER - Two were found at Headlands Beach SP on Sep. 19 (Hannikman, Metcalf, Rosche).

YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT - One was at Chagrin River Park on Oct. 2 (Pogacnik). The first October record ever for Headlands Beach SP was on the 4th (Hannikman).

SPOTTED TOWHEE - The first report of this species to the Cleveland region was observed in Nancy Klamm's backyard Oct. 22-29 (Klamm, Rosche, Haley, Hoffman, Metcalf). Bruce Peterjohn, of the Patuxent Migratory Bird Center, kindly provided the following additional information. "With regards to the racial identity, there are two 'groups' of races of Spotted Towhee. The Pacific coastal 'group' has reduced spotting and patches, and is occasionally mistaken for Eastern Towhees, while the interior group has extensive white spotting. Logic dictates that the interior birds are more likely to appear in the East, and your note seems to indicate this towhee is an interior bird. Within the inte-



Spotted Towhee - Lakewood - Oct. 26
by Larry Rosche

rior 'group,' there are five races which are very similar, the few differences between them are clinal, and certain racial identity in the field is not possible. Perhaps if

you had the bird in the hand and were able to compare it with a series of specimens, you might be able to make a certain racial identity. But given the clinal nature of the races, even an in-hand identification is not a certainty. Arcticus, one of these five races, has the eastern-most distribution, is a fairly long-distance migrant, and is assumed to produce most of the records of vagrants from eastern North America. I do not know how well the specimen records support this assumption.

The bottom line is that you can safely state that this individual is of the interior 'group' of subspecies (the maculatus group), and not of the coastal (oreganus) group. Otherwise, a specific racial identity is not possible under field conditions. Since in-hand identification is not a certainty either, I am not sure that anything would be gained by trying to capture this bird for banding."

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW - One was reported from Chagrin River Park on Oct. 8 (Pogacnik).

LE CONTE'S SPARROW - A typically frustrating juvenile was found at Mill Stream Run Park (see Field Notes) on Oct. 28-30 (Kriska, Zadar).

NELSON'S SHARP-TAILED SPARROW - The sharp eyes of Sean Zadar spied one at Jaite in the CVNRA on Sep. 30. This is one of the very few reports of this species from Summit Co. A juvenile was found at Chagrin River Park the same day (Pogacnik).

HARRIS'S SPARROW - An immature was found at the Seiberling Naturealm on Oct. 4. The staff kept it well fed and it remained, to the delight of many,

through Oct. 26 (Stover, Brumfield. m.obs.).

DICKCISSEL - A female was found by young Nick Barber and verified later by Kevin Metcalf at Landerbrook on Oct. 3.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD - Our only report for the year was in Mentor on Oct. 7 (Pogacnik).



Ohio Peregrine Synopsis by Sara Jean Peters

Nesting territories (alphabetically)

Akron: At long last, this site of Ohio's last peregrine releases (1992, 1993), finally had a nesting pair of birds. J.P. and Bandit laid four eggs, hatching three young. Two survived to banding age. Shortly after banding, the female chick fell from the nest site and died. The male chick fledged, but was later recovered with a severe infection, and subsequently died.

Cincinnati: An observant worker noted Peregrines outside her office window, allowing the Division of Wildlife to find the new nesting site for Falcar and Falcor on the Chemed Center. Three eggs were laid. The nest failed, although at least one egg had an advanced embryo.

Cleves (Hamilton County--Power Plant): This is the second year banded Peregrines have occupied this site. The male has been identified as River Ace, released in

Evansville, Indiana, in 1994. A video monitor in the nest box on this chimney may allow us to read the black over red band on the female. Two eggs were laid but failed to hatch.

Cleveland (Terminal Tower): Bullet, released in Akron in 1993, replaced Szell as the male on this site. Zenith laid four eggs. The four male chicks fledged; one died of electrocution in Aurora.

Cleveland (LTV): A/2 (wild-produced in Pittsburgh, PA, 1992) and Sojourner (released Akron, 1992) produced 4 eggs and hatched one chick, which fledged. Sojourner was recovered with a broken wing in early July. It is unlikely she will recover from this injury. In late October, two birds were present at this site.

Cleveland (Case Western Reserve University): Several males have occupied this territory; we finally identified the current resident as Buckeye, produced in Columbus, 1996. This pair appears to favor gutters as nest sites and both nesting efforts failed this year. The birds ignore a nest box available on a nearby building.

Cleveland (Rocky River/Hilliard Road Bridge): Buckeye and Athena, formerly occupying a territory on the Goldcoast, relocated to this site and reared a pair of youngsters to fledging before they were discovered. This site is particularly fascinating, for it receives a great deal of automobile traffic above (both Hilliard Road and the adjacent 1-90) and below (Cleveland Metroparks road, bike/jogging trail, kids flipping rocks in the Rocky River). There had been a history of Peregrines perching on the lights over the bridge in late winter; there is a

possibility that a different pair nested here in 1996.

Cleveland (Goldcoast): A courting pair was seen here in late March but could not be located after this initial sighting. A pair was found in early November; the banded male from a nest in St. Louis, Missouri, hatched in 1997.

Columbus: More than 26,000 individuals viewed Bandit and Aurora's nesting via the Internet. Traffic was heavy if you tried to log on. Our site master counted 366,721 hits between April and July. The four chicks fledged successfully. Aurora was found, unable to fly, mid-summer and later died of a massive lung infection. This pair was a leading producer in the Midwest population, fledging 19 young in 5 nestings.

Dayton: Baltimore and Mercury laid four eggs. Three eggs hatched a few days before a torrential rain storm flooded the nest box. Site manager Rick Jasper moved three young and the unhatched egg to a nearby nest box, which this pair has used in previous years. Although the fourth egg did not hatch, the young survived this near fatal exposure and fledged successfully.

Lima: This new pair arrived in mid-April. Although there was plenty of breeding activity, the female (Clifty -released Burgin, KY, 1996) and mate Orrville (reared by wild parents in London, Ontario,) did not nest. In October, a juvenile female reared by wild pair in Pittsburgh, PA, was on the site.

Toledo: Ohio's oldest active site, Carmen and C/U laid four eggs and raised three chicks. Renovations of the Commodore Perry Motor Inn site did not inter-

fere with this nesting. Each youngster was retrieved from the street at least once after fledging.

Division of Wildlife biologists and officers responded to a number of grounded peregrines, during the September/October migration period. Many of these were unbanded birds. Although most of our monitoring occurs during the spring breeding season, birders are encouraged to watch for new individuals and pairs setting up territories through the winter months. Please notify your local District Office (Columbus, Akron, Toledo, Athens, Dayton) of these locations and whether the birds are banded or unbanded. Even if these individuals do not nest, they alert us to likely sites for future nests.

We have had reports of single birds in Canton, on the James Cancer Research Center in Columbus, and on the Goodyear clock tower adjacent to Route 76 in Akron. These birds are not on site at the time of this update (Nov. 11, 1998,) but if there were birds there before, it's likely they'll be there again. Listen for complaints about bird pieces/parts around buildings. These signal a possible Peregrine site.

A Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) at Headlands Beach State Park by Ted Gilliland

It was an unusually warm day for November 28. We didn't even need hats or gloves on the break-wall at Mentor Headlands. Paula Lozano, Bob Finkelstein and I had walked the breakwall that day, looking for Purple Sandpipers. I had almost made it to the lighthouse and was feeling a little



Purple Sandpiper - HBSP- November 28
by Bob Finkelstein

doubtful that we would see anything. I turned to talk to Paula and saw a small bird flying low over the water--a Snow Bunting! It landed, and we watched it for about a minute. The sun was shining, and we noticed in the water a reflection of a bird in flight. When it landed, it was a small grayish bird with stubby legs. It was the Purple Sandpiper! We signaled Bob, who was farther behind us, and had a camera. We eventually pointed out the bird to him and moved closer to the sandpiper without its flying away. Bob photographed it from about 30 feet. We watched the sandpiper from 11:00 to 11:45 and actually had to leave before it did.

**Documentation of
Long-tailed Jaeger
(*Stercorarius
longicaudus*)**

by Kevin J. Metcalf

Date: September 9, 1998.
Time: around 8:00 AM
Location: Headlands Beach SP.
Lighting: fairly good, overcast day with gusting North winds.

Larry Rosche and I were standing on the beach, scanning to the west, trying to relocate the phalarope we had just seen, when both of us said jaeger! It was close

to the beach when first observed, about 100 yards away, give or take. The bird worked its way north out over the water and eventually northwest and away from us until it was out of sight. Total viewing time was well over 5 minutes, with about a minute of quality viewing time.

First impression was that this was a tiny, tern-like, trim jaeger. Not a powerful flyer.

Tail long, narrow, pointed. We immediately felt this was a Long-tailed Jaeger. Larry and I both have experience with the other jaegers, and Larry has seen Longtaileds.

The key feature that we both quickly picked up on was that this bird had no white or whitish in the underwings at all--just evenly dark brownish gray/grayish brown. The upperwings showed no white, either (This was not "feather-shaft" viewing distance, but if the bases of the primaries had had any white, I believe we would have seen it). This feature alone should safely eliminate the other species, and probably indicates an adult Long-tailed Jaeger molting to basic plumage. I commented that the bird's head seemed very small, not projecting far beyond the wrists of the wing. The general shape was of a bird all tail and wings. At this distance the head and back appeared evenly dark. The throat color was not well seen. There was a contrast between the belly and breast--somewhat hooded-looking--the breast being darkish, and the belly whitish (See illustrations with the

documentation). The flanks were darker than the belly and may have been slightly barred.

The other key feature was the tail. The tail seemed to just taper narrowly back to a fine point and was long (about the length of the bird's body). The tail length was not as long as it would be in fresh breeding plumage. I am aware that parasitic jaegers can show very long tail plumes in the spring, but I wouldn't expect a parasitic to show this much tail projection in the fall, due to molt/feather wear.

The size of the bird seemed very small from the start, from the buoyant way it flew



(it made slow progress into the northerly gales blowing in off the lake). When it was chased by a Herring Gull, it looked about the size of one of the gull's wings, or less than 1/2 the size of the gull.

The only other similar species is Parasitic Jaeger. A small Parasitic could approximate the size and maybe shape of a Long-tailed Jaeger, but the lack of any whitish in the underwings and long tail clinches the I.D. (Fortunately, this bird was an adult, as opposed to a more confusing juvenile). The jizz characteristics can be subjective, but both Larry and I had no doubts about the I.D. of this bird. It was "textbook" LTJ.

Early September with gusting (20 - 30 mph) north winds seems to be the formula for producing long-tailed jaegers in Ohio. I am as conservative as anyone when it comes to jaeger I.D., though I have a fair amount of experience with them. Seeing is believing!

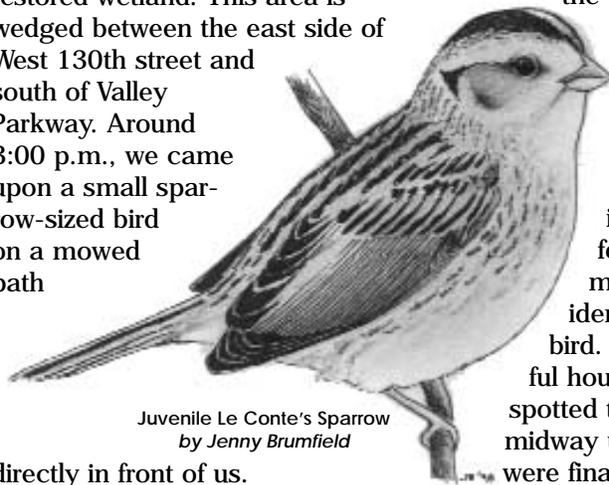
Following notes added November, after looking at a copy of the recently published Jaeger guide:

The photos of the 2nd autumn Long-tailed Jaeger look very similar to the bird we saw - especially the length of tail shown for this age. I think 2nd-year birds are probably very rare on the Great Lakes, but I cannot rule out a 2nd year Long-tailed Jaeger. They are similar to adults in autumn, and also show the even-colored underwings.

A Le Conte's Sparrow (Ammodramus leconteii) at Mill Stream Run Reservation

by Sean T. Zadar

On October 28, 1998, David Kriska and I ventured into a section of Mill Stream Run Reservation to explore a newly restored wetland. This area is wedged between the east side of West 130th street and south of Valley Parkway. Around 3:00 p.m., we came upon a small sparrow-sized bird on a mowed path



Juvenile Le Conte's Sparrow
by Jenny Brumfield

directly in front of us. Before we could focus on the

bird, it took flight, flying low to the ground and into the nearby tall grass. I began to walk through the grass to attempt to flush the bird, and after a few minutes I watched the unidentified bird fly low a short distance and land in an open area of the field. But before Dave and I could locate the bird with our binoculars, it took flight again. We could not stay any longer owing to prior commitments.

The next day Norm Kotesovec, Jr. joined us in our search for this elusive bird. Once again, the bird was foraging on the mowed path. Before we could get a glimpse of it the bird flew low a short distance and landed in tall grass. I tried pishing, but the bird was unresponsive to my efforts. We managed to flush the bird; but it only flew a short distance, landed on a fallen branch, and then flew off into a stand of Alders. After an hour of searching, we got our final glimpse of the bird perched high on a small tree. It started to rain and the temperature had fallen, so our binoculars were not performing well. We were able to view a broad buffy-orange supercilium, a weak malar stripe, and moderate dark streaking on both the sides and breast, forming a stickpin on the breast center. The

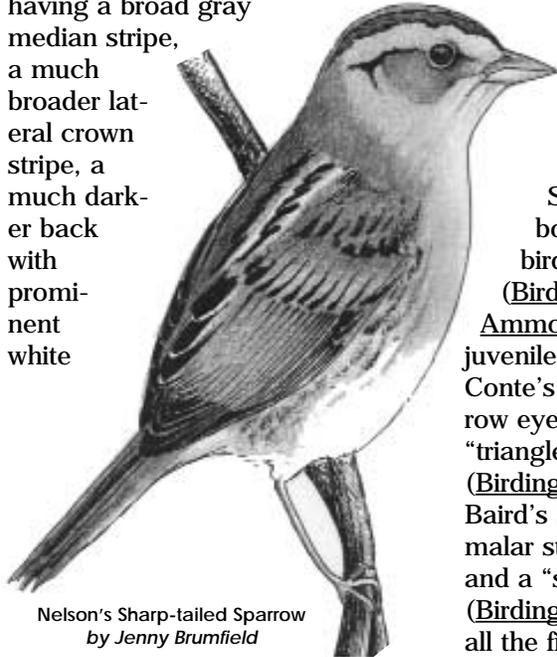
weather worsened, and we had no choice but to abort the chase.

The following morning, Dave and I set forth, determined more than ever, to identify the mystery bird. After an unsuccessful hour of searching, Dave spotted the bird perched midway up a small tree. We were finally able to view the bird at close range and in

good lighting. Overall, the morphological characteristics were typical of the genus Ammodramus: flat forehead, relatively large bill, large-headed, and short, pointy tail. The face had a light buffy-orange "triangle" on the side, encompassing buffy-gray ear coverts, which were not clearly defined. The distinct median crown stripe was buffy in coloration, while the lateral crown stripes were black. A blackish post-ocular stripe became broader as it reached the nape, forming a "checkmark." A weak blackish-brown malar stripe was present. The yellowish bill was relatively large. The throat and breast were buffy, contrasting slightly with the white belly. The buff on the breast and sides formed an upside down u-shape. Moderate streaking occurred on the flanks and breast, forming a centrally located stickpin. The nape was buffy with fine chestnut streaking. The mantle, scapulars, and back had buffy and blackish-brown streaking with five distinct buffy lines running down the length of the back. These lines showed slight "tramlines" as described in Byers, et al., 1995. The overall appearance of the bird was pale buff in coloration. The sparrow did not let us view it at one location for an extended period of time. In fact, the sparrow would take flight if we approached too closely and would retreat to another lookout point. After ten minutes, the sparrow had enough of us and took refuge somewhere in the tall grass. We were satisfied with our observations and left.

The observed sparrow was a juvenile-plumaged Le Conte's Sparrow (Ammodramus leconteii). The overall appearance, or "jizz," of the bird is characteristic of the genus Ammodramus. Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow (A.

nelsoni) mainly differs from a Le Conte's Sparrow by having a broad gray median stripe, a much broader lateral crown stripe, a much darker back with prominent white



Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
by Jenny Brumfield

stripes, unstreaked gray nape, and a well-defined auricular patch (Byers, et al., 1995; Greenlaw et al., 1994; Lowther 1996; Pyle 1997; and Sibley 1996). The observed bird had a chestnut-streaked collar which eliminates both the adult Saltmarsh and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, which have unstreaked napes (Birding, Aug. 1996). Even juvenile-plumaged Sharp-tailed Sparrows lack streaking on the nape (Birding, Aug. 1996). An adult Henslow's Sparrow (A. henslowii) markedly differs from the Le Conte's Sparrow. It has darker coloration on the upperparts and head, an overall olive-colored head, rufous in the wings and scapulars, well-defined auricular patches, and lacks buffs on the side of the face (Byers, et al., 1995; Lowther 1996; Peterson 1980; and Pyle 1997). An adult Grasshopper Sparrow (A. savanarum) is generally buffier on the face and lacks streaking on the underparts (Byers, et al., 1995; Lowther 1996; Peterson 1980; Pyle 1997). In the Grasshopper

Sparrow, buff coloration is restricted to the lore, while the juvenile Le Conte's Sparrow will have buff throughout the supercilium (Birding, Aug. 1996). The auricular patch on the Grasshopper Sparrow has a dark rear border, but the observed bird had no distinct border (Birding, Aug. 1996). Of the Ammodramus sparrows, only juvenile-plumaged Baird's and Le Conte's Sparrow will show a narrow eye stripe that widens to a "triangle," or "anchor" shape (Birding, Aug. 1996). A juvenile Baird's Sparrow will have a dark malar stripe, darker upperparts, and a "scaly backed" appearance (Birding, Aug. 1996). Therefore, all the field marks and behavioral patterns conclusively reveal that the observed bird was a juvenile-plumaged Le Conte's Sparrow.

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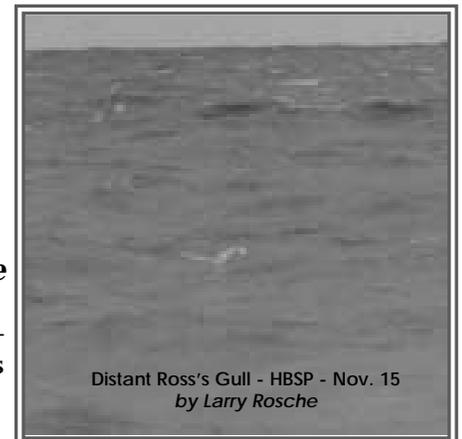
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A Ross's Gull (Rhodostethia rosea) at Headlands Beach State Park by Larry Rosche

Some birds have a mythical quality about them. The Ross's Gull is one. Birders along Lake Erie

have looked longingly for this arctic denizen. The fortunate few who have glimpsed this rare gull have experienced the sensation of the gull's searching for them rather than vice versa. My encounter with this mystical gull was like a scene from a Melville novel, complete with the roaring sound of Lake Erie's crashing waves.

I had decided to take the weekend off from my map making chores for the Peterson Field Guide Series. Having had a successful chase to see a Northern Wheatear near Marion, I thought I would visit my birding buddy, Ray Hannikman, at Headlands Beach SP. Ray had just returned from South America and I'm sure had many wonderful tales of the forests of Northwest Argentina. As I went outside, I noticed it was warm in Kent. Too warm I thought. This will be just like all the other days since Ray has been gone. There will be nothing moving along the lake, but the stories of South America will be worth the hour long drive. When I reached Headlands it was a different story. The sky was ominously painted with shades of gray, and the wind was howling. I should have known better, not to respect the witches of November along the south shore of Lake Erie. I was not dressed for the



Distant Ross's Gull - HBSP - Nov. 15
by Larry Rosche

chill. I told Ray there hadn't been a good day since he left. He returns and bang--northwest winds. We looked up, noting conditions were great for a loon passage. No sooner than we had finished the sentence, there were loons. Within minutes, groups of 7, 9, 16, 23, and so on, were passing overhead. We had 124 Common Loons in less than a half hour.

Then we saw Bonaparte's Gulls moving by. They came in droves, all moving east, with some stopping to feed at the mouth of the Grand River. By now, hundreds of Bonys were hurtling by, and Lake Erie was a raging sea. About 7:45 AM, I saw a pale gull approaching from the west. I thought, could this be...? Skimming low between the waves, the gull had darkish underwings and white trailing edge to the wing. Seeing the centrally-pointed tail, I said to myself this has to be a Ross's Gull. Almost choking in disbelief I said, "Ray, there's a Ross's Gull out there!" I was somewhat dumfounded because I had no camera or video recorder. Here we were watching another rarity blast by Headlands and there were no tools to help in verification.

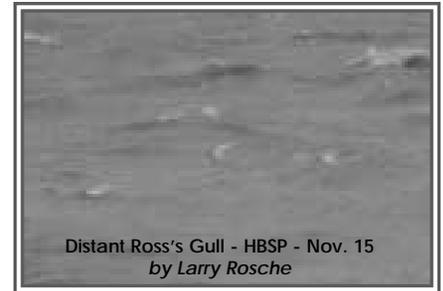
As the bird passed in front of us, we could see the pointed wings. The wing tip was translucent. The bird appeared very pale in comparison to the Bonaparte's Gulls present. The tail was longish and centrally-pointed. The dark base of the secondaries spread into the primary bases, causing the underwing to look dark at times. Other times this effect was not as noticeable. All of a sudden it wheeled and joined the flock feeding at the river mouth about 200 yards out. Nick Barber

appeared behind us and soon had his scope zeroed in on the bird. I ran to the car to get my camera. I figured some distant shots were better than no shots. I noticed my address book on the dash and decided I had better call some people. I tried several. All were home, but busy on the internet and could not answer my call. At last, I got Paula Lozano. If there is anyone to get the word out quickly, it is Paula. She contacted everyone she could. The internet people posted the sighting by 8:00 AM, and people were scurrying from all over the state to get to Headlands Beach State Park. By 10:00 A.M. the wind shifted, the lake calmed, and the Bonys drifted far offshore. Ray and I were delighted that so many got to see the Ross's Gull. We thank Dick and Jean Hoffman and Paula for spreading the word.

DOCUMENTATION

Characteristics: After first seen, the gull was always at least 200 yards away from observers. As it allowed viewing for several hours, direct comparison to the similarly-sized Bonaparte's Gull could be made. The wings were very pointed, but approximately the same length as the Bonaparte's. I felt the Ross's raised its wings slightly higher when turning into the wind. The body of the Ross's Gull was slimmer than the Bonaparte's Gulls. This gave the bird a long-winged effect. Remarkably, the wedged-shaped tail was evident throughout the observation. I must note the bird was often difficult to see, as Lake Erie was really churning during its stay. The gull would dart in and out of the troughs created by the catenary actions of the lake.

Plumage: The head was white with a large eye and small bill.



Distant Ross's Gull - HBSP - Nov. 15
by Larry Rosche

The bill could only be seen through the scope. A hint of an ear spot, not a bold crescent like a Bonaparte's Gull, was noticed by Nick Barber and me. At this distance, no ring could be seen around the neck. The mantle was pale gray, slightly lighter than Bonaparte's. The wings were very whitish-looking at a distance. As the bird neared, one could see they were gray, splashed with white. The secondary coverts were most likely in late stages of molt. The rear half of the wing was whitish. The pointed wings seemed edged with white to the tip of the primaries. The wings had a mottled look, which contrasted slightly with the pale mantle. The dusky base to the primaries was very visible when I first saw the bird. This effect was not as noticeable at other times. Both Jean Hoffman and I remarked on this. The underparts were white with no gray on the flanks or neck that I could see. The tail was pointed centrally. It was noticeably more narrow than a Bonaparte's Gull's tail.

Comments: Regrettably, this bird was distant, and my photographs are certainly not diagnostic. After watching this individual for three hours along with the other top-notch field observers, I still find it difficult to put an age to this individual. After looking at many photographs and video, I really think it was a bird going into second-winter plumage.



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RARE BIRD HOTLINE: (216) 526-2473 (BIRD) 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.

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FIELD REPORTS, ARTWORK, PAPERS, AND PHOTOGRAPHS should be sent to Larry Rosche, 7473 Sylvan Drive, Kent, Ohio 44240.
e-mail: lorofs@aol.com



CLEVELAND REGION BIRD CHECKLIST

Red-throated Loon
Pacific Loon
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
Red-necked Grebe
Eared Grebe
Western Grebe
Northern Gannet
American White Pelican
Brown Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
American Bittern
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Little Blue Heron
Tricolored Heron
Cattle Egret
Green Heron
Black-crowned NH
Yellow-crowned NH
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
White-faced Ibis
Wood Stork
Black Vulture
Turkey Vulture
Fulvous Whistling Duck
G. White-fronted Goose
Snow Goose
Ross's Goose
Brant
Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Trumpeter Swan
Tundra Swan
Wood Duck
Gadwall
Eurasian Wigeon
American Wigeon
American Black Duck
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Northern Pintail
Green-winged Teal
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Tufted Duck
Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup
King Eider
Common Eider
Harlequin Duck
Surf Scoter
White-winged Scoter
Black Scoter
Oldsquaw
Bufflehead
Common Goldeneye
Barrow's Goldeneye
Hooded Merganser
Red-breasted Merganser
Common Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Osprey

Swallow-tailed Kite
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Northern Goshawk
Red-shouldered Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
Rough-legged Hawk
Golden Eagle
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Gyr Falcon
Ring-necked Pheasant
Ruffed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Northern Bobwhite
Yellow Rail
Black Rail
King Rail
Virginia Rail
Sora
Purple Gallinule
Common Moorhen
American Coot
American Golden Plover
Snowy Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Piping Plover
Killdeer
American Avocet
Greater Yellowlegs
Lesser Yellowlegs
Solitary Tattler
Willet
Spotted Sandpiper
Upland Sandpiper
Eskimo Curlew
Whimbrel
Long-billed Curlew
Hudsonian Godwit
Marbled Godwit
Ruddy Turnstone
Red Knot
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Western Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Purple Sandpiper
Dunlin
Curlew Sandpiper
Sant Sandpiper
Buff-breasted Sandpiper
Ruff
Short-billed Dowitcher
Long-billed Dowitcher
Common Snipe
Eurasian Woodcock
American Woodcock
Wilson's Phalarope
Red-necked Phalarope
Red Phalarope
Pomarine Skuas
Parasitic Jaeger
Long-tailed Jaeger

Laughing Gull
Franklin's Gull
Little Gull
Black-headed Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Heermann's Gull
Mew Gull
Ring-billed Gull
California Gull
Herring Gull
Thayer's Gull
Iceland Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Glaucous Gull
Great Black-backed Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
Sabine's Gull
Ivory Gull
Caspian Tern
Royal Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Least Tern
Black Tern
Thick-billed Murre
Black Guillemot
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Pouter Pigeon
Carolina Parakeet
Black-billed Cuckoo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Smooth-billed Ani
Barn Owl
Eastern Screech-Owl
Great Horned Owl
Snowy Owl
Northern Hawk Owl
Barred Owl
Long-eared Owl
Short-eared Owl
Boreal Owl
Whip-poor-will
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Rufous Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Black-backed Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Wood Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Acadian Flycatcher
Alder Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Western Kingbird
Eastern Kingbird
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Northern Shrike
Loggerhead Shrike
European Starling
White-eyed Vireo
Bell's Vireo

Blue-headed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Horned Lark
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
N. Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Barn Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Carolina Chickadee
Black-capped Chickadee
Boreal Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Red-breasted Nuthatch
White-breasted Nuthatch
Brown Creeper
Rock Wren
Carolina Wren
Bewick's Wren
House Wren
Winter Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Golden-crowned Kinglet
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Eastern Bluebird
Townsend's Solitaire
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Hermit Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Varied Thrush
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Town Thrasher
Nighthawk (sp.)
American Pipit
Sprague's Pipit
Bohemian Waxwing
Cedar Waxwing
Blue-winged Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Gray Warb.
Black-throated Green Warb.
Blackburnian Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Pine Warbler
Kirtland's Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
American Redstart
Prothonotary Warbler
Worm-eating Warbler

Swainson's Warbler
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Connecticut Warbler
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Canada Warbler
Painted Redstart
Yellow-breasted Chat
Summer Tanager
Scarlet Tanager
Western Tanager
Green-backed Towhee
Eastern Towhee
Spotted Towhee
Bachman's Sparrow
American Tree Sparrow
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Lark Sparrow
Black-throated Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
LeConte's Sparrow
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow
Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Lapland Longspur
Smith's Longspur
Snow Bunting
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Black-headed Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Dickcissel
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Rusty Blackbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
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