

Ohio Cardinal Records Committee

In this issue every documented bird reported has been reviewed by the new Ohio Cardinal Records Committee. If the bird report appears in The Reports section (all documented birds are noted by an asterisk) then a majority of the Committee accepted the documentation. If rejected, the report appears in a special report in this issue of rejected documentations. Here also appear those records published in the last issue of The Ohio Cardinal which have now been reviewed and rejected. (In the last issue all documented birds were published in The Reports section pending review.)

Members of this Committee's predecessor, The Ohio Records Committee, had additional time consuming duties which they felt prevented them from reviewing all Cardinal documentations. Most wished to restrict their efforts to first state records. The editors attempted to operate without a Committee for several issues but it was quickly apparent a Committee was necessary so the new committee was formed. Members of the former Committee were asked to join this new effort.

The editors strive for a high probability of accuracy in the bird reports published. It's important for historical purposes to have reliable data. To attempt to ensure reliability, reporters are requested to document many rare or difficult to identify species. Even then the editors found it extremely difficult to assess such documentations and sought outside expert opinion either to provide expertise they didn't have as to certain species or provide knowledge of the observer or eliminate any possible bias or simply as a second or third opinion. Above all we wanted the reporter to have every possible chance of having his record accepted. Thus the continuation of the Committee.

At full strength the present Committee will have five members. It now has four and we are still seeking a member to represent eastern Ohio. Each member represents a different geographical area of Ohio and is a recognized expert in field identification of Ohio birds. Each documentation submitted to the Ohio Cardinal is reviewed by each member. As the editors receive the documentations for each issue they are photocopied and sent to each member for his review. The members then return their reviews to the editors by letter or phone. If three or more of the Committee (a majority) approve a record, it is accepted. (Only three members were available to review the documentations in this issue and the last so it was necessary for only two to approve.)

The Committee's objective is to determine the probability that the viewer actually saw the bird named. An acceptance means that the bird described was probably seen. A rejection means only that the description given was inadequate to make this determination. A rejection does not mean that the observer did not see the bird he names. Some observers simply do not write well. The major cause of rejection is the failure of the observer to give a precise detailed description of the bird. As an observer, the rarer the bird, the more you try to get an excellent look at it to be sure of your identification. Thus the better you saw the bird, the more detail you can put into your written description to enable others to come to the same conclusion.

The committee members serve without any compensation. They obviously must devote much effort and time to this work and we feel very lucky to have their service. They worry that bird report contributors, many of whom they know as friends, will stop reporting if they have a documentation rejected. They hope that if they are objective and fair in their reviews that the contributor will not take their response personally as a blow to his ego but rather realize that they could not form an opinion from his description to verify his sighting. Again, they emphasize, it does not mean that the observer didn't see the bird named.

The four committee members are: Dr. Elliot Tramer, Toledo, Ohio; Tom LePage, Cleveland, Ohio; Jim Fry, Columbus, Ohio; and Duncan Evered, Cincinnati, Ohio.

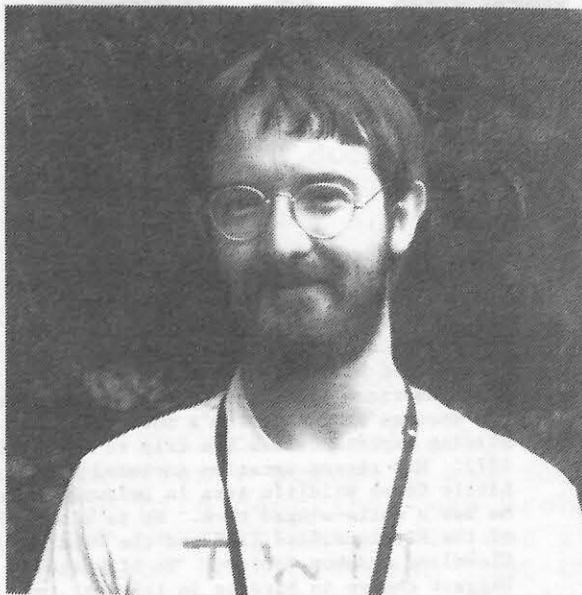
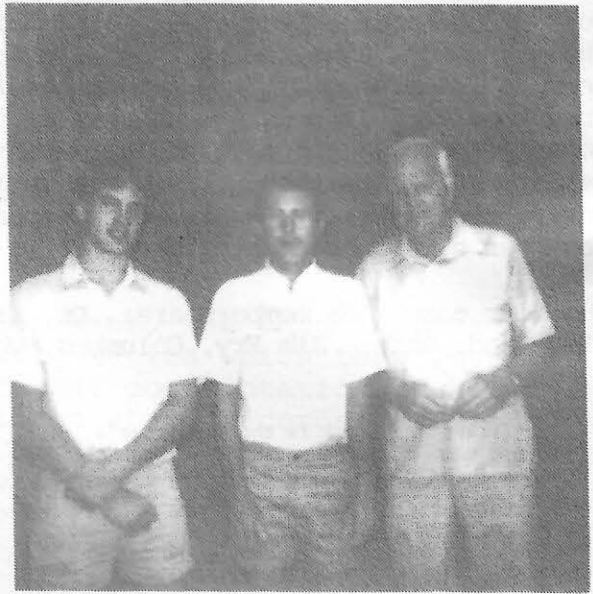
Elliot J. Tramer is the Committee's veteran member, having served on the prior Ohio Records Committee. He is a professor of biology at The University of Toledo where he has worked for 19 years and specializes in ecology. He has over 40 articles published in scientific journals (about half on birds), numerous popular articles on nature subjects, and is co-author of Distribution and Abundance of the Birds of Ohio with the other former Ohio Records Committee members. He is a life elective member of the American Ornithologists Union and also is a member of the Toledo Naturalists Assn., Wilson and Cooper Ornithological Societies and National Audubon Society. His most exciting sightings include quetzals and bellbirds in Costa Rica, cock-of-the-rock in Venezuela and condors in California. After 35 years of birding, his North American life list stands at 595 species. Elliot sees the increase in number and quality of birders leading to much better coverage as the biggest birding change in his lifetime.



Tom LePage is retired from the RCA Service Company. He birds the Cleveland lakefront area daily in addition to his extensive coverage of northern Ohio. In 17 years of birding, he has accumulated a North American life list of 664 birds, with 319 species in Ohio. Tom's most enjoyable birding experience was his trip to Alaska in 1977. His recent vacation included the Little Creek Wildlife Area in Delaware where he saw a white-winged tern. He is a member of the Kirtland Bird Club and the Greater Cleveland Audubon Society. To him, the biggest change in birding in the last ten years has been the increase in people going on birding trips to other parts of the United States with groups.



Jim Fry is an Interpretive Naturalist for the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District. He has worked for them for 28 years, first at Blacklick Woods Metropolitan Park, and since 1973 at Blendon Woods Metropolitan Park. He also writes a nature column for The Columbus Dispatch. Jim has been birding, Ohio almost exclusively, for the last 30 years. He birds twice a week, mostly in central Ohio, and has seen 319 species in the state. In 1977, he broke the American Birding Association's record for Ohio by seeing 265 species in one year and again broke it in 1978 with 283 species. He was the first person to see 265 species per year in Ohio for five consecutive years. He is a past-president of the Licking County Audubon Society and The Wheaton Club. One of his most exciting moments in birding was spending an hour with Dr. Roger Tory Peterson and his wife at their Connecticut home this summer. She took the photograph of Jim (center), her husband and Jim's friend, Eric Reiner. The biggest change Jim has seen in the last 10 years of birding is the establishment of a network of communication among birders throughout most of Ohio.



Duncan Evered was born and raised in England. He has been in the United States since 1982. He has worked as a research assistant for the University of Oxford, England, a research biologist for the Manomet Bird Observatory, a field assistant for Long Point Bird Observatory and is presently a PhD student in avian behavioral ecology at the University of Cincinnati. In fourteen years of birding and banding, he has a life list of 550 for North America and 367 for Britain. He has written two articles for the Bird Observer of E. Massachusetts: Artic/ Pacific Loon Identification and Birding Plymouth Beach. He is a member of the British and American Ornithological Unions, Wilson's Ornithological Society and the British Trust for Ornithology. He birds as often as he can get away with it and in the Spring that's 5-7 hours a day at Burnet Woods City Park. Duncan's biggest hoped for change in birding in the next ten years is to see US birders keep better notes, and to send summaries of their seasonal observations to more state/local committees for compilation.