

SHOREBIRDS OF THE MAUMEE RIVER RAPIDS

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The Maumee River Rapids, located primarily between the towns of Maumee and Grand Rapids just southwest of Toledo, are often productive for shorebirds in the late summer and fall. River levels generally decline beginning in July and remain low throughout the fall. There are years when river levels remain high all summer and fall; virtually no shorebirds visit the river during these years. July 1987 was exceptionally dry in northwest Ohio so the rapids attracted many shorebirds (except for three brief periods of heavy rain) during the late summer and fall.

I censused shorebirds on the Maumee River Rapids in August, September, and October 1987. Areas surveyed were located between the I-475 bridge west of Maumee and Farnsworth Park just west of Waterville. Although there are other rapids farther west along the river, the area between Maumee and just upstream from Waterville is the most productive for shorebirds.

Campbell (Birds of the Toledo Area, Toledo Blade, 1967) lists 29 species of shorebirds that have occurred along the rapids over a period of forty years. Among the more unusual have been both godwits, Am. avocet, Whimbrel, Red phalarope, and Ruff. My census found nineteen species of shorebirds, none of which were particularly unusual. See Table 1 for a summary of species and numbers. Other birds of note found on the rapids in summer/fall 1987 were Snowy egret, several Ospreys, Bald eagle, and two Franklin's gulls.

Numbers of shorebirds peaked in August, declined throughout September, then rose again in October with an influx of Killdeers and Dunlin. By the end of October, few shorebirds could be found. This was due in part to departure of most species and in part to high water levels at the end of the month. I suspect if censuses were taken in July, good shorebird numbers would be found at that time as well.

The best rapid areas are reached from U.S. 24 just west of Maumee. Take any side road south to the river. Travel along River Road from the I-475 bridge past the town of Waterville. Good access sites are at the end of Jerome Road and at Farnsworth Park. Other good areas are reached by crossing the river on Rte. 64 at Waterville, then heading west along the river on Rte. 65.

DATE	8/4	8/8	8/13	8/16	8/23	9/6	9/12	9/13	9/20	9/27	10/3	10/4	10/11	10/18	10/19	10/23	10/25	10/27
<u>SPECIES</u>																		
Black-bel. Plover												2						
L. Golden-Plover					1						3	11	35		2			
Semipalmated Plover	2			3														
Killdeer	64	128	77	128	103	66	35	36	73	65	50	117	192	55	45	10	56	
C. Yellowlegs	13	17	5	5	13	1	1	2		1		2	4	2	5	3	2	4
L. Yellowlegs	150	142	138	130	57	8	5	19	3	3	1	3	12	1	1			
Solitary Sandpiper	2	2	1		3	1												
Spotted Sandpiper	14	25	23	10	6		2	2										
Sanderling	1							2										
Semipalm. Sandpiper	131	128	14	9	2													
Western Sandpiper			1															
Least Sandpiper	24	7	14	10	6	1												
Wh.-rumped Sandpiper											1							
Baird's Sandpiper								1										
Pectoral Sandpiper	157	87	121	115	7	16	8	12		4	20	26	76	17	14	6	6	5
Dunlin														13	10	170	111	137
Stilt Sandpiper	2			9	1								8					
Sh.-billed Dowitcher	1	1	1	2	2													
Common Snipe					1													
<u>TOTALS</u>	561	537	395	418	205	93	51	74	76	73	75	161	327	88	77	189	175	146

Table 1. Numbers of shorebirds on the Maumee River Rapids during Summer and Fall 1987.