

The Grapevine

Cranes at Last!

Prior to this fall, try as I would, I couldn't locate a Sandhill Crane in Ohio for the life of me. Westerville (Franklin Co.) isn't exactly in the crane's migration corridor, and whenever I would try to chase down a sighting, the birds would be long gone. My luck changed dramatically, however, on October 10th as Charlie Bombaci and I were observing a large number of Great Blue Herons at the north end of Hoover Reservoir. I noticed a heron flying toward us and commented to Charlie "Doesn't it drive you crazy when a heron flies with its neck stretched out like that? It always makes me think that it's a crane." At which point Charlie exclaimed "It IS a crane!" Sure enough, it WAS a Sandhill Crane-- just seven miles from my house.

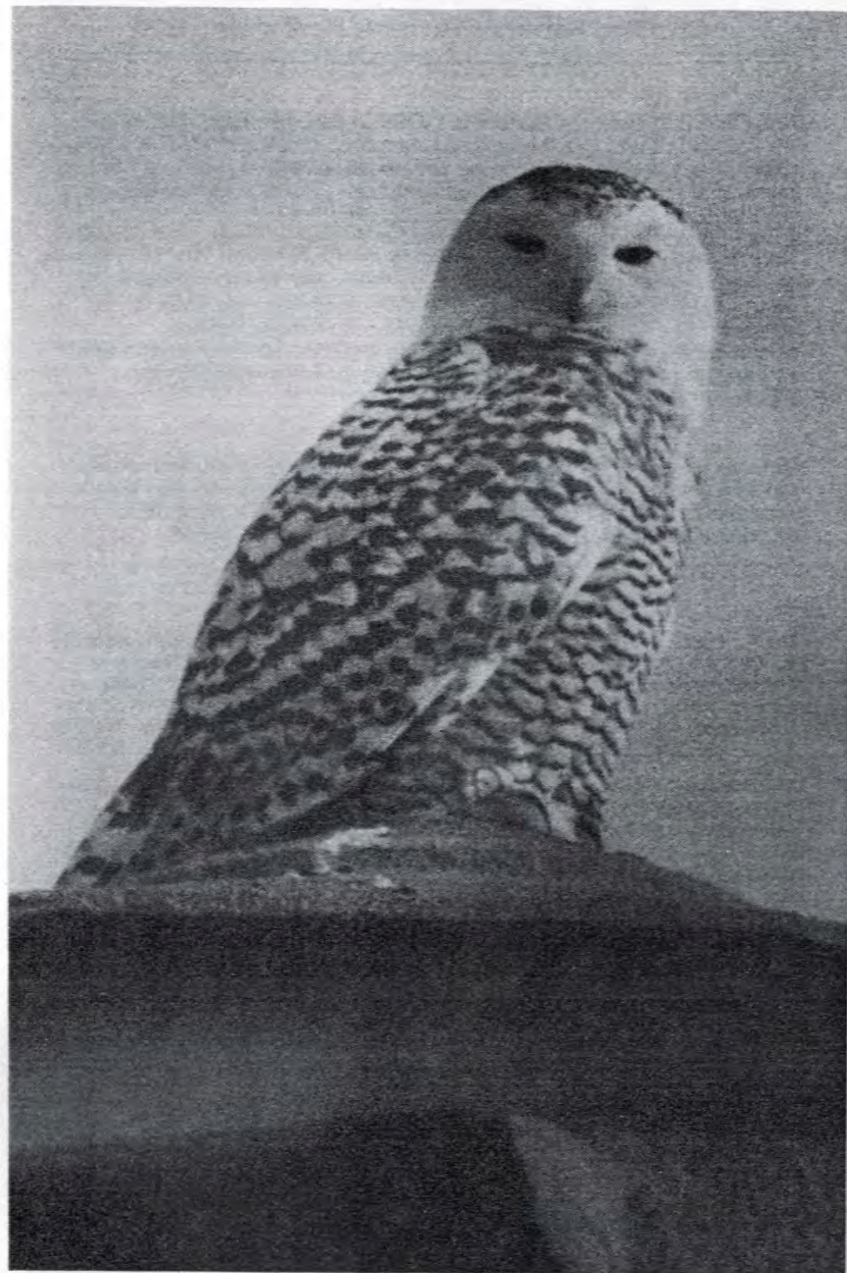
The jinx had been broken and as so often happens when you finally chase down a bird that you've sought for years, other sightings soon follow. Little did I expect, however, that I would encounter over 200 cranes in Ohio during the next few weeks.

On November 28th, I learned that large numbers of cranes had been seen in Hardin Co., just west of La Rue, OH. Despite the lousy weather, Charlie Bombaci and I headed out to confirm the sighting and by 3:00 p.m. we had located 24 cranes feeding in a corn field on the south side of County Rd. 200 west of Dudley Twp. Rd. 245. Things got even more interesting when we heard the loud calls of cranes in the distance and observed a flock of 48 birds approaching at low altitude from the west. The cranes flew east with Charlie and me in pursuit, but by 3:45, we had abandoned any hope that the birds would land and were heading west on Rt. 200 when to our amazement, an extended flock of 107 more cranes approached in groups of from 3 to 30 birds. The spectacle of so many cranes was simply overwhelming. It was as if we had been transported to Nebraska by some mysterious space-time warp. The cranes landed a mile to the east, and we soon beheld a total of 143 cranes feeding in corn stubble along the side of the road. All told, Charlie and I saw 215 cranes on the 28th. By Louis A. Schultz, 337 Barrington Drive, Westerville, OH 43081.

Trumpeter Swan and Bald Eagle Info from the ODOW

Gildo Tori, the Ohio Division of Wildlife's Wetland Wildlife Project Leader at Crane Creek Wildlife Exp. Station, provided us with the following information concerning introduced Trumpeter Swans in nearby states. This info may assist us in identifying free-flying Trumpeters in Ohio. In Ontario, most Trumpeters are marked with yellow/black wing tags. Most Michigan birds are marked with green/black wing tags. Wisconsin Trumpeters are generally marked with yellow/black neck collars. Although many Minnesota Trumpeters are marked with orange/black wing tags, many are also unmarked. A small percentage of Minnesota birds are also marked with yellow/black neck collars. Tori also writes that the ODOW is investigating the potential of reintroducing Trumpeters in Ohio.

Tori also passed along data regarding the 1993 success of nesting Bald Eagles in Ohio. An increase of 4 pairs was noted in 1993, resulting in 24 nests producing 31 young, with an average of 1.29 young per nest. In all, nests were located in 4 lakefront counties & 6 inland counties.



Snowy Owl. Barnesville (Belmont Co.), 11/16/93.
Photo by Mr. Tychonski