

down to join the other shorebirds in the spillway basin. Wow! Many more turnstones, as well as Sanderlings. A reassessment of the numbers of all three species brought the final count to 82 Ruddy Turnstones, 25 Sanderlings, and 4 Dunlin. This assemblage might be expected along Lake Erie, but not in west-central Ohio!

#### Status in Ohio

The Sanderling is one of the more conspicuous shorebirds along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts during migration and winter. This energetic species forages for invertebrates such as crustaceans, mollusks, worms, and insects along breaking waves coastally, and on mudflats and sandy shores inland. The Ruddy Turnstone forages for similar prey along beaches, breakwaters, and mudflats. The turnstone breeding range overlaps that of the Sanderling in the high latitude tundra, while wintering along Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf coasts south to Argentina and Chile.

In Ohio, the largest spring movements of Ruddy Turnstone occur between 20 May and 5 June (Peterjohn 1989), being "accidental to locally rare migrants through the northern and glaciated central" counties. Most inland sightings are of 1 to 10 birds, while and inland maximum of 125 were observed in Wayne Co. 17 May 1978.

The largest spring movement of Sanderlings takes place during the last half of May, wherein "they are considered accidental to casual migrants in groups of 3 or fewer" and along Lake Erie "1 to 6 daily" can be expected. There is an obscure report of 62 Sanderlings seen at Firestone Conservation Reservoir in Summit Co. 2 June 1966 [J. Laughlin, *Cleveland Bird Calendar* 62 (3): 28]. In checking the *Birds of the Lake St. Marys Area* (1970), the Sanderling is considered an uncommon migrant with spring occurrences 8-30 May, although none are annotated with maximum numbers. The Ruddy Turnstone is considered fairly common as a migrant and uncommon as a summer visitor from 10 May, but again maximum numbers are not given. Both species are given as very rare spring transients at Buckeye Lake by Trautman (*Birds of Buckeye Lake*, 1940). During his survey period of 1921 to 1934, there was only a single Sanderling, and the spring maximum for Ruddy Turnstone was three.

#### Conclusions

The new spillway at Grand Lake St. Mary's is definitely worth checking for those already birding the vicinity. Given the right conditions, other unusual shorebird concentrations are possible, as well as rare gulls and terns on the lip of the spillway. The 1997 Ruddy Turnstone flock becomes the 2nd largest inland concentration in spring for Ohio. The Sanderling flock reported here becomes the second largest spring concentration noted in the interior of Ohio.

#### Notes on Cleveland's spring jaegers

by

Kevin Metcalf

In the spring 1997, birders had the opportunity to spend time with a species that usually puts in only a fleeting appearance in Ohio. Five Pomarine Jaegers lingered near the mouth of the Cuyahoga River from 12 April into May. Even the most experienced lake watchers found much to learn from these five birds as they sat in the water, chased gulls, and flew over observer's heads.

The five birds shared many characteristics. All had the Pomarine "double flash" created by whitish bases to the primaries and primary coverts on the underwing, all were about the same size, roughly the size of a Ring-billed Gull, and all had short, blunt-tipped central tail feathers. After spending many hours with these birds, I learned that, when faced with a jaeger to identify, look first to the underwing pattern, look next for a nearby gull to confirm the relative size, and hope the bird comes close enough to see the tail projection. Overall shape and jizz is also useful as one gains experience.

On the Great Lakes, jaegers are usually seen in autumn, and are typically juvenile birds. The Cleveland jaegers were apparently in first-spring plumage. They differed from fall juveniles in that they had whitish, barred uppertail coverts. Some field guides state that, if the jaeger in question has tail coverts paler than the nape, it is probably a Pomarine, while tail coverts darker than the nape indicate a Parasitic. This is in reference to fall juveniles. The word of caution here is that in spring plumage, both species will have paler uppertail coverts, so the field mark is not valid beyond the first fall birds, if it is valid at all.

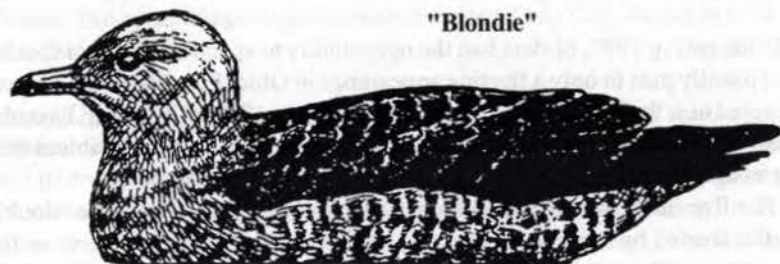
Although these jaegers shared many traits, they also showed remarkable variation in color. Eventually, I came to know them as individuals and tracked them by name. Two of the birds were dark morphs, two were intermediate, and one was very pale. Below are brief descriptions of each.

"Blondie" - Blondie was the palest of the group, having an evenly pale beige head. The lower neck and chest had indistinct barring. The back was dark brown with tan feather edges. The undertail coverts were whitish with blackish barring. The wing coverts were dark brown and tan edged.

"Dark morph 1" - The two dark morphs were distinct, being a dark chocolate brown overall. This bird had pale, brown edging to the back feathers, which the other dark morph lacked. The upperwing coverts did not show the obvious pale edging seen on the paler birds. The folded primaries were blackish, showing no pale edge to the tips. Dark morph 1 differed from the other dark morph bird in that the dark barring on the undertail was not as broad, being about the same width as the pale barring.



"Blondie"



"Dark-face"



"Hook"



"Hook" - Hook was the darkest of the lot. It had a very angular looking bill with a substantial hook on the end. Hook also had a more blocky -shaped head than the others. It had no pale edging on the back or scapulars. Hook's entire head seemed nearly black, and the undertail coverts had dark barring broader than the pale barring.

"Dark-cap" - Along with the next bird, Dark-cap was intermediate in color between Blondie and the dark morphs, showing more distinct barring overall. With Dark-cap, the forehead, most of the crown, and the area around the eye were dark chocolate brown. The auricular area was the palest of the head. The nape, throat, and neck were pale or medium brown, with indistinct barring of a warm brown color on the neck and breast. Dark-cap had thinner brown edging to the back feathers than Blondie. The upper-wing coverts showed well-defined edging or scalloping. The belly showed more contrast with the breast, being distinctly pale. The tail projection was more noticeable on this individual, and it seemed to be in slightly more advanced or adult-like plumage than the others.

"Dark-face" - Dark-face was very interesting because it appeared slightly smaller than the other four birds. It had a straighter bill than the others, being not as deep at the base. The forehead and face were brown, with a paler nape. It showed distinct barring on the breast and flanks, being a warmer brown color than on the other birds. It also had very noticeable pale, grayish, V-shaped tips to the primaries - a field mark that is supposed to be nearly diagnostic for Parasitic Jaeger in juvenile plumage. Despite the mixed bag of field marks, Dark-face still had the double-flash underwing pattern and the blunt tail projection. It also had no head streaking, which an immature Parasitic Jaeger is supposed to have. Of the other four birds, Blondie also showed faint but noticeable edging to the primary tips, so this oft-cited "Parasitic" field mark does not pass muster with our spring five-some. Dark-face illustrates very well that jaeger identification does have its pitfalls, and should be approached with caution.

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Danny Ingold .....	D.I.	Tom Kemp .....	T.K.
Andrew Johnson .....	A.J.	Cal Keppler .....	C.K.
Richard Johnson .....	R.J.	Gene Kritsky .....	G.Kr.
Cece Johnston .....	C.J.	Dorothy Kohl .....	D.Ko.
Bill Jones .....	B.Jo.	Norm Kotesvec .....	N.Ko.
Phyllis Jones .....	P.J.	Jeff Kraus .....	J.Ks.
Ned Keller .....	N.K.	Deborah Landefeld .....	D.La.
		Jason Larson .....	J.L.

Continue on page 122.



Cam Lee	C.L.	George & Darlene Sadler	GDS
John & Sara Leon	JSL	Dan Sanders	D.S.
Jim Lesser	J.Le	Winnie Sarno	W.S.
Tom LePage	T.L.P.	Joyce Scarborough	J.Sc.
Percy Lily	P.Li.	Charlie Saunders	C.Sa.
Ernie Limes	E.Li.	Maynard Schaus	M.Sc.
Greg Links	G.L.	Ed Schlabach	E.S.
Doreene Linzell	D.L.	Mike Schulze	M.Sz.
Fran Long	F.L.	Mary Ann Sedivy	M.A.S.
Paula Lozano	P.L.	Dan & Nancy Seman	DNS
Barbara Lund	B.L.	Paul Sherwood	P.S.
Kathy McDonald	K.Mc.	Bill Shively	B.Sh.
Cal McCormick	C.Mc.	Mark Skinner	M.Sk.
Joe McMahon	J.Mc.	Elaine Snively	E.Sn.
Bernard Master	B.Ma.	Pat Soehnen	P.So.
Charlotte Mathena	C.M.	Dave St. John	DSJ
Charlie Meadows	C.Me.	Bill Stanley	B.Sy.
Gary Meszaros	G.M.	Bruce Stehling	B.St.
Kevin Metcalf	K.Me.	Jay Stenger	Jy.S.
Kathy Mock	K.Mo.	Walt Sturgeon	W.St.
Nelson Moore	N.M.	Dave Styer	D.St.
Pete Munson	P.M.	John Tetslof	J.T.
Jason Neal	J.N.	Tom Thomson	T.Th.
Janet Nolan	J.No.	Bill Thompson III	B.T.3
Kathy Noblet	K.N.	Bill & Anne Toneff	BAT
Doug Overacker	D.O.	Elliot Tramer	E.T.
Karl Overman	K.O.	Robert Thom	R.Tm.
Steve Pelikan	S.P.	Shawn Veres	S.V.
Perry Peskin	P.P.	Sandy Wagner	S.Wg.
Lester Peyton	L.P.	Steve Wagner	S.Wa.
Bob Scott Placier	B.S.P.	Ignaz Wanders	I.W.
John Pogacnik	J.P.	Mary Warren	M.Wa.
Brad Phillips	B.Ph.	Sue Waterhouse	S.Ws.
John Rakestraw	J.R.	Dan Webb	D.W.
Pam Raver	P.R.	Bill Whan	B.Wh.
Brian Rayburn	B.Ry.	Peter Whan	P.Wh.
Susan Reidel	S.Re.	Paul Wharton	P.W.
Frank Renfrow	F.R.	Scott Wright	S.Wr.
Larry Richardson	L.Ri.	Stan Wulkowicz	S.Wu.
Richard Rickard	R.Ri.	Leroy Yoder	L.Y.
Craig Rieker	C.R.	Norman Yoder	N.Y.
Tom & Mary Anne Romito	TMR	Lorinda Yoo	L.Yo
Larry Rosche	L.R.	Dave Yoo	D.Yo
Sue Ross	S.R.	Sean Zadar	S.Z.
Robert Royse	R.Ro.	Marian Zehnder	M.Z.

The following birders also had observations affecting the analysis of the season : Darlene Friedman, Bill & Debra Marsh, Ruth & Joe Motts, Dave Sapienza, Mike Guisinger, Gene Anderson, Jean Kuhn, David Holt, Paul McSweeney, Rebecca Levy.



Boreal Owl, April 1997  
1<sup>st</sup> Ohio Record  
Photo by John Pogacnik