

## Winter 1997-98 Overview

by Bill Whan

The angle at which the sun's light strikes our latitude governs our seasons, and it is the most oblique at the winter solstice. The coldest temperatures lag behind this date, despite the sun's steady recovery from its lowest dip toward the southern horizon, for a couple of months. These months, and the month or so leading up to the solstice, are what we call winter. It sometimes happens, and seems to be happening increasingly frequently and noticeably lately, that atmospheric conditions conspire to create a season we cannot easily recognize as winter, despite the ineluctable influences of the wan winter sunlight and short days. And so it happened this winter, in spades.

Any experienced birder can probably make a number of good predictions about how a notably mild winter will affect our birdlife. Some fall migrants will stay later than usual, and some spring migrants will arrive earlier than usual; some birds that do not routinely spend the winter with us will do so. We can even make reasonable predictions about which species will be involved: species that normally arrive later in the fall are likelier to overstay their customary departure dates and persevere into winter, and those species normally arriving earliest in the spring will be the most likely to arrive even earlier with invitingly warm early conditions. At least the assumptions governing these predictions proved true in this unusually warm winter—we didn't have wintering semipalmated sandpipers or Acadian flycatchers or cattle egrets—but the species at the margins, the half-hardy ones, and even some less than half hardy, took full advantage of our strange weather conditions this season.

Statewide, temperatures were around 2.5°F warmer in December, about 10.5°F warmer in January, and approximately 10°F warmer in February, extravagant deviations from the normal. In December, birders found Hudsonian godwit, common tern, blue-headed vireo, Cape May warbler, vesper sparrow, and rose-breasted grosbeak; in January king rail and sora were reported; in February, word arrived of American bittern, osprey, both yellowlegs, pomarine jaeger, white-eyed vireo, and tree swallow. Species that probably wintered included the following: pied-billed and horned grebes, double-crested cormorant, great egret, tundra swan, wood duck, gadwall, ruddy duck, Virginia rail, dunlin, house wren, gray catbird, pine warbler, northern waterthrush, common yellowthroat, and lark sparrow. Species which may not have overwintered but were nonetheless reported in all three winter months included common loon, turkey vulture, sandhill crane, ruby-crowned kinglet, American pipit, and chipping, field, and savannah sparrows. Compare this winter's numbers and dates of waterfowl with those of a normal winter, when frozen water inland is the rule. Although commoner birds staying longer or arriving earlier dominated the news, we nevertheless had some fine rarities: a third record of mew gull, a second of Say's phoebe, a lark bunting, and our first Ross's gull.

Results of the season's Christmas Bird Counts are not included here, as they appeared in Vol. 20, No. 4 of *The Ohio Cardinal*, the summer 1997 issue, courtesy

of Ned Keller, who compiled results from all 60 counts for us. As always, we try to allow the CBC results to speak for themselves separately from our Reports, but here we have cited CBC results somewhat more often because they cannot be found elsewhere in this issue. They are always identified as such herein. In this and the other Reports in this issue we follow the taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), as amended by the 42<sup>nd</sup> Supplement of July 2000. Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC's Review List; adequate documentation of such sightings is needed to add reports to the official Ohio records. County names are supplied for certain locations, and appear *italicized*. Abbreviations and conventions should be readily understood, with the possible exception of the following: BCSP=Buck Creek SP; BIWA=Big Island WA; CBC=Christmas Bird Count; CVNRA=Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area; EFSP=East Fork SP; EHSP=East Harbor SP; *fide*="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another observer; GAASBC=Greater Akron Audubon Society Summer Bird Count, reported herein by Carol Tveekrem; GRWA=Grand River WA; HBSP=Headlands Beach SP; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA; Killdeer=Killdeer Plains WA; Magee=Magee Marsh WA; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP; Metzger=Metzger Marsh WA; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWA=Mosquito Lake WA; MWF=Miami-Whitewater Forest; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ONWRC=census of birds at Ottawa NWR, reported by E. Pierce; Ottawa=Ottawa NWR in *Lucas* and *Ottawa*; PCWA=Pickerel Creek WA; ph=photographed; PP=Power Plant; Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA; WA=Wildlife Area; ~≈approximately.



White-winged crossbills were widely viewed during the Winter 1997-98 season. This male was photographed in Toledo, Lucas Co., in January 1998 by Bruce Glick.

## The Winter 1997-98 Reports

**Red-throated Loon:** Seven reported: a juv at Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 1 Dec (J. Pogacnik), two at HBSP on 7 Dec (C. Holt), and four juv at Lakeshore MP 14 Dec (Pogacnik).

**Common Loon:** Close to 700 reported, with the lion's share a good flight of 489 on 14 Dec in *Lake* (J. Pogacnik). Most migrants passed through in the second half of Dec, but lingerers included one at Hoover Res, *Franklin*, on 5 Jan (K. Alexander), one at Kelleys Island on 18 Jan (T. Bartlett), one at Caesar Ck SP on 25 Jan (L. Gara), one on 1 Feb in Cleveland (T. LePage), and one at Ferguson Res, *Allen*, on 8 Feb (D. Dister).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Two or three wintered at Lorain (J. Pogacnik). Other deep-winter birds were at Hoover Res on 5 Jan (K. Alexander), two at Lk Logan, *Hocking*, from 12 Jan (C. Dusthimer) to 24 Jan (T. Bartlett), 10 in *Hamilton* on 25 Jan (B. Stanley), and eight off Cleveland on 31 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Four on Summit Lk on 22 Feb were likely returnees (C. Holt).

**Horned Grebe:** Apparently wintered in small numbers: J. Pogacnik, who had the high count of 69 on 21 Dec in *Lake*, remarked that one spent the period at Fairport Hbr. One was at Lorain on New Year's Day (V. Fazio), two on the ONWRC on 4 Jan, and two in *Hamilton* on 25 Jan (N. Keller). By late Feb, probable migrants included two at BCSP (D. Overacker) on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, two at Paulding Res on the 25<sup>th</sup> (D&M Dunakin), and near Wilmington on the 26<sup>th</sup> (L. Gara).

**Red-necked Grebe:** J. Pogacnik had both sightings at Lakeshore MP: one on 21 Dec and the other on 14 Feb.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** This species too wintered in small numbers, it seems. J. Pogacnik reported wintering birds at Fairport Hbr, and K. Alexander had 1-2 all of Jan at O'Shaughnessy Res in Columbus. Other mid-winter reports included 5 Jan birds at Eastlake (K. Metcalf) and Hoover Res in Columbus (K. Alexander), 10 in Sandusky Bay on 11 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), two at Cedar Pt (C. Holt) the same day, one at Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on the following day (F. Renfrow), and eight at Sandusky Bay on 15 Feb (C. Holt).

**American Bittern:** P. Haddad et al. had one in the CVNRA on 15 Feb near Beaver Pond for a very unusual mid-winter record, albeit in a mild season.

**Great Blue Heron:** Decent numbers stayed put in a mild season. K. Alexander reported up to 20 wintering in Columbus. C. Holt saw 12 at Mentor Marsh on 28 Dec, three at Cedar Pt on 18 Jan, then four at Ottawa on 15 Feb. V. Fazio counted a good 44 at Medusa Marsh, *Erie*, on 3 Jan.

**Great Egret:** Of local interest was one at Fairport Hbr on 8 Dec (J. Pogacnik). The same observer and others saw two or three apparently overwintering at Medusa Marsh, *Erie*, with sightings on 3 Jan, 31 Jan, 21 Feb, 23 Feb, and 24 Feb—a remarkable record.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** One on S. Bass Isl on 9 Dec was late (S. Wulkowicz), but 37 were not unexpected for the Toledo CBC on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Later, T. Bartlett counted 26 on the Maumee R on 4 Jan, and C. Dusthimer 21 there on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Less expected were one at the Mentor Lagoons on 27 Jan (A. Fjelstad) and two at Medusa Marsh on 23 Feb (J. Pogacnik).

**Black Vulture:** Birds from the Lk Buckhorn roost were seen from at least 19 Dec through mid-Jan in *Holmes*, with a maximum of 12 birds on 2 Jan (R. Schlabach). C. Dusthimer counted 25 from the Clear Ck roost in *Fairfield* on 1 Jan. B. Hensel counted 42 near the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 1 Feb. The high CBC count was 50 over *Adams* on 20 Dec.

## WINTER 1997-98 REPORTS

**Turkey Vulture:** Reported from many locations during the season. High Jan counts were 207 on the 20<sup>th</sup> in *Athens* (R. Cass) and 65 on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Lk Buckhorn in *Holmes* (B. Glick). J. Pogacnik had birds from 16 Dec through 27 Jan at the Painesville Dump in *Lake*, than another on 16 Feb there. Glick noted two in e. *Holmes* on 10 Feb, C. Dusthimer one in *Fairfield* on 1 Jan, and D. Best two in *Geauga* on 16 Feb. S. Wulkowicz saw the first arrivals at S. Bass Isl on 25 Feb, a more customary date.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Two adults passed by Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 27 Feb (J. Pogacnik).

**Snow Goose:** Over 160 reported, over half on Ottawa censuses, with 52 on 7 Dec and 38 on 1 Feb. Elsewhere the earliest was in *Tuscarawas* on 11 Dec (R. Schlabach), and the latest two at Killdeer on 27 Feb (B. Stehling). At other inland spots, three were at Hueston Wds SP on 3 Jan (D. Dister) and three the same day at Burr Oak SP (L. Barnhart), then five on 23 Jan at Pickerington Ponds, *Fairfield* (C. Dusthimer).

**Ross's Goose:** No reports; no reports for fall, either.

**Brant:** At Conneaut, one was present on 14 Dec, then two on 17 Jan (J. Pogacnik).

**Tundra Swan:** Over 2200 reported, with significant numbers wintering, especially in the western Lk Erie marshes, where the high counts were in the hundreds during Jan and Feb (ONWRC, CBCs). D. Best reported them in *Geauga* through the period, with 100+ on 1 Mar. Jan records came from Funk, *Wayne*, with 16 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 30 on the 29<sup>th</sup> (both B. Glick), Killdeer with four on the 17<sup>th</sup> (T. Bartlett), *Muskingum* with six at The Wilds on the 29<sup>th</sup> (C. Dusthimer), and in Feb on the 3<sup>rd</sup> near Findlay (B. Hardesty) and 11 at BIWA on the 27<sup>th</sup> (B. Stehling).

**Wood Duck:** Some apparently wintered. M. Zehnder and T&M Romito reported a bird on the CVNRA 29 Dec, 26 Jan, 16 Feb, and 23 Feb. Jan birds were in *Holmes* on the 13<sup>th</sup> and two on the 27<sup>th</sup> (both B. Glick). Eight were in *Hancock* on 13 Jan (B. Hardesty); T. Bartlett had one on 2 Jan on Catawba Isl and one at Killdeer on 17 Jan. A pair was at Griggs Res in Columbus on 13 Jan (K. Alexander).

**Gadwall:** Some seemed to hang around throughout the period. In Jan, 40 were at Lk Hodgson, *Portage* (L. Rosche), 14 in *Licking* (C. Dusthimer), 27 at BCSP (D. Overacker), and five at The Wilds in *Muskingum* (Dusthimer).

**American Wigeon:** Four were at Killbuck on 9 Jan (B. Glick). At Castalia, 115 luxuriated in the warm waters on 18 Jan (C. Holt), but most were migrants arriving in late Feb.

**American Black Duck:** Appeared in unremarkable numbers through the period, with a high reported count of 500 at Killdeer on 2 Jan (J. Stenger).

**Mallard:** Numerous as always, with ~11,000 on the 7 Dec ONWRC, and 4000+ at Funk on 27 Jan (B. Glick).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Seemingly none were tempted to spend the warm winter here. One was late at Magee on 21 Dec (H&S Hiris), and two early on 22 Feb in *Licking* (C. Dusthimer).

**Northern Shoveler:** Some wintered at Castalia's spa, where 106 were present on 19 Jan (V. Fazio). Early migrants were two at Medusa on 15 Feb (C. Holt), but in between C. Dusthimer had nine in *Licking* on 23 Jan, and D. Overacker saw the species through the winter at BCSP in *Clark*.

**Northern Pintail:** Reported on 10 CBCs. January reports included one at Hoover Res on the 5<sup>th</sup> (K. Alexander), 10 on the 11<sup>th</sup> at BCSP (D. Overacker), nine at Salt Fork Res on the 19<sup>th</sup> (J. Larson), a pair at Aurora on the 25<sup>th</sup> (C. Holt), and a bird at Funk on the 29<sup>th</sup> (B. Glick).

- Green-winged Teal:** Reported on 15 CBCs, with a high of 49 in Columbus on 21 Dec. One was at LaDue Res on 1 Jan (**K. Metcalf**), 15 on 23 Jan in *Licking* (**C. Dusthimer**), and six at Munroe Falls on 6 Feb (**S&M Saxe**).
- Canvasback:** 9037 were tallied on the 3 Jan Gypsum CBC. Later in the month, **V. Fazio** found 650 off Cedar Pt on the 19<sup>th</sup>, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> ~7000 on Sandusky Bay and ~2500 on the Maumee R. Inland high was 85 at Wellington Res, *Lorain*, on 10 Jan (**F. Greenland**).
- Redhead:** 71 were on the 4 Jan ONWRC. 1500+ gathered at Bayshore Pk on 11 Jan (**J. McCormac**). 58 northbound birds appeared at BCSP on 22 Feb (**D. Overacker**).
- Ring-necked Duck:** Unusually, many appeared in mid-winter. Thirty were at Lk Hodgson, *Portage*, on 2 Jan (**L. Rosche**), one at S. Bass Isl on 24 Jan then six on 4 Feb (**S. Wulkowicz**), eight in *Lucas* on 25 Jan (**V. Fazio**), one on 8 Feb at BCSP (**D. Overacker**), with eight migrants on 15 Feb at Metzger Marsh (**C. Holt**), then 300+ at Lk Mogadore on the 20<sup>th</sup> (**Rosche**).
- Greater Scaup:** Reported on only six CBCs, with 2000 estimated on that for Fremont on 28 Dec. **P. Lozano** had 301 off Cleveland on 28 Dec, and **J. Pogacnik** 145 on 1 Jan in *Lake*.
- Lesser Scaup:** Seen in small numbers for the most part. At Bayshore on 11 Jan 3800+ were present offshore (**J. McCormac**), but except for 929 counted in *Lake* on 1 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**) all other counts were of 200 or fewer.
- Harlequin Duck:** An immature male was off *Lake* on 1 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**).
- Surf Scoter:** Remarkable were eight reported in Jan: one at Wellington Res on the 10<sup>th</sup> (**F. Greenland**), three at Bayshore on the 11<sup>th</sup> (**C. Johnston**), and ad males on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> off *Lake* (**J. Pogacnik**). No Feb reports.
- White-winged Scoter:** No mid-winter reports, but one was at Vermilion on 24 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), another at Lakewood on 28 Dec (**B. Finkelstein et al.**), and a third off *Lake* on 1 Jan (**Pogacnik**).
- Black Scoter:** Seventeen birds were reported, all in Dec: one Rocky R Pk 3 Dec (**T. LePage**), high count of six at HBSP on the same day (**D&J Hoffman**), where two were found on 27-28 Dec (**L. Rosche**). What was judged a first *Richland* record was found on 11 Dec at Clear Fk Res (**J. Herman**, m obs). On 21 Dec two were off *Lake* (**J. Pogacnik**).
- Long-tailed Duck:** After half a dozen reports during autumn, there were over 30 winter birds. In Jan, one persisted at Hoover Res from the 5<sup>th</sup> (**K. Alexander**) through the 13<sup>th</sup> (**C. Dusthimer**), and one passed by Lakeshore MP on the 11<sup>th</sup> (**J. Pogacnik**). **P. Jones** found a bird at Oberlin Res on 14 Feb that stayed for m obs over several days. Latest was a male at Killdeer on 22 Feb (**V. Fazio**).
- Bufflehead:** Fairly normal in numbers, with traditional big concentrations near the Erie islands: 957 were on the Lk Erie Isl CBC on 19 Dec, and **S. Wulkowicz** noted 300+ off S. Bass Isl during Jan and early Feb.
- Common Goldeneye:** Unaffected by the warm season, it seemed. Numbers peaked in Jan, with 105 off *Lake* on the 1<sup>st</sup> (**J. Pogacnik**), 3475 on the Gypsum CBC on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and ~1000 off Cedar Pt on the 18<sup>th</sup> (**C. Holt**) and the 31<sup>st</sup> (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**); on the latter date **V. Fazio** estimated 2800 in Sandusky Bay. Migrants appeared in mid-Feb, with 10 on the 14<sup>th</sup> at Berlin Res (**C. Holt**) and eight in *Paulding* the next day (**M&D Dunakin**).
- Hooded Merganser:** Over 500 reported on 30 CBCs. Fifty were at Lk Rockwell on 8 Dec (**C. Holt**), 20 at BCSP on the 28<sup>th</sup> (**D. Overacker**), two at Conneaut on 4 Jan (**Holt**), three at LaDue Res on the 18<sup>th</sup> (**E. Folts, fide D. Best**), one at Sims Pk on 22 Jan (**R. Rickard**), and two at Nimisila Res on 1 Feb (**Holt**).

- Common Merganser:** Well-represented along the Lake. On 19 Jan **V. Fazio** witnessed an extraordinary ~6000 in the Huron area, 2200 in Sandusky Bay, and 1800 at Oberlin Beach, nearly all adult males. Inland numbers were, customarily, much smaller, with a high of 18 at Hoover Res on 12 Jan (**K. Alexander**). Migrants appeared in strength at Lk Rockwell, with 75 on 18 Feb (**L. Rosche**).
- Red-breasted Merganser:** Warm weather encouraged large numbers to pass the season here. **C. Holt** tallied ~1500 at Huron on 18 Jan, and **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** ~2000 there on the 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Ruddy Duck:** Extraordinary numbers wintered. **P. Lozano** found 1-41 birds between 2 Dec and 26 Feb in Cleveland, and **L. Gara** observed them near Wilmington from 5 Dec (26 birds) through 26 Feb (60 birds). **C. Dusthimer** had 16 on Lk Logan, *Hocking*, on 1 Jan. **F. Greenland** counted 125 at Wellington Res on 1 Feb, while **C. Holt** had 23 at Akron Lks on the same day, where **N. Ibsen** had found 42 on 19 Jan.
- Bald Eagle:** A nice high count of 31 birds came from Winous Pt, *Sandusky*, on 3 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**).
- Osprey:** Remarkably, two birds were seen on 20 Dec in *Butler* (**M. Busam et al.**), and then one in the dead of winter on 9 Feb in *Lake* (**J. Pogacnik**)—documentation accepted by the OBRC.
- Northern Harrier:** Numbers seemed low statewide, though a reassuring high count of 35 was reported in *Seneca* on 25 Jan (**T. Bartlett**). Only one was seen on three day-long censuses of ONWR during the season.
- Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The normal scattered reports. High count was 4 on 5 Jan on S. Bass Isl (**S. Wulkowicz**).
- Northern Goshawk:** **V. Fazio** had an immature bird at Medusa Marsh on 3 Jan.
- Red-shouldered Hawk:** Doing well, especially in the northeast, where its CBC numbers far outstripped those in other sections of the state.
- Red-tailed Hawk:** The Wilmot CBC tallied 128 on 20 Dec. **R. Schlabach** noted 10 northbound migrants on 26 Feb in *Tuscarawas*.
- Rough-legged Hawk:** No large numbers reported. Only one was seen on the monthly Ottawa censuses. High count only four, all dark-plumaged birds, on 29 Jan in *Ashland* (**B. Glick**).
- Golden Eagle:** **T. Kemp** described a young bird over *Lucas* on 19 Jan.
- Merlin:** An ad male was at N. Chagrin Res'n on 2 Dec (**K. Metcalf**), two birds at MWW on 11 Dec (*fide N. Keller*), one in Ashtabula on 15 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), a female in *Cuyahoga* on 9 Jan (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), and a male in *Summit* the following day (**Harlan, Wagner**). At least one bird spent the season at the traditional locale in Bath, *Summit* (**D&A Chasar**).
- Peregrine Falcon:** Most reports emanated from urban areas where introduced birds have been nesting, but one was observed with a kill at Ottawa on 11 Jan (**J. McCormac**), and a bird seen in *Hocking* on 25 Feb (**M. England**) was likely a migrant.
- Wild Turkey:** High count was 150+ in the Pleasant Hill Lk area, *Richland*, on 25 Jan (**M. Gingerich**). About a hundred were at MWA on 4 Jan (**C. Holt**).
- King Rail:** Surprising but hardly unprecedented was a bird found on 3 Jan near Port Clinton (**J. Pogacnik**) on time for the Gypsum CBC, and relocated through the 16<sup>th</sup> (m obs).

**Virginia Rail:** The Millersburg CBC had one for the fifth consecutive count, on 20 Dec; it was refound through at least 15 Jan (**B. Glick**). **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** found another on the Funk Bottoms on 24 Jan. Three Feb reports—one at Ottawa on the 15<sup>th</sup> and two at Springville Marsh, *Seneca* (both **T. Bartlett**), and one at the SVWA on 28 Feb (**D. Dister**)—were extraordinary, but consistent with the season's findings overall.

**Sora:** **T. Bartlett** reported one from *Athens* on 24 Jan, as this rallid joined its cousins in strange sightings this winter.

**American Coot:** Some unusual winter sightings for this species as well. On 1 Jan, **D. Overacker** tallied 20 at BCSP and **C. Dusthimer** had 100+ at Lk Logan, *Hocking*, where on the 24<sup>th</sup> **T. Bartlett** counted 133. Rafts at Wellington Res, *Lorain*, totaled 720 on 31 Jan for **F. Greenland**. 435 on 22 Feb on the Akron Lks were likely migrants (**C. Holt**).

**Sandhill Crane:** Over 200 birds reported. Midwinter reports included one in Ottawa on 4 Jan (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), 16 at Funk through at least 6 Jan (**J. Herman**), and one at Pleasant Hill Lk, *Ashland*, on 27 Jan (**B. Glick**). The earliest returnees were five at Hueston Wds SP on 21 Feb (**J. Reid**).

**Killdeer:** Many reports in midwinter, including a flyby in *Holmes* on 2 Jan (**E. Schlabach**), and two the same day at the eponymous Killdeer Plains WA (**J. Stenger**), one in *Franklin* on 5 Jan (**K. Alexander**), one in *Athens* on 24 Jan (**T. Bartlett**), one at BCSP on 25 Jan (**D. Overacker**), two on 27 Jan in *Holmes* (**B. Glick**), 18 at *Seneca Lk* on 31 Jan (**J&E Snively**), and "several" noted in *Tuscarawas* on 5 Feb (**R. Schlabach**).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Early arrivals were one at Funk Bottoms on 23 Feb (**B. Burnett**) and another in *Lake* on 27 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** **V. Fazio** photographed one in *Lucas* on 28 Feb.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** Lingering late was one near Bayshore PP, *Lucas*, on 1 Dec (**J. McCormac**).

**Dunlin:** Five wintered at the Lorain impoundment (m obs). A bird seen at Pleasant Hill Lk from 24 Jan to 28 Feb (**J. Herman** et al.) probably wintered as well.

**Common Snipe:** Eight CBCs found snipe, with a high count of 17 for the Millersburg contingent on 20 Dec.

**American Woodcock:** The earliest birds arrived on 14 Feb: one at Burr Oak SP in *Athens* (**L. Barnhart**), one at MWF (**L. Peyton**), and one at Gilmore Ponds (**D. Sadler**). By the 28<sup>th</sup>, 11 could be found at Springville Marsh, *Seneca* (**T. Bartlett**).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** Two, an ad and a 2<sup>nd</sup>-winter bird, appeared at Fairport Hbr on 28 Feb (**L. Rosche** et al.).

**Little Gull:** Twelve reported over the period, all singles between Lorain and Conneaut.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** Bonies seemed content to spend the season with us. The high count was 3562 on 28 Dec in Cleveland (**P. Lozano**). At Hoover Res, *Franklin*, **K. Alexander** counted ~500 on 5 Jan. Later in Jan, 250 were at Lorain on the 18<sup>th</sup> (**C. Holt**), 50+ at S. Bass Isl on the 23<sup>rd</sup> (**S. Wulkowicz**), ~100 at Conneaut on the 25<sup>th</sup> (**Holt**), 921 in *Lake* on the 29<sup>th</sup> (**J. Pogacnik**), and ~500 in Cleveland on the 31<sup>st</sup> (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**). **T. LePage** estimated 3000 at the latter location the next day, and **K. Metcalf** 700+ at HBSP on 18 Feb.

**Mew Gull:** **J. Pogacnik** discovered an adult at Eastlake PP on 9 Jan, and **J. Shrader** rediscovered it there on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Third Ohio record, accepted by the OBRC.

**Ring-billed Gull:** Three CBCs—Gypsum, Lorain, and Ashtabula—totaled over 25,000. Close to 4000 were at Berlin Res on 22 Jan (**B&D Lane**). ~300 were at Ira Rd in the CVNRA on 26 Jan for an unusual concentration (**M&T Romito**).

**Thayer's Gull:** As many as 10 birds reported, all singles, and between Huron and Conneaut along the Lake. Persistent were a first-winter bird at Fairport Hbr through Jan (**N. Barber**) and an adult at Lorain through the period (m obs).

**Iceland Gull:** Much as Thayer's—and why not, since many believe them to be conspecific?—with six reports from between Avon Lk and Ashtabula along the Lake, with an odd 23 Feb bird at Ottawa (**J. Pogacnik**). A first-year bird spent the period at HBSP (**E. Bacik** et al.).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** At least a dozen birds from a total of 32 reports. The high count was 4+ on 2 Dec at Eastlake PP (**K. Metcalf**), with inland birds at Summit Lk on 2 and 6 Jan (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), and Findlay Res on 16 and 20 Dec (**B. Hardesty**). The others were seen between Painesville and Catawba Isl (the latter on 2 Jan by **T. Bartlett**).

**Glaucous Gull:** Ten or more birds, in 17 reports. In less expected places were a "probable" bird in *Knox* on 10 Jan (**R. Schlabach**) and another in *Lucas* off Crane Ck SP on 16 Jan (**K. Alexander**). Besides the earliest on 20 Dec at Conneaut Harbor (**J. Hammond** et al.), and the latest, on 24 Feb in *Ottawa* (**J. Pogacnik**), all reports came from Jan.

**Great Black-backed Gull:** Very high numbers, beginning with 213 in *Lake* on 7 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**). The Elyria-Lorain CBC had 788 on 20 Dec. Numbers were strong in Jan, with the high count at extraordinary 2000+ at Cedar Pt on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**); **L. Rosche** found one inland at Summit Lk on the 24<sup>th</sup>. In Feb, **C. Holt** had 125 on the 15<sup>th</sup> in Lorain—not too different from its fall peak numbers, actually—and **S. Wulkowicz** 50 on a single lawn in S. Bass Isl on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** **J. Pogacnik** reported a flyby in *Lake* on 7 Dec.

**Ross's Gull:** **C. Holt** meticulously described Ohio's first, a bird seen on 14 Dec in Conneaut Harbor. Accepted by the OBRC.

**Common Tern:** **J. Pogacnik** discovered, and others observed, a single bird from 20 Dec through 2 Jan at Lorain.

**Snowy Owl:** All reports: one was at Findlay Res from 25 Nov through 1 Dec (**K. Noblet, S. Ross**), two at Conneaut on 28 Dec and one on 1 Jan (both **J. Pogacnik**), one on 24 Jan at Ashtabula (**Pogacnik**), and another 24-28 Feb in *Paulding* (**M&D Dunakin**).

**Long-eared Owl:** Two to six were found at Killdeer from 13 Dec through the period. One was found on the Millersburg count for the only CBC record.

**Short-eared Owl:** The high count was 24 on the Chandlersville CBC of 3 Jan in *Muskingum*. Reported in the traditional places in modest numbers otherwise. Elsewhere, six were in *Paulding* from 7 Dec through the period (**D&M Dunakin**), one in *Ashtabula* on 15 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), four in *Madison* on 17 Dec (**B. Royse**), five to eight in *Fairfield* on 1 Jan (**C. Dusthimer**), two at MBSP on 11 Jan (**G. Links**), and one on 23 Feb in *Lake* (**Pogacnik**).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** About 30 reported, with a high count of five at Killdeer on 3 Jan (**D. Kinsman**).

**Belted Kingfisher:** On 20 Dec, 29 were tallied by the Millersburg CBC.

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** J. Pogacnik had one on 13 Dec in Avon Lk, where there is a sporadic presence at least. In the *Hancock* survey of 13 Jan five were found (*vide* B. Hardesty). Fourteen were seen on the Adams County CBC and 15 on that for Millersburg, both 20 Dec.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** Nine were found on the Cincinnati CBC of 28 Dec. In the northern half of the state, one was at Dawes Arboretum, *Licking*, on 2 Jan (C. Dusthimer), two on the 4 Jan ONWRC, one at Woodlawn Cem on 11 Jan (C. Holt), and one in Wooster on 14 Jan (L. Curtis). One wintered at Green Lawn Cem in Columbus (K. Alexander).

**Downy Woodpecker:** The Millersburg CBC of 20 Dec found 482.

**Hairy Woodpecker:** D. Chasar remarked they were on the increase in the CVNRA. The 20 Dec CBC for Millersburg found 113.

**Northern Flicker:** 168 were found by the Millersburg CBCers.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** A remarkable 88 came from the 20 Dec Millersburg count.

**Eastern Phoebe:** T. Bartlett had one in *Seneca* on 20 Dec, and another on Kelleys Isl the following day. R. Schlabach found one in *Coshocton* on 29 and 31 Dec. Mid-winter reports came from 4 Jan at Tar Hollow SP (C. Dusthimer), 19 Jan at Magee (E&J Snively), and 30 Jan in *Hocking* (V. Fazio).

**Say's Phoebe:** One was discovered in *Knox* on 11 Dec by S. Albaugh, and remained for many observers there and at a location a couple of miles distant by m obs through 7 Jan (C. Dusthimer). Accepted by the OBRC for Ohio's second record of the species.

**Northern Shrike:** Seventeen reported, the earliest on the Lk Erie Isl CBC of 19 Dec, the latest 22 Feb in *Lucas* (D. Dister). One spent all of Jan in the Oak Openings (T. Kemp). The furthest south was in *Tuscarawas* on 3 Jan (B. Glick et al.).

**White-eyed Vireo:** Quite remarkable, and a first mid-winter record for the state, was an adult in Kent, *Portage*, from 7-11 Feb (S&M Saxe, m obs, ph).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** Quite late was one at Kelleys Isl on 19 Dec (J. Pogacnik).

**American Crow:** F. Renfrow estimated the Cincinnati roost at 25,700 birds, and ~11,000 were estimated in Mansfield by the CBC.

**Horned Lark:** Big counts were 533 on the Ragersville CBC of 30 Dec, and 677 on a census of *Hancock* on 13 Feb (*vide* B. Hardesty). Ninety-two birds in Fairport Hbr on 22 Feb were probable migrants (L. Rosche).

**Tree Swallow:** B. Stehling noted an early arrival at BIWA on 27 Feb.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** 846 reported statewide on CBCs, with no fewer than 154 on the Grand Rapids-Waterville count of 3 Jan. B. Glick related that 10-15 could be found at Mohican SF "on any day," D. Overacker counted 20 in *Lucas* on 3 Jan, and B. Hardesty's census of *Hancock* of 10 Feb turned up 21 birds.

**Brown Creeper:** 62 were located on the Millersburg CBC of 20 Dec, and 61 on the Mohican SF count of 1 Jan. On 3 Jan, six were in *Lucas* (D. Overacker), and six more at EHSP (R. Harlan, S. Wagner).

**Carolina Wren:** S. Wulkowicz found eight pairs on S. Bass Isl on 9 Jan. D. Chasar called the species "fully recovered" in the CVNRA, where six were at Ira Rd on 26 Jan (T&M Romito).

**House Wren:** One apparently overwintered at S. Bass Isl—what more eloquent evidence of the mildness of the winter?—with sightings from 19 Dec through 26 Feb (S. Wulkowicz).

**Winter Wren:** V. Fazio had 16 at EHSP on 17 Dec. Five were on the 4 Jan ONWRC.

**Marsh Wren:** Two birds found at MWW on 10 Jan (N. Cade) had dwindled to one on 31 Jan (D. Dister). Others wintered as usual in marshes in the northwest.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** The Millersburg CBC of 20 Dec found 141. Ten were discovered taking advantage of S Bass Isl's balmy climate on 26 Jan (S. Wulkowicz).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** 40 reported on the CBCs, the high 10 in Lakewood on 28 Dec. One spent 8 (M. Zehnder) through 28 Dec (D. Chasar) in the CVNRA, and two were at Baldwin Lk on the latter date (M&T Romito). Midwinter birds were in *Summit* on 6 Jan (R. Harlan), at MBSP on 19 Jan (V. Fazio), and in Columbus on 16 Feb (A. Goloda). Two were found at SVWA on 24 Feb (M. England).

**Eastern Bluebird:** The Millersburg CBC of 20 Dec counted 564. Thirteen were in the Holden Arboretum, *Lake*, on 8 Feb (C. Klaus).

**Hermit Thrush:** Thirty were on the Lk Erie Isl CBC of 19 Dec. One was at Firestone MP in Summit on 31 Dec (E. Pierce). Jan birds included four in *Tuscarawas* on the 3<sup>rd</sup> (E. Schlabach), one in the CVNRA on the 15<sup>th</sup> (D&A Chasar), and one in *Richland* on the 25<sup>th</sup> (J. Herman).

**American Robin:** Many reports of wintering in the northern counties. High count on CBCs was 1739 in Cincinnati on 28 Dec; the Lk Erie isles sheltered 455 on 19 Dec for their CBC.

**Gray Catbird:** One apparently overwintered on the CVNRA (M. Zehnder, M&T Romito). One persisted in *Hancock* from 1 Dec through at least 27 Jan (*vide* B. Hardesty). One was found on a 21 Dec census of Kelleys Isl (T. Bartlett), and a bird was at Killbuck WA on 30 Jan (Bartlett); Bartlett located another in *Ottawa* on 2 Jan. A bird was seen in *Tuscarawas* from 30 Dec through 3 Jan (E. Schlabach). The Millersburg and Ragersville CBCs recorded single birds.

**Brown Thrasher:** One found on the 20 Dec CBC in *Holmes* persisted through at least 27 Jan (B. Glick). In the north, one was at EHSP on 3 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), and another on Kelleys Isl on 18 Jan (T. Bartlett).

**American Pipit:** One was in *Tuscarawas* on 18 Dec (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), two in Lorain on 3 Jan (Harlan, Wagner), and two in *Paulding* on 11 Jan (M&D Dunakin). Two on 24 Jan in Dayton were joined by a third on 7 Feb (D. Dister), and one spent 31 Jan-14 Feb at Pleasant Hill Lk, *Richland* (J. Herman et al.). On 15 Feb, C. Holt found three at Metzger and two at Ottawa.

**Cape May Warbler:** This durable species was on Kelleys Isl on 19 Dec (J. Pogacnik).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** 174 were found on the Lk Erie Isl CBC on 19 Dec, and on the same day a bird of the "Audubon's" race was found on Kelleys Isl by J. Pogacnik et al. L. Rosche had 35+ near Lk Rockwell on 13 Feb.

**Pine Warbler:** One apparently overwintered in the Zaleski SF, *Vinton* (D. St. John), and an imm male was reported by J. Pogacnik from *Lake* on 29 Jan-1 Feb.

**Northern Waterthrush:** One was seen through much of the season—27 Dec through 15 Feb—at Barrs Mills Marsh in *Tuscarawas* (L. Erb, m obs, ph).

**Common Yellowthroat:** Birds probably overwintering included a female at SVWA on 1 Feb (D. Dister) and a male at Killdeer 25 Jan (K. Alexander) through 8 Feb (V. Fazio et al.).

**Eastern Towhee:** 267 were reported by 35 CBCs. Deep-winter birds in the north included one on 2 Jan in *Summit* (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), probable overwinterers persistently found in the CVNRA (M&T Romito, M. Zehnder), and two others in *Trumbull* (C. Babyak).

**American Tree Sparrow:** Average numbers. 1305 were counted for the Millersburg CBC of 20 Dec. B. Royse found ~300 on 8 Dec at Killdeer.

**Chipping Sparrow:** Sparingly reported on CBCs. Jan and Feb records included two in *Holmes* 31 Dec-31 Jan (E. Schlabach et al.), one in *Geauga* on 1 Jan (K. Metcalf), one in Akron 31 Dec-2 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), one in *Summit* 20 Jan (E. Pierce), two in *Holmes* on 1 Feb (T. Bartlett), and one in *Tuscarawas* on 19 Feb (R. Schlabach).

**Field Sparrow:** Reports from the northern half of the state included birds in *Lake* on 27 Dec (J. Pogacnik), in *Fairfield* on 5 Jan (C. Dusthimer), in the CVNRA near Ira Rd the same day (N. Ibsen), one in *Holmes* on 1 Feb (B. Glick), and two that wintered in *Delaware* (K. Alexander).

**Vesper Sparrow:** C. Keppler found one at MWA on 21 Dec.

**Lark Sparrow:** A bird found on the Ragersville CBC on 30 Dec remained through at least 4 Apr (E. Schlabach).

**Lark Bunting:** An immature bird was seen by m obs in Clark Twp, *Holmes*, between 27 Jan (E. Schlabach) and 16 Feb (B. Glick). Documentation accepted by the OBRC.

**Savannah Sparrow:** In the north, one was on 20 Dec's Millersburg CBC, then four in *Holmes* on 17 Jan (B. Glick). One was near Ottawa on 24 Feb (J. Pogacnik).

**Fox Sparrow:** One was at Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, 1-5 Dec (J. Pogacnik), one on the 20 Dec Millersburg CBC, and one near Peninsula, *Summit*, on 21 Dec (L. Rosche). Returnees appeared near Sugarcreek, *Holmes*, on 27 Feb (J. Miller) and at Firestone MP on 28 Feb (E. Pierce).

**Song Sparrow:** Over 14,000 counted on CBCs, and not missed by any. Single-spot high was 45 on 22 Feb in Funk Bottoms by C. Holt.

**Swamp Sparrow:** At least one apparently wintered in the CVNRA (M. Zehnder et al.). Sixty-plus were at MWW on 2 Jan (L. Peyton).

**White-throated Sparrow:** L. Rosche called their numbers "phenomenal" this season. Over 5,000 were counted on the CBCs, and missed by only one team.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Nearly 2,000 reported by the CBCs.

**Dark-eyed Junco:** The 20 Dec Millersburg and 30 Dec Ragersville CBCs combined for over 4,000 birds.

**Lapland Longspur:** B. Royse found ~100 at Killdeer on 8 Dec, T. Bartlett 60 in *Seneca* on 20 Dec. Odd sightings were of birds at HBSP on 24 Dec (N. Barber) and on 15 Feb at Avon Lk (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Returnees included 100+ in *Ottawa* on 24 Feb (J. Pogacnik), 1655 at Magee on 27 Feb (V. Fazio), and 50 in *Paulding* on 28 Feb (M&D Dunakin).

**Snow Bunting:** Often snowless buntings appeared in good numbers. On 1 Dec 51 were at Findlay Res (S. Ross et al.) and 362 on 16 Dec in the same county's survey (fide B. Hardesty). D&M Dunakin had ~250 in *Paulding* on 14 Dec, and J. Pogacnik 180 at Ashtabula the following day, then D. Best 100+ in *Geauga* the next.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** One coming to an *Ashland* feeder 10 and 14 Dec was a great find for J. Herman.

**Red-winged Blackbird:** Numbers reported from CBCs were topped by 16,949 from the Gypsum team on 3 Jan. Flocks of returnees were noted on 14 Feb to *Geauga* (K. Metcalf) and *Portage* (C. Holt).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Only 114 reported from the 60 CBCs. B. Glick found 30 at an e. *Holmes* site on 17 Jan.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Early migrants were a male at Ottawa on 24 Feb (J. Pogacnik) and three at Springville Marsh, *Seneca*, on the 28<sup>th</sup> (T. Bartlett).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Over 700 reported from the CBCs. Midwinter flocks in the north numbered 60 at Firestone MP on 2 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner) and ~100 at Ottawa on 4 Jan for the census there; ~250 spent late Dec through Jan in nw *Holmes* (D. Kline).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** Two were at Ottawa on 11 Jan (N. Barber), and one was at MWA on 18 Feb (D&J Hochadel).

**Common Grackle:** Over 5700 on the CBCs, with 3353 from the Kingston count. On 25 Dec, C. Holliday estimated ~20,000 on a three-acre field in *Butler*.

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** High count was 400 at a Columbus roost on 14 Jan (K. Alexander).

**Purple Finch:** Surprisingly few reports came from the southern counties. High count was 20 in the Mohican SF on 17 Jan (J. Herman).

**Red Crossbill:** Twenty were in the Mohican SF on 7 Dec (R. Carmel, fide J. Herman), six on 2 Jan in *Lake* (J. Pogacnik), and four in Woodlawn Cem in Toledo on 20 Dec (S. Andres) and one there on 11 Jan (J. McCormac).

**White-winged Crossbill:** A good showing. First were a female and a young bird in Columbus on 8 Dec (K. Alexander), then a young male at Mitchell Memorial Forest, *Hamilton*, on 15 Dec (M. Busam et al.). A bird visited a feeder in *Hancock* 17-18 Dec (fide B. Hardesty), then 52 were in *Lake* on 2 Jan (J. Pogacnik). A flock variously consisting of 5 (C. Holt, 11 Jan) to 35 birds (on 4 Jan by R. Harlan, S. Wagner) was seen by many at Woodlawn Cem in Toledo through at least 15 Feb (D. Overacker). Another was seen from 3 Jan (~60 birds, G. Links) through the end of the period (28 Feb, 22 birds by B. Finkelstein et al.) near Monclova in *Lucas*.

**Common Redpoll:** Many regarded the species as scarce this season, but it's been scarcer. At Lakeshore MP, J. Pogacnik had six on 28 Dec, and a singleton from 19 Jan-1 Feb. One was at Metzger on 11 Jan (P. Lozano), then 12 on 17 Jan (B&A Toneff). At Woodlawn Cem, R. Harlan and S. Wagner had 10 on 4 Jan, then T. Bartlett 18 on 25 Jan. One came to a *Hancock* feeder after Christmas (fide B. Hardesty). Twenty were at MBSP for G. Links on 11 Jan, where K. Alexander found 11 on the 16<sup>th</sup>. The high count was 75-100 in *Lorain* on 12 Feb (F. Greenland).

**Pine Siskin:** J. Pogacnik called them "very scarce," with one at Lakeshore MP from 1 Dec-1 Feb. One was in Wilmington on 6 Dec (L. Gara), 10+ in the Mitchell Mem. Forest on 14 Dec (N. Cade), 20 on the *Hancock* census of 20 Dec (fide B. Hardesty), four at Green Lawn Cem on 4 Jan (where two remained on 28 Feb, K. Alexander), 25 at Woodlawn Cem in Toledo on 11 Jan (C. Holt), 75 in the Mohican SF on 17 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), then 75 there on the 29<sup>th</sup> (B. Glick).

**Evening Grosbeak:** Seven were in *Ashtabula* on 15 Dec, then six in *Lake* on 2 Jan (both **J. Pogacnik**). In the Mohican **SF M. Gingerich** found 45 on 17 Jan, where **B. Glick** found 30 on 29 Jan. On 28 Feb **B. Finkelstein et al.** found a male and six females in N. Olmstead, *Cuyahoga*.

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A star of the Winter 1997-98 season, this immature lark bunting entertained many during its multi-week stay in Holmes Co. Photo by Bruce Glick in February 1998.

## Oh, What a Month it Was!

Every birder is familiar with the lists so many of us keep, lists of everything from our yard to the world. Listing games can add to our hobby's enjoyment or, at their most extreme, become a pathological extension of our already compulsive behavior.

Minnesotans admit to recording birthday lists, bird-bath lists, non-motorized big days, species big days (14 species of sparrows currently lead the state), nest lists and, of course, personally-found state lists, in which no staked-out birds can be counted, or birds pointed out to the observer by someone else.

Californians have NIBS lists (containing No Introduced Bird Species). ABAers follow a 95% rule for big days (95% of the birds seen by a group must have been seen by all members), requiring self-sustaining 10-year populations of exotics before listing them, and 24 hours after release for listing captured birds. Some of my friends claim to keep copulation lists (bird with bird, that is).

In January 1998, certain factors coalesced to stimulate the listing response in some Ohio birders. Seeing a hundred species by 1 March used to be an informal goal, but when El Niño brought warm, unwintery conditions, accompanied by a lot of vagrant birds, a hundred began to seem like a realistic goal for January to some of us. Birders in Licking County (Curt Dusthimer), Tiffin (Tom Bartlett), Cleveland (Rob Harlan and Sandy Wagner), Millersburg (Bruce Glick), and Akron (Jim Reyda and Ed Pierce), apparently independently seemed to sense this possibility in the number of species still lingering from the Christmas counts.

Available in northern Ohio in January, for example, were Say's phoebe, lark sparrow, lark bunting, northern waterthrush, Virginia rail, common snipe, wild turkey, black vulture, savannah sparrow, northern shrike, short-eared owl, killdeer, dunlin, American pipit, chipping sparrow, hermit thrush, eastern towhee, rusty blackbird, ruby-crowned kinglet, sandhill crane, king rail, marsh wren, great egret (three birds, the only previous overwintering having occurred in 1982-83), and Brewer's blackbird—a most unusual collection of species for the state at any given time of year.

Combining these 23 species with the usual winter residents, including the finches (both crossbills, common redpoll, evening grosbeak, pine siskin) and lingering half-hardy species (brown thrasher, gray catbird, yellow-bellied sapsucker, wood duck, double-crested cormorant), Rob Harlan and Sandy Wagner had 100 species by January 11<sup>th</sup>, and Bruce Glick by the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Bruce birded 18 of the available 31 days in January, generally his slowest month at work. Although he missed ruffed grouse—Rob and Sandy were on the other side of the bush and saw it flush—he and the Harlan/Wagner team would tie at 122 species for the month. Fortunately for them, a recount on the last day of the month “found” one species for Rob and Sandy that they'd forgotten to list—an accounting error—and an overlooked call of a brown thrasher—an auditory error—to make up their total. Bruce's previous January high had been 99 in 1997; previous to that he'd been in the low 90s.