

The Ohio Cardinal is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

The Ohio Cardinal exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio.

The Ohio Cardinal invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area of the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied upon request. Unusual species should be documented, and forms to do so are available upon request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

Seasonal Report Due Dates

Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25
Summer (Jun.-Jul.) - August 25
Fall (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25

Please send all reports to:

Bill Whan
223 E. Tulane Rd.
Columbus, OH 43202
danielel@iwaynet.net

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The Ohio Cardinal
c/o Edwin C. Pierce
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The Ohio Cardinal

Bill Whan, Editor
Edwin C. Pierce, Publisher
Joseph W. Hammond, Design Manager
The Ohio Bird Records Committee: Jim McCormac, Secretary
Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
1889 Fountain Square, Bldg. F-1
Columbus, OH 43224

On the Cover: **White-winged Crossbill** - Cleveland Hts., Cuyahoga Co., 13 March 2000. Photo by Laura Gooch.

Winter 1999-2000 Overview

by Bill Whan

Real winter lasted about three weeks this time around in Ohio. Not unlike a year ago, except about two weeks later, persistent snow and sub-freezing daily high temperatures arrived during the third week of January and lasted through the first week of February. There were conspicuous empty periods in the reports of certain species during that span; these gaps may not be obvious in the reports, where we tend to concentrate on the exceptional to the detriment of the routine. The gaps were likelier to be an ugly-weather result of reduced birder coverage than low bird numbers in some cases.

Because persistent bitter weather arrived late, we witnessed many late-lingering birds, a few of them indeed so late that one could make a case for them as early migrants. Swallows actually spanned the period, with no fewer than four new record late dates for northern rough-winged swallow in December, and early tree swallows in late February. Bitter weather having also departed early, a week of the season's only temperatures above 65°F began statewide on 23 February, accompanied by winds averaging above 10 knots in the southwest quarter, and resulted in some notably early arrivals, as well as a copious influx of expected migrants such as vultures, killdeers, and woodcocks.

Drought far to our north apparently depressed seed and fruit crops, and sent redpolls, grosbeaks, crossbills, siskins, and waxwings south in profusion, though not always to Ohio. We had but a single Bohemian waxwing report, but New England and the upper Midwest reported spectacular numbers. Grosbeaks in Ohio were nothing to brag about, nor were snowy owls. Rough-legged hawks and northern shrikes, however, seemed to be everywhere this winter, the latter seen at times well south of their customary range in the state. Florida had its first records of rough-legged hawks this winter. Siskins, and redpolls especially, had a good season. Golden eagles and merlins appeared in record numbers. More than a few tundra swans and some sandhill cranes apparently overwintered, or at least overlapped their migrations.

So it was a winter when a rose-breasted grosbeak could frequent a feeder up in New Brunswick at the same time a first-record snowy owl could be found in Florida's sand dunes. Closer to home, another apparent jaeger and a kittiwake showed up in southern Ohio, while mockingbird numbers were up in the north. Cave swallows might well have overflowed Ohio, but were not recorded, though many showed up across the Lake in Ontario, where a specimen examined turned out, still more amazingly, to be of the southwestern race *P. f. pelodoma*, and others of this species lingered into mid-December in New Jersey, Virginia, and North Carolina. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reckoned this the warmest winter in the US since they began keeping records 105 years ago; in fact, the last three winters have, successively, been the warmest during that span, indicating a trend in which we might expect some fundamental changes in birds' movements. In view of all this, it is difficult to explain why relatively few of our half-hardy species—such as brown thrasher, gray catbird, eastern phoebe, etc.—were reported during the period. And it is significant that this winter did not come close to matching last winter's eight warbler and 11 shorebird species.

Four Review Species were reported, and details for all were sent to the OBRC: Bohemian waxwing, western grebe, Harris's sparrow, and two Ross's geese. In the

following reports, Christmas Bird Count data are not repeated unless of exceptional significance; for most CBC results, consult the summary. We are grateful to those who participate in and compile Christmas Bird Counts, as we are to others who send in their winter sightings for the public record; a foul-weather friend is a friend indeed.

It is always enlightening to compare a season's bird sightings with those of the previous year's. Now that *The Ohio Cardinal* is closer to being caught up with its missing issues, this should be possible from now on. In late March we mailed to eligible subscribers a special double issue covering Autumn of 1998 and Winter of 1998-1999. Our newer subscribers, not eligible for this 60-page bonus issue as part of their subscriptions, may want to have one: beyond two seasonal reports from guest editor Bob Conlon, and the season's CBC summary from Ned Keller, it contains Don Burton's article on weather-related waterfowl groundings, Frank Renfrow's look at the birds of the Hocking Hills, and a guide to birding Lake La Su An WA by Jeff Grabmeier. It is available for the single-issue price of \$3.75 from the Publisher, at the address inside the *Cardinal's* inside front cover.

The following reports follow the taxonomic order of the 7th edition of *The AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998). Underlined names of species indicate those on the Ohio Bird Records Committee'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*. Other abbreviations should be readily understood, with the following possible exceptions: CBC=Christmas Bird Count; CVNRA=Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area; *fide*="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another observer; GRWA=Grand River Wildlife Area; Killbuck=Killbuck Wildlife Area; Killdeer=Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area; Magee=Magee Marsh Wildlife Area; Metzger=Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWF=Miami-Whitewater Forest; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ONWRC=monthly census at Ottawa NWR, reported by E. Pierce; ph=photograph; Res=reservoir; Res'n=reservation; RTLS=Ravenna Training and Logistics Site, a *Portage* site surveyed by L. Rosche *et al.*; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; WA=Wildlife Area; WWTP=Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, in Cleveland; ~≈approximately.



This red-breasted nuthatch frequented the feeders at Highbanks Metro Park, Delaware Co., throughout the winter season. Photo by Joe Hammond (18 February 2000).

Red-throated Loon: After autumn reports of 16 birds, only two turned up: a fly-by at Lakeshore MP on 4 Dec (J. Pogacnik), and a basic-plumaged bird on Meander Res 18 Dec, described for the Youngstown CBC (C. Babyak *et al.*).

Common Loon: Decent numbers persisted through December, with a high of 79 off Headlands Beach SP on the 11th (K. Metcalf), then stragglers into January when 15 birds were reported, the last on the 26th at Perkins Beach, Cleveland (P. Lozano *et al.*).

Pied-billed Grebe: Only a few hung around through the 1/16-2/6 frigid spell. C. Holt had two at Summit Lk on 25 Jan, and H. Armstrong 12 at East Fork SP 27 Jan, the latter the high count for a single location that month.

Horned Grebe: The cold snap discouraged horned grebes, or at least those who might observe them. A bird on 2 Feb (D. Sanders, D. Burton) was aided by the warm water outflow at Bayshore PP. Only two sizeable counts: 30 at Sims Park, Cuyahoga, on 15 Dec (C. Johnston *et al.*) and 66 at Lakeshore MP, Lake, on 12 Dec (J. Pogacnik).

Western Grebe: Amazing was a second report for 1999, this one found at Clear Fork Res, Richland/Morrow, by J. Herman on 15 Dec. It remained at least through the 18th for E. Pierce, as well as for the Mansfield CBC. Documentation from both observers is with the OBRC.

American White Pelican: Last winter's bird on 10 Dec set a late record. This year, another surpassed it by showing up on 19 Dec in Mahoning for B. Jones; it was seen at least through the following day (L. Rosche).

Double-crested Cormorant: Seen in at least small numbers on Lk Erie through the period. R. Harlan and S. Wagner had eight on Turning Pt. Isl in Sandusky on 9 Jan, S. Wulkowicz two birds near S. Bass Isl on 16 Jan, and P. Lozano one at Avon Lk PP on 30 Jan. H. Petruschke had one at Eastlake PP on 20 Feb. Inland, one was at Buck Ck SP on 4 Dec (D. Overacker).

Great Blue Heron: Single-locale highs in the north included ~40 at Bayshore PP on 27 Dec (B. Morrison *et al.*), 30 at East Harbor SP on 9 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner), 21 on 20 Feb at Headlands Beach SP (H. Petruschke), and 27 in the CVNRA on 21 Feb (T&MA Romito). The Gypsum CBC reported 200 on 1 Jan. J. Pogacnik called them "hard to come by in the NE" despite warm weather.

Great Egret: One stuck it out through some chilly weather to be found by J. Pogacnik on 26 Dec at Camp Perry, Ottawa. This is lateish, but one stayed at Medusa Marsh through 1/1 last winter to fluff January lists for some folks.

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Away from Lk Erie, two imm were at Bluffton, Allen, in the bitter cold of 22 Jan. Two others reported at Greenlawn Dam in Columbus on 27 Feb (H. Fradkin) may have been the ones present six weeks later (B. Conlon).

Black Vulture: The east-central colonies flourished, with ~20 at the Lk Buckhorn roost, Holmes, on 15 Jan (T. Sponseller); L. Deininger saw two over Killbuck, Wayne, on 25 Jan; and ten in the Holmes/Tuscarawas area on 5 Feb (S. Snyder, L. Yoder). At the end of January D. St. John counted 64 on the roof of the Old Man's Cave lodge in Hocking. Most striking of all was a count of 400+ birds described by veteran observer B. Lund over Brown near Aberdeen on 2 Dec, the state's first report of over 200 of this species. 93 apparently stayed for the Ohio River CBC on the 18th.

Turkey Vulture: Some excellent numbers at southern roosts included 357 on the Athens CBC of 18 Dec; 150+ were at Athens's North Hill roost alone on 26 Dec (B. Whan *et al.*, ph). Very unusual mid-winter sightings in the north included one at the Painesville dump on 6 Jan (J. Pogacnik), two—for the second year in a row—in Trumbull on 9 Jan (D&J Hochadel), and a stunning six near Fremont on 16 Jan, admittedly the last day before real cold set in (Z. Baker). After several birds wintered last year in the CVNRA, vultures were seen there only in Dec and Feb this time (A&D Chasar). A big push came between 23 and 26 Feb, when strong winds and warmth from the south brought 22 reports of 91 birds statewide.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Apparent migrants, some of them rather early, passed through in February. **N. Barber** found one in Mayfield, *Cuyahoga*, on 5 Feb, and one lingered at East Fork SP from 5 Feb to at least 12 Feb (**B. Foppe**). Four were seen at Killdeer (**M. Warren**) on the 27th, then six there on the following day (**J. Ruedisueli**). Two were frequenting Pickerington Ponds in *Franklin* on the 28th (**R. Cressman**), where two remained as late as 1 Apr (**C. Corbin**).

Snow Goose: Numbers overwintered in the NW, particularly at Ottawa, where the ONWRC counted 45 on 2 Jan, then 29 on 6 Feb. Scattered mid-winter birds were found in the NE, with a high of 14 in the Funk area of *Wayne* on 19 Jan (**S. Snyder**). Most interesting were reports from the SW: one at Meldahl Dam on 17 Dec (**F. Renfrow**), four in *Clinton* from 4 to 16 Jan (**L. Gara**), a flight of ~200 over Spring Grove Cemetery, *Hamilton*, on 2 Feb (**C. Tucker**), a bird in *Clermont* on 9 Feb (**D. Morse**), and 10 at East Fork SP on 12 Feb (**B. Foppe**). By late Feb, migrants included 50-75 at Ottawa on 26 Feb and 49 in *Lake* on the 27th (**J. Pogacnik**).

Ross's Goose: Two individuals of this Review Species were found, both documented for the OBRC. **D. Sanders** reported one from *Fayette* on 19 Jan; this record has since been accepted. Documentation from **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** for one found in *Ottawa* near ONWR on 29 Jan has yet to be reviewed.

Tundra Swan: Over 800 birds in 28 reports. Birds apparently wintered in good numbers near Lk Erie: **C. Caldwell** counted 165 at Ottawa on 4 Dec, the **Romitos** 98 there on 2 Jan, and the **Hirises** had 38 on the Magee census of 20 Feb. The ONWRC came up with 283 on 5 Dec, 195 on 2 Jan, and 179 on 6 Feb. South of there, 19 birds on 2 Feb at Independence Dam, *Defiance*, were reported by **J. Yochum**, and 20 at Killbuck from 2 to 27 Feb (**S. Snyder**) were good numbers. Still further south, a bird at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, from 25 Jan (**D. Russell**) to 27 Jan (**H. Armstrong**) was unusual. The 18 Dec Cleveland CBC reported 124 birds, highest count in the past 60 years.

Wood Duck: Wintering woodies no longer occasion much surprise, but 10 up in *Defiance* on the cold date of 28 Jan (**J. Yochum**) raised supercilia; they were probably concentrated and sustained by open water in the rapids near Independence Dam. Warm outflow from the sewage plant on Summit St in Toledo probably allowed a drake to continue to 2 Feb (**D. Sanders, D. Burton**).

Gadwall: A count of 76 inland at Highbanks MP, *Delaware*, on 18 Dec (**J. Hammond**) was a good one. 32 luxuriating in Castalia's warm water on 21 Jan (**V. Fazio**) were no surprise, and 12 at Lake Rockwell on 1 Jan (**L. Rosche**) and three the following day in Cleveland (**C. Holt**) were coasting along in the wake of warm weather. **B. Hardesty** had one in *Hancock* on 11 Jan. Six at Killbuck on 5 Feb (**S. Snyder**) were more daring, as was one at Paint Ck SP on 16 Feb (**L. Gara**).

Eurasian Wigeon: **Brian McGuire** found one in the ONWR on 26 Feb.

American Wigeon: Southbound migrants had mostly passed before the period, but some braved our brief winter, as Jan records included two on New Year's Day in Northfield (**D&A Chasar**), four at ONWR the following day (**MA&T Romito**), a bird on the 9th, 29th, and on the 30th at Buck Ck SP (**D. Overacker**), and two at Avon Lk PP's warm waters on the 29th (**S. Zadar**). Ten were on Hoover Res, *Delaware*, on the 23rd (**R. Thorn**). **J. Yochum** had one at Independence Dam, *Defiance*, on 19 Feb, and by the last week of Feb, migrants were flooding north, as 250 at Metzger on the 28th (**J. Hammond**).

American Black Duck: This hardy species was present in normal plenitude throughout the period, numbers which included 724 at Mosquito Ck Lk on 19 Dec (**C. Babyak**), 820 at Ottawa on 2 Jan (**Romitos**), 1400+ at Castalia on 21 Jan (**V. Fazio**), and 800+ at Blendon Woods MP, *Franklin*, on 6 Feb (**R. Thorn**).

Mallard: The most abundant waterfowl species, as usual. High count by far was 16,500 on the 2 Jan ONWRC (the CBC centered there counted 27,356 that same day); on 23 Jan the **Romitos** had 8200 at the same location. **S. Snyder** reported an apparent mallard X black duck hybrid at Funk, *Wayne*, on 23 Feb.

Blue-winged Teal: The Gypsum CBC found one on 1 Jan. Warmth in late Feb ushered four to Headlands Beach SP as early as 26 Feb (**H. Petruschke**).

Northern Shoveler: A few lingered into Jan, some, such as 93 at Castalia on the 21st (**V. Fazio**), benefiting from warmer waters. Tougher birds were one in the MWW on 15 Jan (**N. Cade**), six at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, on the 23rd (**Y. Mohlman, fide B. Foppe**), one the same day at Buck Ck SP (**D. Overacker**), one at Paint Ck SP on 1 Feb (**L. Gara**), and three at Killbuck on 5 Feb (**S. Snyder**).

Northern Pintail: Lingering Dec birds topped out at 26 on the 16th at Mosquito Ck (**C. Babyak**), with CBC counts in *Seneca* and *Trumbull* in the 30s. Very scarce during the coldest days, with one at Wellington Res on 16 Jan (**C. Holt**), one at Lorain on 23 Jan (**S. Zadar**), and 12 in *Brown* on 3 Feb (**L. Gara**). Six were counted on the ONWRC of 6 Feb. Late Feb brought northbound birds, as 80 at Funk on the 27th (**S. Snyder**).

Green-winged Teal: Tenderer ducks, a few nonetheless showed up during our brief period of challenging weather: 10 were at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, on 16 Jan, then five on the 23rd (**B. Foppe**), two were at Perrysburg on 30 Jan (**M. Sweeney**), two in the CVNRA on 31 Jan (**T&M Romito**), four at Killbuck on 5 Feb (**S. Snyder**), and four at Greenlawn Dam, Columbus, on 20 Feb (**J. Dennison**).

Canvasback: The huge Sandusky Bay aggregations do not always last long, and it seemed few reporters witnessed them this year. **B. Royse** counted ~1500 at Avon Lk PP on 1 Feb, and **N. Barber** 132 at Eastlake PP on 19 Feb; by the 28th, the 600+ off Lorain (**S. Zadar**) were no doubt moving north. The Ottawa CBC on 2 Jan tallied 2235. Interesting inland records included 18 on 5 Jan at Wilmington Res (**L. Gara**), and 120 at Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 11 Feb (**F. Renfrow**).

Redhead: The 62 CBCs found a mere 45 redheads. The largest wintering flock was reported at Avon Lake PP on 29 Jan, where **S. Zadar** found ~400 birds. Most passed through quickly during the last week of February on the way north, the larger sightings being of 350 at Maumee Bay SP (**J. Hammond**) and 800+ off Lorain the following day (**S. Zadar**). The closest thing to an inland deep-winter report was of 8 at Paint Ck SP on 16 Feb (**L. Gara**).

Ring-necked Duck: Not the hardiest of ducks, this species was able to dally in warm weather: 170 were at Wellington Res, *Lorain*, on New Year's Day (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), 80 were at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton*, on 10 Jan (**D. Brinkman et al.**), and 34 on 16 Jan on S. Bass Isl (**S. Wulkowicz**). After the cold weather, only warmed water retained them, as six at Avon Lake PP on 23 Jan (**S. Zadar**), through 30 Jan (**C. Holt**). One was in the Maumee R rapids from 5-13 Feb (**E. Tramer**), but by the 27th migration was fully underway, with ~300 at Killbuck (**S. Snyder**).

Greater Scaup: Observed numbers were down in a warm winter, with ~500 at Avon Lk PP on 1 Feb (**B. Royse**) the highest count. On 22 Dec at Bayshore PP, *Lucas*, ~300 (**J. Hammond**) was a good count for the west, as were three at the Newton gravel pits, *Hamilton*, on 27 Feb (**J. Lehman**) for the SW and a male at Silver Ck MP, *Summit*, on 3 Jan (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**) inland in the NE. Statewide CBC total only 148 birds.

Lesser Scaup: Wintering birds seemed scattered, with few large concentrations. ~800 bobbed off Avon Lk PP from 29 Jan (**S. Zadar**) to 1 Feb (**B. Royse**). By late Feb returning migrants were abundant: **J. Hammond** found 3000+ mixed scaups, mostly this species, along the Bayshore PP-Maumee Bay SP shoreline on 29 Feb.

Surf Scoter: 18 reports of 25 birds. Mid-winter birds included one 16 Jan at Lakeshore MP, *Lake* (**J. Pogacnik**), one 23 Jan at Eastlake PP (**N. Barber**), and two at Avon Lk PP on 30 Jan (**E. Pierce**); latest was one at Avon Lk PP 6-12 Feb (**C. Holt et al.**).

White-winged Scoter: Few reports, but normal. All follow: two off Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 29 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), two off Bayshore PP on 30 Jan (**S. Stockford**), and four off Lakeshore MP on the latter date (**Pogacnik**). No birds of this species on the CBCs.

Black Scoter: All reports: two off Lakeshore MP on 6 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), one at Bay Village on 26 Dec (**B. Finkelstein et al.**), one on 1 Jan at Lakeshore MP (**Pogacnik**), one on 2 Jan at Bay Village (**P. Lozano et al.**), and a female on 29 Jan at Avon Lk PP (**S. Zadar**), where **E. Pierce** found a male and a female the same day. One bird on the CBCs.

Oldsquaw: In recent years likelier inland, this winter Lake Erie was the better place. All reports: 4 and 12 Dec Lakeshore MP (**J. Pogacnik**), 12 Dec Headlands Beach SP (**H. Petruschke**), 19 Dec in the CVNRA (T&MA Romito) and Huron (D&A Chasar), 20 Dec Ladue Res (**D. Ferris**), 22 Dec Cleveland (P. Lozano *et al.*), 24 Dec Fairport Hbr (**Petruschke**), 1 Jan Headlands Beach SP (**L. Rosche**, **R. Hannikman**), 18 Jan Bayshore PP (**S. Stockford**) through the 23rd (**G. Links**), and 29 Feb at Lorain (**S. Zadar**).

Bufflehead: For years, the Lake islands have claimed the record for numbers of this species, as in this period when 700+ were found on the Kelley's Isl census for 19 Dec (**T. Bartlett**), and 1502 on the Islands CBC on the 16th. On 1 Feb ~200 were off Avon Lk PP (**B. Royses**), and 60 off Eastlake on 20 Feb (**H. Petruschke**). Inland, 20 were on the Wilmington Res on 12 Jan, diminishing to four by 24 Feb (**L. Gara**).

Common Goldeneye: Observers from shore generally see only a fraction of the goldeneyes present on Lk Erie, especially this year, as ~200 off Bayshore PP on 22 Dec (**J. Hammond et al.**), 516 off S Bass Isl on 16 Jan (**S. Wulkowicz**), or ~400 off Rocky River Pk on 23 Jan (**S. Zadar**). The Toledo CBC reported 837 on 18 Dec. Three were in Columbus on 25 Jan, then nine on the 28th (**A. Froehlich**).

Hooded Merganser: High count 350 at Lk Rockwell 19-22 Dec (**L. Rosche**), a flock which diminished to a single bird by 1 Jan. After a chilly week for the holidays, decent numbers remained, but the big freeze in the second half of Jan chased most of the hoodies south. A few remained at hot water on Lk Erie, as two at Avon Lk PP on 29 Jan (**S. Zadar**) and five at Eastlake PP the following day (**C. Holt**). Remarkable numbers persisted in ice-free spillways beneath major dams in central Ohio: **R. Thorn** had 48 at Hoover Res on 23 Jan, and **A. Froehlich** 23 at Griggs Dam on the 25th.

Common Merganser: High count was ~4000 off the Bayshore PP-Maumee Bay SP shoreline on 22 Dec (**J. Hammond**, **D. Sanders**). Inland high was 10 at Buck Ck SP on 15 Jan (**D. Overacker**). 384 flew by Lakeshore MP, *Lake*, on 19 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**). Frozen nearshore water concentrated 225 at Eastlake PP on 23 Jan for **C. Holt**. Forty-five seen by the same observer on 27 Feb there were probably headed north.

Red-breasted Merganser: Good numbers of birds on Lk Erie persisted into Jan, whereupon ice pushed most out of sight until early Feb. **J. Pogacnik** counted 6788 passing Lakeshore MP over three hours on 6 Dec, while warm waters at Eastlake PP yielded **C. Holt** 350 on 23 Jan. The Elyria-Lorain CBC on 18 Dec counted 26,492. Downstate, **J. Lehman** had 25-30 at East Fork SP on 12 Dec, and **N. Cade** seven at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 18 Dec. The Cleveland CBC total of 13,036 was the highest in 60 years.

Ruddy Duck: The Cuyahoga Falls CBC found 1215 on 19 Dec. Warmer weather persuaded small numbers to linger into January, but only the boldest stuck it out through the cold period: four at Lorain on 23 Jan (**S. Zadar**), two at Avon Lk PP on 29 Jan (**Zadar**), and 11 on 25 Jan at Summit Lk (**C. Holt**).

Bald Eagle: Widely reported throughout the period. Nesting was evident in many spots, some new, by mid-Feb. The Ohio Division of Wildlife's January count yielded a record 193 eagles in 29 counties (the previous record was 149 birds in 1998), including 107 adults and 86 immatures. *Ottawa* led with the highest count, with 40 birds, and *Sandusky* was next with 39. Last year 57 nesting pairs produced 72 eaglets, the standing record.

Northern Harrier: 148 birds reported other than on CBCs. The Funk bottoms area, *Wayne*, was harrierier than others, with 33 birds on 14 Feb (**D. Bartlett**). A report of 37 on the Millersburg CBC of 18 Dec was good news, too.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: 45 birds reported other than on CBCs. **R. Harlan** regarded the species as "above expectations" in numbers.

Cooper's Hawk: 76 reported beyond CBCs. The Millersburg CBC's total of 26 was an all-time Ohio record, according to the folks at *The Bobolink*.

Northern Goshawk: Five reports, probably of four birds. **J. Pogacnik** had an imm. in the GRWA on 11 Dec. **T. Bartlett** saw one over Tiffin on 16 Jan, and **Z. Baker** one there on the 20th. One was over the Little Miami R, *Hamilton*, on 20 Feb (**D. Hadine**), and **D. St. John** reported one in Toledo's Woodlawn Cemetery on 29 Jan.

Red-shouldered Hawk: Largest numbers reported were from the NE, with next-largest from the SW; other than in some CBCs, we have disappointingly few reporters from the SE. Interesting sightings elsewhere included one along Rt 58 in Lorain on 9 Jan (**R. Harlan**, **S. Wagner**), and one north of Lancaster, *Fairfield*, on 6 Feb (**D. Sanders**, **D. Burton**). **L. Rosche** offered a summary from his *Portage/Summit* domain: "West Branch SP has at least four birds, Kent another four, Ravenna TLS had six to 10, Twin Lks another four, Stow has at least 10 and probably more, Munroe Falls has three, Cuyahoga Falls has at least six, Tallmadge at least two, Aurora (Walden) has two, Shalersville three-four, add [itional] in CVNRA and so on...the notion of a trend toward increase in this species is certainly valid."

Red-tailed Hawk: **E. Tramer** noted one sporting all-white plumage save for an orange tail near Whitehouse, *Lucas*, on 13 Feb. The eponymous tail does seem the part of this species' plumage least susceptible to albinism/leucism. Another white bird, a regular for the past few years, was south of Chardon during the period (**A. Fjeldstad**).

Rough-legged Hawk: Over 200 reported other than on CBCs, for an excellent showing by this impressive buteo. Though commoner in the state's northern half, reports reached all the way to the River—and why not, since Florida had its first state records of the species this winter? **S. Snyder et al.** found the species on 70 occasions during 23 visits to SW *Wayne* during the period. High count was 39 in The Wilds, *Muskingum*, on 21 Feb (**D. St. John**), matching the nice total for the 18 Dec Millersburg CBC.

Golden Eagle: Unprecedented numbers of documented sightings this winter (none last year), presaged by the record high numbers at fall hawk-watch sites. **H. Petruschke** photographed one on 1 Dec near Kirtland Hills, *Lake*, where only four miles distant **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** found one (and the same?) on 15 Dec—on Eagle Road as fate would have it. **B. Faber** had good looks at an imm bird in *Geauga* on 16 Dec (*vide D. Best*), and **A. Duff** photographed another in S. Chagrin during Feb (*vide K. Metcalf*). **J. Diller** reported a subad on 24 Dec at Lake La Su An WA. A young bird discovered at The Wilds, *Muskingum*, on 9 Jan (**D. St. John**) was re-found (at least a bird in the same plumage) through the period by m obs, such as **J. Bens et al.** on 27 Feb. Elsewhere, **D. Brinkman et al.** described well an imm bird near Chillicothe on 9 Feb. **D. St. John** photographed another near Lk Hope, *Vinton*, on 28 Feb. Something of the proportions of age classes of these eagles is suggested in the 31 Oct 99 records from the Holiday Beach observatory: two adults, five subadults, and 41 juveniles.



This golden eagle, flying with an American crow, was seen near Kirtland Hills, Lake Co., on 1 December 1999. Photo by Haans Petruschke.

American Kestrel: R. Sempier counted 14 at Killdeer on 18 Dec. S. Snyder tallied 21 on New Year's Day along roads in *Holmes* and *Tuscarawas*. The Wilmot CBC had an impressive 111 on 18 Dec.

Merlin: A stunning 29 reports beyond those on CBCs. L. Rosche took the prize for reports by an individual, with one on 18 Dec at Wildwood Pk, on 2 Jan a male at Fairport Hbr, and on 8 Jan a female there. One was found dead in Galena, *Delaware*, on 17 Dec (P. Schiff). A bird may have stayed a while at Spring Grove Cem in *Hamilton*, with reports from 23 Dec (D. Russell) to at least 16 Jan (H. Armstrong). E. Pierce reported what may be a new *Summit* winter roost; a bird has been seen two years running at a golf course in Cuyahoga Falls. The Hoffmans remarked the Cleveland CBC tallied more merlins (5) than kestrels (4) this year, marking a new record during the past 60 years, during which the species was reported in only four counts.

Peregrine Falcon: By late winter it is not possible to separate local or regional introduced birds from wild ones; the former are certainly in the majority. Twenty-three were reported other than on CBCs. A pair inspected a church steeple in Sandusky on 22 Dec (M. Warren) continuing through the period (S. Young), and one in Nelsonville, *Athens*, on 25 Feb was interesting (D. St. John), as were birds at the Tri-Valley WA on 17 Dec (J. McCormac) and one in downtown Coshocton on 22 Feb (S. Johnson, *vide* R. Johnson).

Wild Turkey: Our usual contributors reported over a thousand birds for the period. Veteran J. Fry said they were "everywhere" in *Hocking*, with separate flocks, for example, of 27, 27, and 11 noted over one January day.

Northern Bobwhite: Six were in the MWW on 29 Jan (M. Busam *et al.*), but only one was noted on the *Adams* CBC of 18 Dec. High count among the 44 seen on CBCs was 16 at Killdeer, where bobwhites, one must admit, are of dubious origin at best.

Virginia Rail: Three were discovered at a traditional spot in *Holmes*, a spring-fed wetland, and duly counted on the 18 Dec Millersburg CBC.

American Coot: Remained in good numbers with warm temperatures, as ~450 on 1 Jan at Wellington Res, *Lorain* (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Lingered during the coldest weather, too, even at unusual locations: 12 at Rocky River Pk on 23 Jan (S. Zadar), 20 at Avon Lk PP on 29 Jan (Zadar), 17 at Eastlake PP on 30 Jan (C. Holt), 53 at Lk Rockwell, *Portage*, 5 Feb (L. Rosche), 41 at Lake Buckhorn, *Holmes*, on 9 Feb (S. Snyder). By 2/28 they were back in force as migrants, as ~500 at Metzger Marsh WA (J. Hammond).

Sandhill Crane: 838 birds reported in December outside of CBCs. Two near Lk Ladue (perhaps those tracked last season) were seen as late as 1 Jan (A. Fjeldstadt). One stayed from 17 Oct to at least the end of the period in Toledo (J. Loughman, m obs), and may have been the one seen at Bayshore PP from time to time, as on 27 Dec (B. Morrison *et al.*). Seventeen birds were reported by the Wooster CBC on 19 Dec. By the last week of Feb, small groups of two to eight birds had been reported at six locations on their way back, the latest of which was three birds over Spring Valley WA on the 29th (P. Niehoff).

Killdeer: Good Dec numbers seemed inevitable this season, and were topped by 181 at Cowan Lk on the 8th (E. Roush). CBC reports totaled 510. Some toughed it out later, as three at Beach City WA (P. Rosenberry) on 2 Jan, five on 24 Jan at Perrysburg (M. Sweeney), and three on the Maumee R on 29 Jan (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Southerly winds brought many back the last week of Feb, the largest number 15 at Toussaint WA, *Ottawa*, on the 26th (V. Fazio).

Greater Yellowlegs: Not too surprisingly, reports were of one at the Newton bottoms, *Hamilton*, as late as 26 Dec (N. Keller *et al.*), and one near Milford, *Hamilton*, on the following day (*vide* D. Morse). One had returned to Turtle Ck by 26 Feb (V. Fazio).

Lesser Yellowlegs: No Dec reports, as is routine, but two were quite early returnees at Turtle Ck, *Ottawa*, on 26 Feb (V. Fazio).

Least Sandpiper: Late migrants concentrated at Buck Ck SP, *Clark*, where D. Overacker found four on 4-5 Dec, then three on 18 Dec.

Pectoral Sandpiper: The last southbound bird was reported on 3 Dec at Lost Ck Res, *Allen* (J. Ruedisueli), and the first northbound at Turtle Ck on 26 Feb (V. Fazio).

Purple Sandpiper: Two were seen at Headlands Beach SP on 5 Dec (H. Petruschke). Two were at Conneaut harbor on 9 Jan (J. Pogacnik).

Common Snipe: Some snipes overwintered, as would be expected in mild weather, such as two along the Little Miami R on 2 Feb (J. Rakestraw). One on 9 Jan in the GRWA was a beneficiary of the weather (J. Pogacnik). Total of 92 on CBCs. By 27 Feb at Maumee Bay SP (V. Fazio) and the 28th at Killdeer (J. Hammond) migrants had returned.

American Woodcock: Warm weather induced birds to stay till 12 Dec at Lakeshore MP, *Lake* (J. Pogacnik), till 20 Dec at Salt Fork SP (R. Kolde), and even till 1 Jan in *Geauga* (A. Fondrk). By the last week of Feb, returnees were flooding into the state, with 11 reports between the 23rd and the 26th.

Pomarine Jaeger: J. Pogacnik reported two offshore from *Lake*, on 16 Jan and 23 Jan. T. LePage noted one at Edgewater in Cleveland on 9 Jan. The few jaegers reported this winter in nearby states, even Kentucky (!), were said to be pomarines when identifiable.

Jaeger sp.: A bird seen 19 Dec at Buck Ck SP by D. Overacker was very interesting, latest of a wave of pelagic birds well south of Lk Erie; documentation is with the OBRC.

Laughing Gull: A first-winter bird on 8 Dec in Lake was very late even for a warm winter, but unequivocally described (S. Zadar, D. Kriska). There are fewer than a dozen other Dec records of this species.

Franklin's Gull: Two imm. birds were seen by J. Pogacnik at Pymatuning Res on 11 Dec.

Little Gull: One report during the species' mid-winter lull, an adult at Conneaut harbor on 9 Jan (J. Pogacnik).

Bonaparte's Gull: One remained in alternate plumage at Eastlake PP on 8 Dec (S. Zadar). Inland, Mosquito Lk hosted good numbers, with ~500 on 7 Dec (D&J Hochadel) and 608 on the 19th (C. Babyak). Still further south, F. Renfrow estimated 150 at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 15 Dec. The Firelands CBC had over 30 thousand on 18 Dec. Just before the harsh weather closed in, the *Hirises* counted 30 at Magee on 16 Jan, and S. Wulkowicz four near S. Bass Isl the same day. Latest seen were at Eastlake PP on 23 Jan, where N. Barber had one and C. Holt three.

Ring-billed Gull: On 11 Dec, with rare north winds, titanic numbers of gulls, nearly all this species, were just offshore several miles east and west of Avon Lake. Counting methods collapse in the face of such gatherings, and vantage points were intermittent at best, but one estimate was of 250K to half a million gulls, a goodly proportion of the Lake's population of ring-billeds (J. Hammond *et al.*). C. Holt ventured a guess of "tens of thousands" at Cleveland even on 2 Jan, a day when winds were southerly and the temperature there reached 62°F. To the south, F. Renfrow estimated 3500 at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, on 11 Feb.

Ring-billed Gull hybrids: J. Pogacnik and V. Urbanski found an apparent adult ring-billed X laughing gull cross at Lorain on 18 Dec (written details from Pogacnik).

Thayer's Gull: A difficult species, with early appearances this winter, and not many. J. Pogacnik had a first-winter bird on 6 Dec at Lakeshore MP and adults there on 1, 16, and 30 Jan. N. Barber found a first-winter bird at Lorain on 23 Dec, relocated by Pogacnik on the 26th and again by Barber and I. Kerns the following day.

Iceland Gull: December birds were reported at Avon Lake PP on the 12th (first-winter, S. Zadar), at Headlands Beach SP on the 27th (imm, B. Winger *et al.*), and at Lakeshore MP on the 29th (J. Pogacnik). The latter observer had others there on 15 Jan (first-winter) and 19 Jan (adult). Barber found a first-winter at Eastlake PP on 23 Jan, where C. Holt reported one on 9 Feb. The only western basin report was from Bayshore PP on 2 Feb (D. Sanders, D. Burton). S. Wulkowicz had one on 24 and 29 Feb on S. Bass Isl.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Thirty reports, perhaps of ~20 birds. Most reports were in Dec and Jan in the Lake's central basin, but the Toledo CBC counted a record eight on 19 Dec, and the following inland reports were notable: one near Best Lk in *Geauga* on 1 Jan (**K. Metcalf**), an adult at Oberlin Res, *Lorain*, on 16 Jan (**C. Holt**), and a second-winter bird at Greenlawn Dam in Columbus 14-15 Feb (**A. Goloda**, ph).

Great Black-backed Gull: 49 passed by Lakeshore MP on 1 Jan, and 117 on 30 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**). **S. Zadar** tallied 80 at Avon Lake PP and 120 at Rocky River Pk on 23 Jan.

Glaucous Gull: A weak showing, but the weather was not propitious for boreal gulls. Ten reports were received, eight of them during the three-week cold period when ice concentrated gull gatherings. The others were of one at Lakeshore MP on 4 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**) and an adult bird at Eastlake PP on 30 Dec (**B. Winger et al.**).

Black-legged Kittiwake: Not unknown along the Ohio River in winter, one showed up on 4 Dec at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont*, for **F. Renfrow**, and remained until at least 24 Jan (**D. Graham**, *vide B. Foppe*).

Barn Owl: Two reports came from *Holmes*: one or two birds wintering and helping out the Millersburg CBC of 18 Dec, and a bird seen at another site through 11 Dec, then presumably the same individual on 26 Feb.

Snowy Owl: Very scarce again. One was seen at the Bayshore PP on the Toledo CBC of 19 Dec, and was rumored to have remained for some time, though out of sight save for those allowed to enter the area. Only one report last winter, too.

Long-eared Owl: **J. Pogacnik** had three in *Trumbull* on 29 Jan. As many as nine were repeatedly scrutinized by mobs at Killdeer throughout the latter part of the period.



Arriving on 4 December 1999, this black-legged kittiwake entertained (or frustrated) numerous observers at the Meldahl Dam, *Clermont Co.*, through 24 January 2000. Photo by Frank Renfrow (10 December 1999).

Short-eared Owl: 38 reports totaling about 150 birds were received other than from CBCs. Numbers at *The Wilds*, where a one-day count of 83 was made last winter, seemed well down by all accounts until **D. St. John**, with permission to visit areas closed to the public, tallied 59 on 21 Feb. Elsewhere, the high count was only eight along *Veler Rd* in the ONWR on 28 Feb (**R. Harlan**, **S. Wagner**). An unusual report from overdeveloped *Franklin* came from **S. Borgwald**, who found a bird near the city airport on 4 Feb.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Few reported in Ohio vs. elsewhere, where in addition to a record southbound migration they were found wintering well north into Canada. **M. Busam** found one at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler*, on 15 Jan. A bird, perhaps the one found at the same location last winter, spent some days at Sheldon Marsh SNP after its discovery on 21 Jan by **M. Warren**. A grand total of one found on the 62 CBCs, a bird at Mohican discovered by **J. Herman**.

Belted Kingfisher: Braving Lake Erie's ice and spray were one on 23 Jan at Eastlake PP (**N. Barber**, **C. Holt**) and one in *Lake* on 30 Jan (**H. Petruschke**).

Red-headed Woodpecker: High CBC count was 36 from Millersburg, *Holmes*.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: The Cleveland CBC had 72, the highest count in 60 years.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: Nine were reported during the depth (narrow as it was) of the winter, with a high count of five at Spring Grove Cemetery, *Hamilton*, on 23 Jan (**M. Busam et al.**). 86 on CBCs, most in the southern counties.

Downy Woodpecker: The *Holmes* CBCs had nearly 900 between them.

Hairy Woodpecker: The *Holmes* CBCs came up with 30% of the state total.

Northern Flicker: 226 were on the Millersburg CBC tally-sheet for 18 Dec. One wintered way up in *Lake*, at **J. Pogacnik**'s feeder.

Pileated Woodpecker: Largest CBC numbers where else but *Holmes*, where the Millersburg team counted 103 on 18 Dec.

Eastern Phoebe: These birds can survive a cold season by subsisting on winter stoneflies. One at Clear Fork Res, *Richland/Morrow*, on 19 Dec found by **C. Holt** may have retreated south later, as may have one found on the MWW by **N. Cade** on 15 Jan, but two birds were reported during the worst winter weather: **B. Placier** had one in *Hocking* on 23 Jan, and **J. Faulkner** reported another roosting, apparently on its former nest site, at 10°F on 24 Jan in *Perry*.

Loggerhead Shrike: Two reports only, but that's good for this species in winter these days. **J. McCormac** found one (ph) in Woodbury WA on 17 Dec, and **L. Powlick** another in *Union* two days later.

Northern Shrike: Reports of this species, arising from at least 15 counties, exceeded by ~50% those of last winter's excellent 25+ reports. **L. Rosche** took the honors, with eight birds seen in *Portage, Lake*, and *Geauga* during the period. **J&D Hochadel** found five widely-spaced in *Trumbull*. A bird in Mt. Hope, *Holmes*, apparently had returned for the fifth consecutive year (**L. Yoder**, **S. Snyder**). Furthest south was a northern reported on 12 Feb at Spring Valley WA, *Greene*, by **R. Kolde et al.** and found as late as the 18th by **K. Beal**, who, interestingly enough, had reported a shrike sp. there on 12 Nov.

Blue Jay: That significant numbers of our wintering jays are Canadian breeders is suggested by a single-day record count of 121,000 southbound birds at Holiday Beach Migration Observatory in Ontario 25 Sept 1999.

American Crow: Growing urban roosts, only gradually being discovered, are the big story for this species. **G. Carey** estimated 60-80,000 headed SE over Cincinnati on 2 Jan. **F. Renfrow** reckoned that the Cincinnati roost had shifted 2 mi NE to I-71 and Victory Parkway this year. **J. Herman** estimated 17,000 at the Mansfield roost for the local 18 Dec CBC.

Horned Lark: The species became especially evident during the snowbound weeks when it resorted to roadsides and blown-out ridges in fields. **N. Barber** had ~150 in *Geauga* on 17 Jan, and **P. Wharton** a veritable exaltation of larks—around 400—along E. Miami Rd in *Hamilton* on 27 Jan.

Tree Swallow: **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** reported their earliest ever of the species on 28 Feb at Magee, not a record for the state but significantly early all the same.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Breaking previous records for late occurrence by this species—no fewer than four times in a row—were one on 3 Dec at Maumee Bay SP (**D&K Glauser**), probably the same bird on 5 Dec there (**J. McCoy**), then a bird on 11 Dec on the Maumee R, *Lucas* (**E. Tramer**), apparently refound the following day there by **T. Kemp**. **Tramer** remarked that “the bird stayed mostly over the enriched relatively warm water carrying the effluent of the County Wastewater Treatment Plant...it appeared the bird was feeding on small midges.” The previous late record for Ohio was 15 Nov 1972, and October departures have been normal for the species. This winter, it was reported in Texas as late as 15 Jan.

Black-capped Chickadee: The **Romitos** counted 30 along Ira Rd in the CVNRA on 6 Dec. The species invaded the south this season—far enough to give Kentucky a new state record, and where birds remain in April—and the maximum count of invaders here was eight in Sugarcreek, *Holmes*, on 11 Dec (**E. Schlabach**).

Tufted Titmouse: A count of 111 was a new record for the Toledo CBC.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Autumn’s huge movement of this species eventually involved areas to our south, so record Ohio numbers were not achieved. As the period wore on, however, substantial numbers of nuthatches devoted themselves to reliable food sources such as feeders statewide. High counts continued at Spring Grove Cemetery in *Hamilton*, as 20 on 19 Dec (**N. Cade**), and 15 on 9 Jan (**M. Busam**), while in *Trumbull* **D. Hochadel** called them “as common as I can ever recall.” Some ratios of numbers of r-b nuthatches per CBC over recent winters: 92/93—2.48; 93/94—5.92; 94/95—1.30; 95/96—6.62; 96/97—0.91; 98/99—1.18; and this winter 6.37.

Brown Creeper: High count at a single site was 7 at Ottawa by the **Romitos** on 2 Jan. The CBC total was 379 statewide.

Carolina Wren: Some ratios of Carolina wrens per CBC over some recent winters: 93/94—40.21; 94/95—18.97; 95/96—24.49; 96/97—26.98; 98/99—44.73; and this winter 28.91.

Marsh Wren: The N. Lorain CBC found one on 18 Dec, and the Toledo CBC one on the following day.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: High count three in Athens 1 Jan (**D. St. John**). A late bird was detected at Headlands Beach SP on 11 Dec (**K. Metcalf**). Twenty-one were found statewide on the CBCs.

Eastern Bluebird: An excellent year, with over five thousand statewide on CBCs.

Hermit Thrush: Reports from 11 southern counties, with a high count of seven at Old Man’s Cave SP, *Hocking*, on 8 Jan (**D. St. John**). CBC counts were way down; the Lk Erie Islands CBC had 30 last winter in traditional haunts, and only one this time.

American Robin: Very good numbers persisted through the cold weeks. The Cincinnati CBC had 8234 on 27 Dec, and **L. Rosche** and **R. Hannikman** found 1000+ in the dunes (!) at Headlands Beach SP on 29 Jan.

Gray Catbird: Surprisingly few reports of this half-hardy species during a warm winter; one was found at Killdeer on 30 Jan by **T. Vince**. Only four total from the CBCs, three of them from the Wilmot count.

Northern Mockingbird: Gradually regaining ground to the north, encouraged by warm winters. The editor’s backyard bird first broke into full song on 24 Feb, nearly a month earlier than last year. Some selected novel sightings: four at Lake View Cemetery, Cleveland, on 18 Dec (**D&J Hoffman**), one on 18 Dec at Eastlake PP (**L. Rosche**), and one in downtown Lorain on 9 Jan (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**). The Cleveland CBC found nine mockingbirds, their highest count over the past 60 years.

Brown Thrasher: One was in Eastlake on 18 Dec (**L. Rosche**). A bird was reported at the feeder of **C. Ignasiak** in Cleveland on 26 and 27 Jan (*vide Rosche*), then again during cold weather in Feb. One was described from near Sugarcreek, *Holmes*, on 29 Jan (**L. Schlabach**).

European Starling: **F. Renfrow** estimated 100,000 along I-71 in Cincinnati on 7 Jan.

American Pipit: Small numbers of birds showed up well past their usual schedule. Later in Dec were six at Spring Valley WA on the 16th (**J. Rakestraw**) and four on Kelley’s Isl on the 19th (**T. Bartlett**). The Wilmot CBC reported 200 on 18 Dec. Unusual were seven January birds: one at Lorain on the 8th (**L. Aldrich**), 11 at Pleasant Hill Lk, *Ashland/Richland*, on the 14th (**J. Herman**), one on the 24th at Perrysburg, *Lucas* (**M. Sweeney**), and there on the 29th (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**), then four on the 29th in *Buller* (**M. Busam et al.**). Returnees were on schedule, with eight at Maumee Bay SP on 27 Feb (**V. Fazio**) and one at Ottawa on the 28th (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**).

Bohemian Waxwing: **K. Metcalf** picked one out of a flock of cedar waxwings at N. Chagrin MP on 12 Dec, but regrettably it was not rediscovered, nor were others reported in the state, despite massive incursions in New England and the Upper Midwest this winter. Documentation is with the OBRC.

Cedar Waxwing: Good numbers this season. Larger flocks included 716 on the 18 Dec Millersburg CBC, 547 on the Grand Rapids-Waterville CBC on 26 Dec, ~300 in *Tuscarawas* on 28 Dec (**L. Rosche**), 200 on 22 Jan at Secrest Arboretum, *Wayne* (**L. Yoder**), ~200 in *Perry* on 24 Jan (**J. Faulkner**), ~200 south of Medina 29 Jan (**G. DeMars**), and ~100 in the CVNRA on 21 Feb (**T&MA Romito**).

Orange-crowned Warbler: In this unusually warm winter, reports of this species are not unthinkable. **N. Cade** reported one at Spring Grove Cemetery on 1 Jan, but still more unusual was another at Old Woman Creek SNP, *Erie*, on 20 Jan (**P. Lozano**).

Yellow-rumped Warbler: About a hundred birds reported other than on CBCs, significantly including **D. St. John**’s high count of 56 in the Zaleski SF, *Vinton*, on 4 Jan. There were 645 statewide on the CBCs.

Pine Warbler: One was found and documented by **R. Miller** for the Ragersville CBC, *Holmes*, on 28 Dec.

Palm Warbler: The diligent birders of the Ragersville CBC found and documented *two* palm warblers on 28 Dec, one by **R. Schlabach** and one by **L. Schlabach**.

Common Yellowthroat: A good find was a female/imm at Metzger Marsh WA on 13 Dec (**R. Harlan, S. Wagner**).

Eastern Towhee: More northerly reports included one 12 Dec in *Hocking* (**J. Fry**), one 5 Jan at Killdeer (**J&L Day**), and one on 20 Jan at Beach City WA (**W.P. Rosenberry**); **B. Hardesty** had a bird in her Findlay yard 13 and 25 Jan, and the **Romitos** had two in the CVNRA on 13 Feb.

American Tree Sparrow: Big counts included 300+ in Shalersville Twp, *Portage*, by **L. Rosche** on 19 Feb, and 500+ at Killdeer on 26 Feb by **B. Royse**.

Chipping Sparrow: Reports spanned the period. **S. Landes** had a bird frequenting his feeder in *Franklin* on 6 Dec, the Toledo CBC discovered a bird in Woodlawn Cemetery on 19 Dec, and **R. Kolde** reported one in *Hamilton* on 28 Jan.

Field Sparrow: Not so uncommon to the south usually (witness 18 reported by **D. St. John** from the Zaleski SF, *Vinton*, on 4 Jan), we had unusual numbers in the north. **R. Harlan** and **S. Wagner** found four at Silver Lk MP, *Marion*, on 8 Jan, and **L. Rosche** three at Lk George, *Portage*, on the following day. **J. Pogacnik** had one at the GRWA on 29 Jan. **L. Deininger** found birds on 25 and 29 Jan in *Coshoc-ton*. Ten found by **Rosche** on 19 Feb in Shalersville Twp, *Portage*, made up the high count.

Vesper Sparrow: Unexpected was one videotaped by **L. Rosche** in Shalersville Twp on 19 Feb; overwintering is a more likely explanation in this instance than premature movement north. Only one CBC bird, from the 2 Jan Kingston count.

Savannah Sparrow: Ohio appeared to be a winter vacation spot for savannahs. Ten reports, seven of them in the state's northern half, were received other than from CBCs. Of two found in *Holmes* on 19 Dec and following days, **L. Yoder** remarked that they "fed on cracked corn put out for horned larks during cold snowy period; disappeared when weather moderated." Perhaps these birds retreated south, but one on 3 Feb in *Wadsworth* (**J. Wert**, *fide* **L. Rosche**) apparently toughed it out for a most unusual record. Another extraordinary find was 12 birds near *Ragersville* on 19 Jan (**R. Schlabach**), some of over 50 reported in *Holmes* during the period.

Fox Sparrow: Their early spring and late fall appearances inspire confidence they can survive an Ohio winter, and the one just past must have been a piece of cake. Thirty-two reports, other than from CBCs, suggest this. **M. Busam** called them "almost regular" at *Gilmore Ponds*, citing three to four birds present during the coldest period, between 15 Jan and 6 Feb. Northerly mid-winter reports included one in *Sagamore Hills* 12 Dec (**D&A Chasar**), one on 8 Jan at *Lorain* (**S. Landes**) and another 22 Jan at *Sheldon Marsh* SNP (**P. Lozano**).

Song Sparrow: On 2 Jan, the **Romitos** kept track of finds at *Ottawa* totaling 33 birds. Over seven thousand reported from the CBCs.

Swamp Sparrow: Many reports. Traditionally scarcest in the NE quadrant, 26 birds were reported there, with 12 at *Lorain* on 20 Feb (**S. Zadar**), seven in the *CVNRA* on 3 Jan (**T&MA Romito**), and three at *Lk George*, *Portage*, on 3 Jan (**L. Rosche**). Highest CBC count was 195 at *ONWR* on 2 Jan.

White-throated Sparrow: Mostly single-digit reports for this hardy species, other than CBC compilations. The **Romitos** did count 15 along *Ira Rd* in the *CVNRA* on 21 Feb. CBC numbers were down about a third from last year's.

Harris's Sparrow: **J. Beechy** carefully observed a short stay by one in *Saltillio*, *Holmes*, on 9 Jan. Documentation is with the *OBRC*.

White-crowned Sparrow: Our other regular *Zonotrichia* sparrow seemed inexplicably scarce as well, judging by reports. Though **L. Rosche** found 30 in *Mahoning* on 20 Dec, most observers reported only handfuls at best, and **J. Fry** reported no white-crowns or white-throats at his well-stocked and famously bird-friendly rural *Hocking* feeders during the period. This said, the CBC numbers were down only a bit from last year's, much aided as they were by a record-setting 1070 from the *Millersburg* team.

Dark-eyed Junco: Normal numbers present. **D. St. John** counted 200+ along five to six miles of *SR 83* in *Morgan* on 21 Jan, and **L. Rosche** 120+ in *Shalersville Twp* on 19 Feb. Over 15 thousand CBC reports.

Lapland Longspur: Well-distributed in glaciated Ohio, and more easily discovered during snowbound periods, large concentrations appeared only with staging migrants in late Feb, as 126 in *Marion* on the 26th (**D. St. John**), 2100 over *MBSP* on the 27th (**V. Fazio**), and ~750 near *Killdeer* on the 29th (**B. Royse**). The CBC's found only 23 statewide.

Snow Bunting: Plentiful and widely reported. Many reported from the northern counties, with 50+ in a flock in *Cuyahoga* 17 Jan (**N. Barber**) and a flock of ~500 persisting through Jan just west of *Antwerp*, *Paulding* (**D& M Dunakin**). The *ONWRC* had 256 on 5 Dec, ~600 on 2 Jan, and 268 on 6 Feb. Smaller numbers well to the south included two or more near *Oxford* on 24 Jan (**D. Russell**), one in *Butler* 29 Jan (**M. Busam et al.**) and three in *Hueston Wds* SP on 5 Feb (**N. Cade**).

Indigo Bunting: A first February record for Ohio was set by an apparent female, well described, that frequented the feeder of **B. Royse** in *Columbus* on 17 and 18 Feb and 27 Feb. By April it became clear that the bird was probably a male, as blue feathering emerged in mid-month. Closest record was one seen in *Cincinnati* on 29 Jan 1960 by **Worth Randle**. **Royse's** bird remained as of this writing, 19 April.

Dickcissel: **M. Barkman** found one near *New Bedford*, *Coshocton*, on 19 Dec and was probably the same individual which was tallied on the *Ragersville* CBC on 28 Dec. This bird remained through the end of the period.

Red-winged Blackbird: Widely wintering, usually in small numbers, though **L. Yoder** reported 350-400 on 14 Jan in *Holmes*, and the *ONWRC* 751 on 6 Feb. By 22 Feb large flocks—such as ~10,000 seen by **S. Snyder** in *Wayne*—were returning.

Eastern Meadowlark: **D. Best** reported four from *Geauga* on 1 Jan, where wintering meadowlarks can be scarce. High count for single occasions was 30+ on *The Wilds*, *Muskingum*, on 25 Feb (**J. Larson**), which may well include spring migrants.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: Two came to feeders at *Pearson MP*, *Lucas*, on 1 Feb (**B. Place**). One was near *Stange Rd* in *Lucas* on 27 Feb close to the probable nesting sites of last year (**S. Stockford**). A male was seen well with a flock of two to three thousand other blackbirds in *Holmes* on 28 Feb (**A. Erb**).

Rusty Blackbird: Reports after mid-Jan were surprisingly numerous: ~300 in *Holmes* on 15 Jan (**L. Yoder**); one at *Mosquito Lk* WA on 19 Jan (**C. Babyak**); one on 23 Jan, two on the 29th, and three on the 30th at *Buck Ck* SP (**D. Overacker**); one at *Gilmore Ponds*, *Butler*, on the 30th (**M. Busam**); and six near *Ottawa* on 2 Feb (**D. Sanders**, **D. Burton**). By 26 Feb, **V. Fazio** observed ~1400 at *Magee*.

Brewer's Blackbird: A nice find was 15 in *Athens* on 18 Dec (**A. Barber**). One appeared at a feeder in *Holmes* on several days near 25 Jan (**T. Yoder**).

Common Grackle: Seen throughout the period, generally in smaller numbers in the north and larger ones to the south. ~300 were counted by the *ONWRC* on 6 Feb. **S. Snyder** witnessed a spring migrant flock in *Wayne* on 22 Feb, estimating it a ~90,000 strong; a lot of birds, but dwarfed by counts of ~200,000 made in the same county up to 20 Dec (**M. Weaver**); where they spent the meantime remains a mystery.

Purple Finch: Most reports in Dec and early Jan, with larger numbers in the southwest. On CBCs, 322 statewide were dominated by 118 in *Adams*. Highest count in the northeast was five on 9 Jan at *Lk George*, *Portage* (**L. Rosche**). **B. Stanley** had 30 at *East Fork* SP, *Clermont*, on 5 Dec. **J. Fry** had the most consistent counts, made at his *Hocking* feeders; here, with a high count of eight, the species appeared on six days in Dec beginning on the 19th, 18 days in Jan, and 21 days in Feb.

Red Crossbill: Generally scarce and flighty. All reports: a small flock at *Woodlawn Cem* in *Toledo* reached an early peak of four birds on 3 Dec (**G. Links**). Three in *Spring Grove Cemetery*, *Hamilton*, on 16 Jan (**D. Styer**) remained on the 27th (**N. Cade**). In less marmoreal settings, **J. Pogaenik** had three at *Lake-shore MP*, *Lake*, on 23 Jan. **A. Raber** found a female in *Holmes* on 9 Dec. **J. Fry** had fairly faithful birds at his *Hocking* feeders on 24, 26, and 31 Jan, and on 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 19 Feb, with a high count of 13 on 18 Feb.

White-winged Crossbill: A good incursion. Numbers were never large (high count was 30+ at *Woodlawn Cem* in *Toledo*, by **D. Linzell et al.** on 11 Dec), the species apparently having overshot Ohio to show up in places like *Dallas*, TX and southernmost *Virginia* this winter. The *Woodlawn* flock was noted by **J. McCoy** on 5 Dec through a single female, and a male seen there on 29 Jan led **R. Harlan** to observe that it seemed to be acting territorial. This species has nested in all months of the year in its normal range. *Spring Grove Cemetery* had a flock numbered at 16 on 20 Dec (**D. Brinkman**, ph) and but one on 16 Feb (**D. Russell**). A *Columbus cemetery*, *Green Lawn*, got into the act with three beginning on 26 Dec (**R. Cressman**), later repeatedly seen or repeatedly missed by m obs. Other small flocks were more fickle, including a male at an *Athens* feeder on 13 Dec (**A. Wells**) (the last reported here, a specimen, was 20 Dec 1965), one in *Clark* on 8 Jan (**D. Overacker**), ~15 at *hemlocks* in *Columbus* on 27 Jan (**B. Conlon**), and four more on 31 Jan on the *OSU campus* (**D. Horn**). Several remained on 13 Apr in *Cleveland Hts* (**K. Metcalf**). Wild food favorites were most often *hemlock cones*, with *sweetgum balls* a distant second.

Common Redpoll: Some big flocks in the northern part of the state appeared, such as 212 in *Ashtabula* on 12 Dec (**J. Pogaenik**) and ~150 at *Eastlake PP* on 9 Dec (**D. Sanders**, **D. Burton**). The species reached *Oklahoma* by Jan this year, so reports from further south in Ohio were not surprising, as one in *Wester-ville*, *Franklin*, on 17 Feb (**D. Linzell**), one at *Lk Hope* SP, *Vinton*, on 25 Jan (**D. St. John**), and even at *East Fork* SP, *Clermont*, on 5 Dec (**B. Stanley**). On 26 Feb at *Lakeshore MP*, *Lake*, **J. Pogaenik** noticed his first redpolls since Jan, three of them, one in full song; he was still seeing two at his feeder on 9 Apr.

Pine Siskin: E. Tramer justly described its abundance thus: "present in moderate numbers. Not a huge irruption year, but a nice showing." Present across the northern tier of counties (except apparently in Lake, where Pogacnik's oft-visited feeders featured no siskins this winter), with high count of ~75 at Woodlawn Cem, Toledo, on 11 Dec (D. Linzell *et al.*), but relatively few reached the south, as three on 3 Dec in Clinton (L. Gara). J. Fry had siskins at his Hocking feeders each day from 20 Oct into March.

Evening Grosbeak: Not numerous, and many of the reports from points south. Mohican SP was the most reliable spot, where B&A Toneff found three on 29 Dec, and others found birds through 23 Feb (S. Snyder, L. Yoder), with a high count of 15 on 6 Feb (D. Sanders). Eleven were seen by the Beaver Valley CBC team on 18 Dec. The other reports spanned a ten-day period during the coldest part of the season: a female at a Vinton feeder on 25 Jan (D. St. John), two in Zaleski SF on 27 Jan (St. John), eight for several days in Hocking beginning 30 Jan (B. Hatfield), and two in Summit on 4 Feb (B. Kaplan).

EXOTICS:

Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*: On 22 Dec two unidentified swans were reported at the Camp Dennison gravel pits, Hamilton, by W. Hull. On 22 Jan, Y. Mohlman identified a swan at this location as of this species, and subsequently sent documentation to the OBRC. Other local birders studied the bird closely, and were unable to find signs of captivity; they and others continued research into this individual and the species' occurrence in North America. The species has been accepted by the records committees of California, Oregon, and Quebec, based on appearances in these locations. On 6 Feb the bird had disappeared, but was refound in a pond in Milford (H. Armstrong, ph). Most recently, it—or a bird eerily like it—appeared in a pond in SW Warren (J. Lehman). Other whoopers have been reported in the region in Iowa (two occasions), N. Dakota, and Indiana over the past six months. Lehman reported on 3 Mar that the latest thinking is that some or all of these birds are those that reportedly escaped from a suburb of Rockford, Illinois, where five cygnets were born to captive parents in 1998. Nevertheless, the bird was widely admired and profitably studied. It was at one point in time possible to see five species of swans in the Cincinnati area this winter, only one of them—tundra swan—probably present at a time and place it should have been.



After leaving the Camp Dennison gravel pits, these two swans (trumpeter on left, whooper on right) reappeared in a pond near Milford on 6 February 2000. Photo by Hank Armstrong.

CORRIGENDA: In the Autumn 1999 issue, a 3 October report of yellow-throated warbler is incorrect; this sighting involved a common yellowthroat, and is hence perhaps of less interest. Inattentive editors would make fewer mistakes of this sort, as Bob Roysse pointed out, if we used the less ambiguous and more appropriate name "Sycamore warbler" for the former. In the same issue, an 8 Aug date for a pine siskin at a Trumbull feeder was in error; the actual date was a more mundane 8 Oct. In our omnibus issue for last winter, recently sent to subscribers, the report of 650 ruddy ducks at Bresler Res and 350 at Metzger Res (both Allen) on 12 Feb 1999 is erroneous; the date should be 12 Dec 1999.

CONTRIBUTORS: Lynn Aldrich, Chuck Anderson, Matt Anderson, Kiley Andre, Lynda Andrews, Hank Armstrong, Carole Babyak, Zac Baker, Andy Barber, Nick Barber, Mose Barkman, Tom Bartlett, Eric Baumgardner, Kathy Beal, Chris Bedel, Jacob Beechy, Joe Bens, Byron Berger, Dan Best, Adam Blank, Elmer Benkamp, Steven Borgwald, Bill Bosstic, Richard Bradley, Judy Bradt-Barnhart, Victoria Brannen, David A. Brinkman, Lori Brumbaugh, Nancy Brundage, Don Burtle, Don Burton, Mike Busam, Mary Butts, Neill Cade, Craig Caldwell, Granville Carey, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Bob Conlon, Bill Creasey, Rich Cressman, Donna Daniel, Leo Deininger, Gordon DeMars, Jen Dennison, Jon Diller, David Dister, Adam Duff, Doug Dunakin, Micki Dunakin, Eric Durbin, Arlen Erb, Bob Faber, Joe Faulkner, Duane Ferris, Bob Finkelstein, Anders Fjelstad, Bob Foppe, Howard Fradkin, August Froehlich, Larry Gara, Phil Gingrich, Tami Gingrich, Delores Glauser, Kent Glauser, Adam Goloda, Laura Gooch, Jeff Grabmeier, Frank Greenland, David Hadine, Stan Hadine, Joe Hammond, Betty Hardesty, Rob Harlan, Stephen Harvey, Becky Hatfield, Jim Haw, Jim Heflich, Helen Hendrickson, John Herman, Tom Hissong, Dave Hochadel, Judy Hochadel, Dick Hoffman, Jean Hoffman, Dave Horn, Linda Houshower, William Hull, Robert Johnson, Andy Troyer, Scott Johnson, Cece Johnston, Bill Jones, Barb Kaplan, Tom Kemp, Isaac Kerns, Gerry Klug, Kurt Knebusch, Ron Kolde, Jeff Kraus, Marian Kraus, Mary Krejci, David Kriska, Steve Landes, Jason Larson, Bill Leaman, Jay Lehman, Tom LePage, Jim Lesser, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Jeff Loughman, Paula Lozano, Barbara Lund, Dottie Mathiot, Keith McClintock, Jim McCormac, Jeff McCoy, Robert McCullough, Brian McGuire, Joe McMahon, Kevin Metcalf, Lee Miller, Pete Miller, Roy Miller, Jared Mizanin, Yvonne Mohlman, Scott Moody, Ben Morrison, Donald Morse, Patti Niehoff, John Oros, Art Osborn, Doug Overacker, Karl Overman, Haans Petruschke, Lester Peyton, Brad Phillips, Ed Pierce, Bernie Place, Bob Placier, John Pogacnik, Len Powlick, Allen Raber, John Rakestraw, Frank Renfrow, Jim Rettig, Grant Rettig, Steve Richards, Richard Rickard, Craig Rieker, William Rinehart, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Larry Rosche, William P. Rosenberry, Ed Roush, Bob Roysse, Jonathon Ruedisueli, David Russell, Dave St. John, Brian Sampson, Dan Sanders, Kevin Schieltz, Regina Schieltz, Paul Schiff, Ed Schlabach, Leroy Schlabach, Robert Schlabach, Ron Sempier, Lois Shadix, Rod Sharpnack, Jon Shrader, Darlene Sillick, Mark Skinner, Su Snyder, Brad Sparks, Terry Sponseller, Bill Stanley, Mark Stephens, Steve Stockford, Dave Styer, Mike Sweeney, Joe Szczerbiak, Karin Tanquist, Rob Thorn, Ann Toneff, Bill Toneff, Elliot Tramer, Casey Tucker, Vince Urbanski, T. J. Vince, Joe Vogerl, Sandy Wagner, Mary Warren, Arvin Wells, Jeff Wert, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, John Wilson, Ben Winger, Stan Wulkowicz, John Yochum, Leroy Yoder, Titus Yoder, Sheryl Young, Sean Zadar, Marian Zehnder, Karen Zeleznik, Phil Zito. *The Ohio Cardinal* also received invaluable assistance and information from the editors of *The Bobolink* and *The Cleveland Bird Calendar*, the Northwest Ohio Rare Bird Alert, and online resources managed by Victor Fazio III.