

Behavior

The "hunkered-down" posture seen initially may be a characteristic behavior of jaegers to hide from passing gulls. At least once, this jaeger seemed to use this posture as a way to surprise gulls and ambush them. This jaeger was observed chasing ring-billed gulls several times on 30 and 31 October. This bird was "one tough dude," (Hank Armstrong), chasing the gulls, getting right on their tails until they dropped or disgorged food, whereupon the jaeger wheeled and dropped to the water to eat the booty. As Armstrong further elaborated in his report to the OBRC, "This bird didn't hesitate a moment in its attack on any gull that had food in its possession. Swift and powerful flight in its attacks. In over six hours of observation, I saw it only once retrieve a small fish from the surface of the lake that had not been dropped by another bird." During its stay at East Fork SP, the pomarine jaeger spent most of its time in the general vicinity of South Beach and the saddle dam. This area is typically used as a lounging, loafing, and staging area for the wintering resident flocks of gulls.

Epilogue

The East Fork pomarine jaeger was also seen by the Cincinnati Bird Club field trip leader and attendees on 30 October 1999: Hank (leader) and Lynette Armstrong, Erick Heineke, Doug Wallace, Bobby Foppe, Mark Morgan, and Thomas and Donna Hull; many of these observers returned on 31 October 1999. Local birders Dave Styer, David A. Brinkman, Neill Cade, Ned Keller, Frank Renfrow, Darlena Graham, Norm Walker, Jeff Hayes, and Bill Stanley independently identified this bird. In addition, a number of birders from outside the area came to East Fork SP to observe the jaeger. Doug Overacker led a group of five birders from Dayton on 14 November 1999 and observed the jaeger for over an hour. A birder from Pennsylvania stopped at the park office, asked for directions to the area where the bird was being seen, and observed the bird that day. Two birders from Indiana also observed the bird after asking directions to the area from park manager Charlie Clark. The bird was last seen by Hank Armstrong on 15 November 1999. This record has been accepted by the Ohio Bird Records Committee, based upon documentation submitted by David A. Brinkman, Hank Armstrong, and the author (J. G. Lehman).

REFERENCES

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Book Review

Harry Church Oberholser. 1999. *When Passenger Pigeons Flew in the Killbuck Valley: The Birds of Wayne County, Ohio, 1896*. Kurt Knebusch, ed. Introduction by Bruce Glick, with a checklist of Wayne and Holmes counties by Dennis Kline. The Wooster Book Company and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, Wooster. 158 pp, ill. Paper, \$8.95. ISBN#1888683961.

The career of Harry Church Oberholser (1870-1963) as an ornithologist was long and prolific. His best-known published works are monumental monographs describing the avifauna of Texas (posthumous, 1974) and Louisiana (1938). A classifier and accumulator of objects by temperament, he obsessively collected specimens in the US and data on birds brought back by explorers from far-flung climes in every continent. He is regarded as one of the foremost "splitters," painstakingly describing plumages and morphology among discriminable forms, ultimately naming 560 species and subspecies. In 1939 Phillips named the dusky flycatcher *Empidonax oberholseri* in his honor.

Oberholser's tenure with the US Bureau of Biological Survey (later the US Fish & Wildlife Service) began in 1895 and lasted until 1941, when he assumed the office of curator of ornithology for the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. He died in Cleveland on Christmas day in 1963. His early career involved the state of Ohio as well, as the twenty year-old Oberholser, while clerking at his father's dry-goods store in Wooster after having left Columbia University without a degree, began in 1890 to compile an annotated list from four years of observation of birds in Wayne County. The work had been commissioned by the Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station (now OSU's Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center) in Wooster, and the fruits of his labors appeared as *A Preliminary List of the Birds of Wayne County in 1896*. This was Oberholser's first publication in a career that was to produce nearly 900 scientific papers.

When Passengers Flew in the Killbuck Valley resurrects this publication, original copies of which are pretty scarce these days. Kurt Knebusch of the OARDC edits it for readers of today (adding modern nomenclature and taxonomic order), Bruce Glick introduces the text, and Dennis Kline appends a very useful modern-day checklist of Holmes and Wayne County birds. It appears from The Wooster Book Company, a Wayne County publisher whose future plans include a second edition of Peterjohn's *The Birds of Ohio*, scheduled for release this fall.

The word "Preliminary" in the title is more than an instance of standard scientific modesty. Oberholser apologizes early for his sketchy data—he reports only 183 species in all—citing the study's short duration and the demands of "an active business life." Oberholser, though an observer of birds since his boyhood, had not grown up in Wayne County, and his career as a specialist—where he distinguished himself in museum work—had yet to begin. Unsurprisingly, the commoner species are more fully treated. The American robin receives the lengthiest account, whereas many less familiar species are pretty much given a lick and a promise, even in the case of the passenger pigeon of the new title, which appears and disappears in three sentences. Lack of time and opportunity, rather than any matters of actual occurrence, seems to explain

the presence of many birds on Oberholser's list of 74 hypothetical species: examples include gadwall, ring-necked duck, semipalmated plover, least sandpiper, black tern, blue-headed vireo, bank swallow, American pipit, palm warbler, and northern waterthrush. These species, some of which we must feel any active birder would have observed, are listed as "hypothetical" because unconfirmed by specimens. In his day, only a specimen could verify a species' status, and Oberholser was a tireless collector and probably a good shot. Of the 723 Ohio specimens in the University of Michigan's bird collections, for example, fully 154 were donated by Oberholser between 1890 and 1894, and bear the famous "HCO" as well as Wayne county locations on their tags.

Oberholser's work in Wayne County must have soon led him to join the Bureau of Biological Survey as an ornithological clerk. While there he attained degrees through the doctoral level at George Washington University by 1916. This first work on birds attests to his scrupulous devotion to verifiable evidence as well as to his familiarity with the existing ornithological literature. Occasional anecdotes enliven the annotations, and the young observer seems unafraid to contradict his elders when he has supporting evidence. Only occasionally—as in his annotations to the nominate subspecies of horned lark—does his later interest in taxonomy emerge.

His account of Wayne County birdlife a hundred years ago sometimes surprises us with how much things have changed, and sometimes with how little. Oberholser regards turkey vultures as rare summer visitors, and the red-shouldered hawk as the most common raptor. He notes but a single nesting record for the mallard, and regards the black-billed cuckoo, Virginia rail, and sora as unverified as nesters. On the other hand, the house sparrow's more obnoxious nesting habits are noted, as is the common grackle's willingness to roost in larger towns. The work's more elaborate detail in some annotations—as in describing the nests of swallows and swifts—is lacking in others where it would have been at least as interesting. Oberholser's introductory chapter, "The Nature of the Land," presents a Wayne County largely recognizable today, and where certain natural features have regrettably since disappeared he often has noticed the first symptoms of their obliterations.

Overall the work is just old enough to charm in illuminating an earlier time, and recent enough to reflect our experience in the present day. Kline's checklist makes clear subsequent changes in the avifauna, as it underlines some of the inadequacies of the young ornithologist's version. The book lacks an index, but readers familiar with standard taxonomic order really won't need one. The back cover features an antique map of the county. As for errors, there are a couple in modern names for birds, so trifling that very few readers will even notice them. Birders in this region of Ohio will certainly want to have it, as will collectors of Ohio bird books and admirers of Oberholser's work. The book is well-produced and attractively priced, and will reward any student of Ohio birds. *Bill Whan*

Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

The Ohio Bird Records Committee exists to increase knowledge of Ohio's birdlife by validating records, maintaining for the public archival records of occurrences of rare birds in the state, and establishing the official list of Ohio bird species. The OBRC relies vitally upon help from Ohio's field birders who send in details of their sightings of rare birds. The Committee establishes the Review List (see below), which includes all species encountered infrequently enough in Ohio as to require documentation (specimen, photo, sound recording, or full written description) for their inclusion in the official record. *The Ohio Cardinal*, as a journal of record, will not treat reports of Review List species as established until accepted by the OBRC, and hence will not usually publish reports of species not supported by documentation submitted to the OBRC.

The OBRC does not review sightings, of course, only documentations of sightings. The Committee cannot decide if a given species was seen, but only if documentation from those present at the sighting verifies, for the historical record, the species' occurrence at the time. All documentations, with Committee actions thereon, are archived for future researchers. All these records—with the exception of the identities of Committee members on vote sheets—are available to the public. We offer here, as a general rule, only brief summaries of OBRC actions, details of which are available from Jim McCormac, Secretary of the OBRC, upon request. We are grateful to him for supplying information for this report.

ACCEPTED RECORDS: Documentations received from the observers specified for the following records were judged sufficient to verify them by at least nine of the eleven members of the Committee.

Western Grebe—Richland County, 15-18 January 1999, observers J. Herman, E.

Pierce, K. Metcalf

Ross's Goose—Ottawa County, 29 January 2000, observers R. Harlan, S. Wagner

Ross's Goose—Mercer County, 1 April 2000, observer D. Dister

Yellow Rail—Pickaway County, 11 April 2000, observer J. McCormac

Bohemian Waxwing—Cuyahoga County, 12 December 1999, observer K. Metcalf

Le Conte's Sparrow—Cuyahoga County, 28-30 October 1998, observer S. Zadar

Le Conte's Sparrow—Erie County, 3 October 1999, observer S. Zadar

Harris's Sparrow—Holmes County, 9 January 2000, observer J. Beechy

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED: Documentations received for the following reports received fewer than six votes to accept, and were hence not accepted.

Parasitic Jaeger—Lake County, September 1999

Long-tailed Jaeger—Lake County, October 1999

Jaeger sp.—Clark County, December 1999

Glaucous-winged Gull—Cuyahoga County, February 1989

Eurasian Collared-Dove—Washington County, March 2000

Common Nighthawk—Hamilton County, February 2000

Black Rosy-Finch—Ashtabula County, April 1971 [accepted as rosy-finch sp.]