

acceptance by the OBRC, there seems to be no reasonable explanation for its inclusion in this work.

Many of us are intensely interested in rarities, and publications such as *The Birds of Ohio* serve a valuable function in elucidating the vagrancy patterns of such species. Thus, it was with great surprise that I learned that this second edition was not only planned, but also nearly completed by the time most Ohio birders were made aware of it. Most authors attempting such a work—especially those residing in another state—will be in contact with all the people who might be able to add useful information, subscribed to all the relevant publications, and making public appeals for interesting data, but there seems to be little evidence Peterjohn did these things. This has unfortunately led to many errors of omission in this edition. While I detected too many inaccuracies to cite here in full, a few examples are offered:

**Brown pelican**—The new edition includes a 1996 report that was rejected by the OBRC, principally because it was based on very sketchy information for this very rare visitor.

**Golden eagle**—This is no longer a review species, but I was surprised to find that the bird's apparent over-wintering at The Wilds in Muskingum County during the past three years was not mentioned, as this is quite noteworthy.

**Black-necked stilt**—This shorebird is a mega-rarity in Ohio, so it is important to note that 1995 saw three indisputable records, not two as cited.

**Common raven**—Inexplicably absent is the 1998 Lake County record, which was documented in part by a photograph.

**Spotted towhee**—There are actually three accepted records of this western species from the 1990s, rather than the two cited.

**Clay-colored sparrow**—This species seems to be undergoing a gradual range expansion, and may soon be verified as a successful Ohio nester. Therefore it is surprising that Peterjohn doesn't mention the pair that attempted nesting in Franklin County—even building a nest—despite the fact that this record was published in *The Ohio Cardinal* in 1996 (Watts and Albin, 19(4):104-105).

While the number of questionable reports, and errors of omission, in the second edition of *The Birds of Ohio* is not alarmingly high, there are enough to raise eyebrows, particularly in contrast to the comparatively error-free and painstakingly researched first edition. So, is this book worth buying? Emphatically yes, as it serves up a wealth of knowledge of Ohio's avifauna, while providing valuable updates since the original edition. Does it continue the latter's tradition of relentless accuracy? Unfortunately, no.

*Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Natural Areas and Preserves  
1889 Fountain Square Court  
Columbus, OH 43224*

### Short Note: The Roughest Ruffed Grouse

In late March on the Edge of Appalachia Preserve in Adams County my 5 year-old son Eli Bird Bedel and I arrived at the preserve gate to find a male ruffed grouse. We were delighted to see the grouse approach the car, offering a perfect opportunity to study the bird's magnificent feather patterns. Little did we know at the time how familiar this bird was to become.

On subsequent days the grouse regularly appeared at the gate in full breeding splendor. We finally decided to see if it would allow us to approach on foot for even closer study. When we tried, it circled us, pecked nervously at vegetation, and made low clucking noises. At other times, it walked nearly sideways, its ruff partially extended, its crest erected and its tail fanned. When we squatted, the bird rushed us, thudding our boots with its wings. We were thrilled.

As time passed, the bird appeared nearly every day, becoming more aggressive and determined. On several occasions when Eli turned and ran away, the bird pursued on foot, then took flight and like a shot hit his back with its feet. If we extended a hand or foot toward him, he would counter with a flurry of beating wings, scratching the earth with his claws. We soon recognized the signs of an impending attack: he lowered his crest, made a guttural growl, then squatted and leaped forward. It was amazing. The bird not only chased whoever was found around our gate, but any visitor to the nearby cemetery as well. One evening we returned from a night of toad-watching around 11:00 p.m. We heard rustling in the woods, nervously groped for a flashlight, and found the grouse in hot pursuit even in complete darkness!



Chris Bedel

He later took up habitual car-chasing. If we made it past the wing-beating of our boots as we got in and out of our vehicle to open and close the gate, we had to contend with an attack on the tires. He'd jump, kick and smack the tires with flailing wings as we attempted to pull away. The bird had no fear, and at times held cars hostage, running amuck around the vehicles' wheels. Feints and bursts of speed had to be employed to escape without running over the bird. Alas, even once on our way we weren't safe, for the bird would run at great speeds down the road after us. Instead of giving up as we pulled away, he'd take to the air and fly at full speed

toward the car. Looking in the rearview mirror to see a furious bird aiming himself at you through a storm of gravel dust is an unforgettable experience. Sometimes he would halt only just before colliding with the car, then resume the onslaught.

On several occasions his hormones got the upper hand and he made contact. He rammed the sides of more than one car. Once he bashed the window of a local contractor's pickup. "He came straight at me like a rocket," the driver told us later. "He hit the front window and feathers went everywhere. He bounced over the top of my truck. I thought that was the end of him. I saw him when I left that day and amazingly he was okay." No miscalculations, these were intentional assaults on perceived trespassers. One day after another violent encounter with my wife's car, Eli dubbed the bird "the roughest of ruffed grouse." By then a familiar neighbor, the grouse never ceased to amaze and amuse over its two-month tenure at the gate.



We saw another grouse with him only once. Another male was on the scene when we reached the gate one day, but it fled upon our arrival and our grouse quickly turned his attention to us. It's safe to assume our bird was on territory and simply defending his turf from all comers. We always made it a practice to back off from every encounter, feigning defeat to satisfy the determined guardian. We know of only one human who captured the curious creature in hand. The grouse appeared to be in molt at the time, as feathers exploded in the tussle. When released, the bird ambled into the woods with ruff extended and tail at full mast. The bird appeared a few times after that encounter, then vanished into the Appalachian forest. Only a handful of Ohio birders witnessed this unusual spectacle. The grouse had his wings full dealing with the daily trespasses of locals. We can only hope that he mated successfully, perhaps passing on his uniquely assertive gene!

*Chris, Suzanne, and Elijah Bird Bedel  
Edge of Appalachia Preserve  
19 Abner Hollow Rd.  
Lynx, OH 45650*

## Recent Actions of the Ohio Bird Records Committee

Here is a summary of actions taken by the Ohio Bird Records Committee since our last 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.

- Tricolored Heron—Erie County, 17 May 2001, observer B. Whan
- Glossy Ibis—Hamilton County, 6-10 September 2000, observers F. Renfrow, J. Lehman, N. Keller
- Glossy Ibis—Summit County, 5-11 November 2000, observers D. & A. Chasar, H. Petruschke, G. Leidy, E. Pierce
- White-faced Ibis—Ottawa County, 12 May 2001, observers J. Lesser, B. Whan
- Ross's Goose—Lorain County, 10 March 2001, observer V. Fazio
- Ruff—Marion County, 10 April 2001, observer B. Whan
- Townsend's Solitaire—Lake County, 17 January-21 February 2001, observers J. Pogacnik, J. McCormac, B. Whan
- Townsend's Solitaire—Wyandot County, 1&14 February 1998, observers S. Richards, J. Peacock
- Varied Thrush—Hancock County, 12 December 2000-9 April 2001, observers A. Wymer, B. Hardesty, J. McCormac, B. Whan
- Varied Thrush—Lucas County, 14-21 December 2000, observers T. Kemp, G. Links
- Kirtland's Warbler—Paulding County, 5-6 May 2001, observers M. Dunakin, J. Yochum
- Le Conte's Sparrow—Cuyahoga County, 23 September 2000, observers S. Zadar, T. Gilliland
- Le Conte's Sparrow—Holmes County 12-21 October 2000, observer E. Yoder
- Le Conte's Sparrow—Cuyahoga County, 13-16 October 2000, observer S. Zadar
- Le Conte's Sparrow—Wyandot County, 10 April 2001, observer P. Weber
- Harris's Sparrow—Marion County, 27 December 2000, observer T. Romine
- Harris's Sparrow—Wayne County, 1 January-7 May 2001, observers J. McCormac, B. Whan

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

- Tricolored Heron—Athens County, 10 April 2001
- Ross's Goose—Delaware County, 2 February 2001
- Gyr Falcon—Ottawa County, 22 February 2001
- Dovekie—Auglaize County, 30 October 2000
- Eurasian Collared-Dove—Lucas County, 14 April 2001
- Northern Hawk Owl—Wyandot County, 17 January 2001
- Western Tanager—Cuyahoga County, 3 October 2000

**RECORDS IN RECIRCULATION:** Having received between six and eight votes to accept, the following reports are currently being recirculated in the Committee.

- Glossy Ibis—Wyandot County, 13 April 2001
- "Harlan's" Red-tailed Hawk—Holmes County, 18 November 2000
- Long-tailed Jaeger—Lake County, 15 September 2001
- Black-legged Kittiwake—Warren County, 2 December 2000
- Chestnut-collared Longspur—Marion County, 10 April 2001
- Shiny Cowbird—Lucas County, 5 May 2001
- Hoary Redpoll—Cuyahoga County, 20-21 January and 16-18 February 2000