



Retrospective: 20 Years Ago in the Cardinal

The summer 1981 season was covered in a monstrous 74-page omnibus issue containing Vol. 4, No. 2 (Summer 1981) and Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer 1982). Issues for the intervening seasons were never published. The subject of the cover photograph, a cattle egret nestling taken by Ed Pierce, reflected the content of his lead article, "West Sister Island: Home of the Herons." Among other topics covered in this issue was the dramatic success of bald eagle nesting in 1981 and 1982. Laurel Van Camp described these two years as "the most successful...since 1959" following the fledging of nine young in 1981 and eight in 1982. He went on to describe nine sites where there was significant bald eagle activity during those two years. Following the raptor theme, John J. Stophlet contributed a short article documenting two 1981 broad-winged hawk nests in Oak Openings Park—the first there since the early 1970s.

Elsewhere, documentation of a rare bird by Chuck Hocevar described the fourth-ever occurrence of black-necked stilt in Ohio. In addition, hooded mergansers were confirmed as nesters in Wayne County during the summer of 1981 in notes from John E. Staab. Other notes pertaining to the summer 1981 season included a report by David Kline on cliff swallows nesting on structures at his family's farm (192 pairs) and a report by Reed F. Noss and Steven M. McKee on the summering birds of Mohican State Park and Forest (75 species). A summary of summer censuses conducted in both 1981 and 1982 included results for Summit, Hocking, Fairfield, and Trumbull counties.

Chuck Hocevar broke new ground in 1981 with a record-breaking Ohio big year, and described it in the latter pages of this omnibus issue. His introduction describes how he began the big year, what others had accomplished in the past, and methods for reaching a record total, concluding that "I would not recommend that most birders attempt a big year. Most do not have the temperament, the endurance, or desire. In 1981 I drove over 30,000 miles on birding trips. I visited 72 counties, spent over \$2500.00 on gasoline, and spent every available day (except four) in the field, and I drove to Lake Erie no less than 47 times." Keep in mind that 1981 gas prices were around \$1.40 per gallon. That's \$2.74 per gallon in 2001 dollars, folks.

Hocevar finished the big year with 292 species, and stated "the number is no big deal" and "I believe anyone with the motivation and unlimited time could reach 310+ in a good year." That would have to be a darned good year. Anything in the 290s is a fantastic number and he deserved applause for getting there, especially since he reached his total during a time when sophisticated communication networks like Internet listservs did not exist. There were also fewer birders scouring the state then as well.

Like the summer of 2001, the summer 1981 season was a little light on rare birds. The highlights included a tricolored heron summering at Magee Marsh, a piping plover on 29 July in Cleveland, a black-necked stilt on 18 July at Magee Marsh, and two white-winged crossbills in Lorain from 1-9 June. Other articles from this omnibus issue will be covered in a future retrospective. *Joseph W. Hammond*



Reclaimed strip-mines provide suitable nesting areas for many species of grassland birds. The Henslow's sparrow shown above and below found Woodbury Wildlife Area, Coshocton Co., much to its liking. Photos by Bob Royse on 25 June 2001.

