

The Ohio



CARDINAL™

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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	Please send all reports to:
Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25	Bill Whan
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25	223 E. Tulane Rd.
Summer (June-July) - August 25	Columbus, OH 43202
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25	danielel@iwaynet.net

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On the Cover: Louisiana Waterthrush - Idlewood Park, Summit County, 29 December 2001. Photo by Judy Semroc.

Winter 2001-02 Overview

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What we used to call the grip of winter has recently become a warm clasp more like a handshake. This time the variables most affecting birds—snow-cover and air temperatures (at least insofar as they produce ice or diminish food supplies)—seemed less wintry than ever. The nation's average November-January temperature has increased at a rate of 1.2°F per decade since 1976. In mid-state at Columbus, 8.4 inches of snow fell, compared to the historical average of 27.6 inches. The first three weeks of December here averaged an impressive 11.7°F above normal, and after the following two cold weeks averaged 5.1°F below, the next fifty days of winter averaged 8.0°F above normal.

Birds that winter south of the US can seldom take advantage of such mild conditions, but some who pass the season in the southern states, and more of those who do so even closer, showed marked increases both in numbers and in the length of time they spent farther north. Winter's nine reported rarities subject to review by the OBRC were northern gannet, Ross's goose, parasitic jaeger, two black-headed gulls, glaucous-winged gull (a first state record if accepted), California gull, *Selasphorus* hummingbird, vermilion flycatcher, and brown-headed nuthatch. Of these, perhaps the stays of the hummer and the flycatcher were prolonged by mild weather, but these are hardy birds in any event. The cumulative effect of recent clement winters led this time to record tallies of northern mockingbirds and Carolina wrens in northern counties. Higher temperatures this season must have been involved in a dearth of cold-weather ducks and a surplus of tenderer ones, no fewer than seven warbler and 12 shorebird species (for most of the latter, vital habitat was available only at the Crane Creek estuary) statewide, plus unusual numbers of sandhill cranes, snow geese, tundra swans, and pomarine jaegers. Add to these two Baltimore orioles, a Swainson's thrush, and an amazing summer tanager, and you get the picture of a mild winter that favored adaptable species, especially among those normally wintering not too far away. Perhaps most newsworthy of all was the addition of two southern species to the official Ohio list—brown-headed nuthatch and Eurasian collared-dove—bringing it to 410 species.

Turkey vultures clearly benefited from the weather, seen throughout the period in some unusual places and in excellent numbers. Among waterfowl, open water to our north kept concentrations of hardy diving ducks on Lake Erie down, but open water inland induced higher than normal numbers of puddle ducks and other divers to pass the winter here. Indeed, this winter one got the strong impression that these birds are perennially in a hurry; attaining nuptial plumage in fall, courting in the snow, they go not an inch further south than they have to, and restlessly await a chance to head north at the earliest possible moment. At sleepy Burke Lakefront Airport in Cleveland it seemed there were often more snowy owls than planes in flight, but another arctic species with similar food habits, the rough-legged hawk, seemed down somewhat in numbers around the state. Despite a shortage of the ice