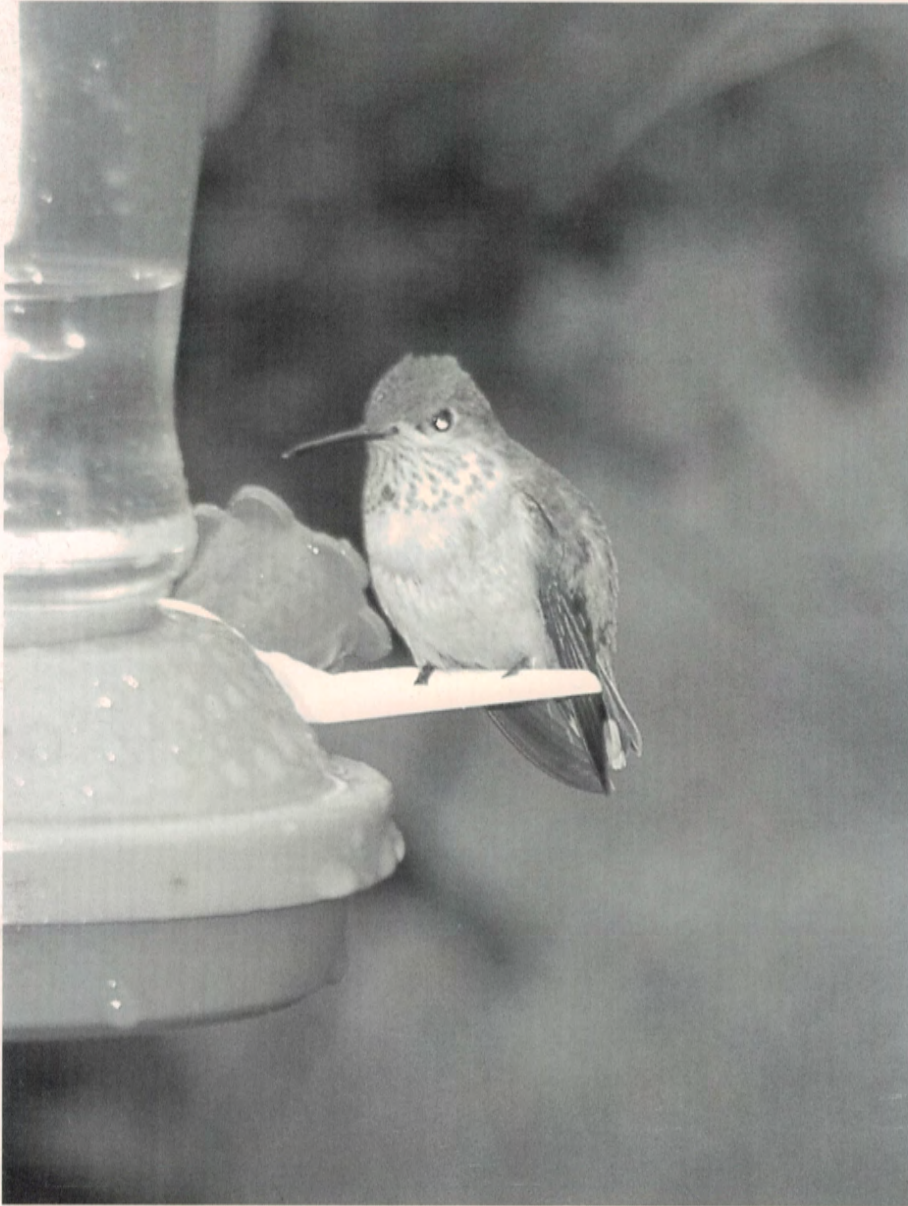


The Ohio



CARDINAL™

Vol. 26, No. 1
Autumn 2002



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 (June-July) - August 25
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25

Please send all reports to:

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Subscriptions

The subscription rate for one year (four issues) is \$20.00. Please send all subscription requests to:

The Ohio Cardinal
c/o Edwin C. Pierce
2338 Harrington Rd.
Akron, OH 44319

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The Ohio Cardinal

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ISSN 1534-1666

On the Cover: This Calliope hummingbird was photographed in Chillicothe, Ross County, on 30 October 2002 by Bill Bosstic and Joe McMahon.

Autumn 2002 Overview

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This memorable autumn followed the nation's third hottest summer—cooler than only the Dust Bowl years of 1934 and 1936—with an abnormally hot August and September. A cold and windy November with a relentless series of cold fronts closed out the period, and brought some noteworthy rarities, from tiny hummingbirds to looming gannets. During the season a remarkable 301 species were reported in Ohio, a still more remarkable 19 of them review species (two of them regrettably undocumented). One, accepted by the Ohio Bird Records Committee, was new to the state list.

Severe drought in the southeastern states may have sent some waders north, starring our record-breaking quartet of spoonbills. Waterfowl tended to arrive late, and hardly in numbers to brag about, especially divers, but the two eastern eider species put in long stays on the Lake Erie shore, remaining available to birders while miraculously avoiding gunners, law-abiding and otherwise. Shorebirds in decent numbers benefited from three spots on the Lake Erie shore—Conneaut harbor, Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve, and the Crane Creek estuary at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge—still open, however narrowly, to natural fluctuations in Lake levels. In addition, Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area and a couple of spots out in Paulding County's expanse of corn and beans surprised observers with mudflat habitat and some nice records.

Late-lingering ruby-throated hummingbirds perhaps kept nectar feeders out long enough to attract western species in their wanderings, including an astonishing 12 confirmed rufous or rufous/Allen's and our first Calliope. Passerines were mostly reported as disappointing in numbers. Neotropical migrants seemed to have reacted to the notably cold, wet spring (remember all those rose-breasted grosbeaks at feeders when insects were hard to find?) followed by a hot, dry summer with reduced productivity. Early portents for winter finch numbers were dismal but not surprising; we have recently grown used to looking for numbers of these species only in winters that begin in odd-numbered years.

Some alarming reports led to concerns about the effect of the West Nile virus on bird populations. People were led to present more bird corpses to officials, to ascribe all mortalities or transient fluctuations in reported numbers to the virus, and to suppose any effect would be permanent. Among officialdom, mortality among birds demonstrated to harbor the virus was often attributed to the pathogen (rather than pollutants, for example), and spraying to control mosquitoes (apparently not the only vector of the disease) harmed bird populations. Effects on horses and zoo animals were better documented. Facts are much needed. We may learn more about effects on wild bird populations after the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts are completed and carefully analyzed.

The Reports follow the taxonomic order of the 7th edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 42nd (July 2000) and 43rd (July 2002) Supplements. Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List;