

*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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### The Ohio Cardinal

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**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

### Bill Whan

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

documentation is needed to add reports of these species to official state records, or to attributed records in the Reports. When supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: BCSP=Buck Creek SP in *Clark*; BIWA=Big Island WA in *Marion*; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE=Crane Creek estuary in Ottawa NWR; CPNWRC=monthly census at Cedar Point NWR in *Lucas*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley National Park in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; eop=end of the period, in this case 30 Nov 2002; EHSP=East Harbor SP in *Ottawa*; fide="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; GLSM=Grand Lake St. Marys in *Mercer* and *Auglaize*; HBSP=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; HBSNP=Headlands Beach SNP in *Lake*; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in *Wayne* and *Holmes*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in *Lake*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOV=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at Ottawa NWR; PCWA=Pickerel Ck WA in *Sandusky*; ph=photograph; Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene* and *Warren*; WA=Wildlife Area.

### Corrigenda

The little blue heron of 20 Jul 2002 was not found in *Montgomery*, but the observers could not be reached to determine whether it was in *Greene*, *Warren*, or *Butler*. The daily number of purple finches reported this summer in *Mahoning* was 1-2.

### For the Record

Here are noteworthy reports from earlier dates in 2002 (except where otherwise noted) that for one reason or another escaped our notice:

**Northern Harrier:** One was at Woodbury WA in *Coshocton* on 15 Jun (A. Yoder).

**Sora:** An adult and chick were noted in a marsh in *Ashland* 6 Jun (B. Burnett).

**Willet:** J. Lehman had one at the renowned shorebird Mecca of Crown City WA, *Lawrence/Gallia*, on 13 Jul.

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Very early to return, and perhaps a failed breeder, was a female at Fairport Hbr on 29 Jun (R. Hannikman).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** One was quite early on 1 Apr in *Shawnee SF* this year (B. Roysse).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** An "Audubon's" was at Magee 27 Apr (J. Sawvel).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** J. Grabmeier had a singing male in *Columbus* 17 Jun.

**Smith's Longspur:** E. A. Yoder reported a bird seen 2-3 Apr 2000 on his farm in *Wayne* that, while he acknowledged the details are not wholly satisfactory, strongly suggested this species. The date is right, but it would be a first record for the region. We hope *Cardinal* readers will review the features on this species in the Spring issue, and conduct some intensive searches for Smith's in late Mar and early Apr this spring. 🐦

## Autumn 2002 Reports

### Bill Whan

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**Red-throated Loon:** First noted 20 Oct at LSR, with another 24 Nov (both J. Pogacnik). One was off Kelleys Isl 16 Nov (T. Bartlett), and four there 23 Nov (Bartlett fide V. Fazio), while Pogacnik had another off MBSP on 28 Nov. Inland, birds were at Delaware Res 4 Nov (B. Shively) and Lk Lemon, *Hamilton*, 9 Nov (N. Keller).

**Common Loon:** 2600+ reported. A local record early bird on 20 Sep in *Paulding* (D&M Dunakin) might have been summering elsewhere nearby; certainly one at KPWA on 3 Aug was doing so (B. Foppe). Other inland sites had big numbers in mid-Nov: 184 at Clear Fk Res (J. Herman) the 16<sup>th</sup>; 170+ at Hoover Res (R. Thorn) the 17<sup>th</sup>; 496 over *Holmes* (E. A. Yoder) the 18<sup>th</sup>; and 768 over Parma Hts (S. Zadar) the 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Bred sparsely. High count 31 at Metzger Marsh WA 14 Sep (R. Harlan, S. Wagner). Three remained at Seneca Lk, *Noble*, 26 Nov (B. Glick).

**Horned Grebe:** Scanty this fall statewide, the most noteworthy number by far 117 off Kelleys Isl 24 Nov (V. Fazio).

**Red-necked Grebe:** Most along Lk Erie: Cleveland 2-5 Nov (S. Zadar), Rocky River 9 Nov (R. Rogers), and Eastlake 10 Nov (C. Spagnoli). Inland, a likely first record for *Richland* was one 26 Nov (J. Herman) to 29 Nov (S. Snyder) at Clear Fk Res.

**Eared Grebe:** J. Pogacnik had one at Conneaut 28 Sep, and G. Miller birds at Rocky River Pk 14 Nov and Fairport Hbr 26 Nov. Reports came from 20 Nov in Cleveland (S. Zadar) and 29 Nov in Mentor, *Lake* (G. Leidy).

**Northern Gannet:** A great year for gannets began 16 Nov, with a first-fall bird at Rocky River Pk (K. Metcalf, m obs). Accepted by the OBRC. Another went undocumented.

**Brown Pelican:** Nine reports, most of them second-hand (fide A. Wormington), emerged of what was probably a single imm bird ranging between the Lk Erie Islands and Maumee Bay. They spanned the period from 9 Jun (P. Froehlich) to 23 Sep (crew of S. Bass Isl ferry fide N. Bixler). R. Duktig photographed an imm off Toledo 22 Aug. Accepted by the OBRC.

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Counts of 25,600+ on 28 Sep (CPNWRC) and 22,000+ there 10 Oct (J. McCormac) exceed all others previous. Good inland numbers were 220 at Hoover Res 21 Oct (R. Thorn), 250-300 in Cincinnati 28 Oct (D. Brinkman), and 258 at Findlay Res 29 Oct. One was at EFSP as late as 28 Nov (D. Morse).

**American Bittern:** One possible breeder was spotted by D. Overacker at PCWA 3 Aug. All others were probable migrants in a short Oct span: the 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at N. Chagrin Res'n (K. Metcalf), the 10<sup>th</sup> at Magee (J. McCormac), and the 13<sup>th</sup> at Gilmore Ponds, *Butler* (D. Brinkman).

**Least Bittern:** Sparsely reported, with a late one 13 Oct at ONWR (J&M Kraus, ph).

**Great Egret:** V. Fazio tallied 440+ in three *Erie* locations 30 Aug, and 395 crowded Medusa Marsh 12 Sep (B. Whan). Inland, 16 were at Dillon Res 5 Aug (M. Bowman), 27 at BIWA 13 Aug (J. Hammond), a local record 60 on 23 Aug at Gilmore Ponds (M. Busam), and 23 on 8 Sep in *Mahoning* (B. Jones). The 3 Nov ONWRC had 44, and the last report came from 5 Nov at Sheldon Marsh (G. Leidy).