

The Ohio



CARDINALTM

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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

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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On the Cover: This black rail was photographed in a Holmes County flower bed on 14 June 2003 by Morris Miller.

Summer 2003 Overview

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It seemed like a cool summer because we had so few really hot spells, but in the end temperatures were not so far off normal. Here in central Ohio, we started with a first four days of June colder than the first four of April, but it all averaged out. Depending on where you were, you might have called it a wet summer or a dry one. Rain was very unevenly distributed, with few well-defined broad fronts, instead often consisting of very localized downpours in what the forecasters defensively began to call "pop-up storms." During June, rainfall in Columbus and Cincinnati differed by a significant 2.58 inches, and in July, Columbus and Dayton differed by 4.25 inches. During July, Cleveland recorded a lot of rain—4.89 inches—but only 75 miles away in the Youngstown area 10.6 inches fell; Columbus had 1.68 inches less than normal rainfall in July, when parts of Paulding County got a Noachian 11.6 inches.

Four review species were documented, about average for the season: tricolored heron, black rail, ruff, and loggerhead shrike. Twenty years ago, species subject to review before adding them to the published record included the following: American white pelican, greater white-fronted goose, brant, northern goshawk, pomarine jaeger, laughing gull, black-legged kittiwake, Thayer's gull, and Bell's vireo. Why do they no longer require review? Do we see more of them, or have record-keepers become less conservative? Among them probably only the pelican, not the most difficult to identify, is more common now in Ohio. Better field ID techniques have helped; even the popular field guides are now more helpful on jaegers and gulls, for example, than older ones. It helps that more birders are in the field, and better linked by communications media: more birds are seen by multiple observers, and beginners are more likely to know someone more experienced nearby to help with a strange-looking bird. Still, editors and other reviewers are likely to seek more details upon getting a report of a species out of place or season—a brant in Athens County, a June Thayer's gull anywhere—or for those species that remain less familiar to most Ohioans and/or difficult to identify: goshawks, immature eagles, adult dowitchers, or kittiwakes.

On 11 May, a half-dozen or more trumpeter swans were released in Cedar Point NWR, perhaps the most pristine of Ohio's Lake Erie marshes, where their presence on this Federal property may test the wisdom of Ohio officials' introduction program. Common loons stuck around in good numbers, and some intriguing reports emerged—far from substantiated as of the date of this writing—that seemed consistent with successful nesting in the central part of the state. If nothing else, these reports will keep local observers more alert next summer.

Raptors, by all reports, had a great breeding season statewide, and were present in better-than-average numbers. Some attributed this to a rapid filling of available territories after ravages of the West Nile Virus, some to the reduced depredations of