

Winter 2003-04 Reports

Bill Whan

223 E. Tulane Road, Columbus OH 43202

danielel@iwaynet.net



This Ross's goose was seen by many observers at Navarre in Stark Co. Photo by Jason Estep on 11 January 2004.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Twenty reported, one 3 Jan in *Wyandot* (**R. Counts**), and the rest the latter half of Feb, maximum six in *Scioto* the 18th (**J. McMahon**).

Snow Goose: About 400 reported, most of them Dec and Feb. High cts: 70 for the Columbus CBC 14 Dec, 62 overhead in *Hancock* 18 Dec (*fide* **B. Hardesty**), and 53 on the Lorain CBC 20 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**) and. A flock again wintered at ONWR, with 48 (28 white morph) there 1 Feb (ONWRC).

Ross's Goose: One was documented 10-18 Dec at Lk Rockwell, *Portage*, and another 23 Dec through least 3 Jan near Navarre in *Stark*. Reports from both are with the OBRC.

Brant: Quite rare in winter, rarer still inland in winter, one was found w/Canadas 17 Jan near Loudonville in *Ashland* (**J. Herman fide S. Snyder**); it remained, straying at times into a pond nearby in *Holmes*, through

at least 11 Feb (**T. Leslie**).

Mute Swan: Though their numbers have probably not decreased, reports of multiple mutes were of only 28 in *Erie* 7 Feb (**D. Overacker**) and 13 on the Hoover CBC 20 Dec.

Tundra Swan: Extraordinary mid-winter numbers persisted around the state into the eop. On 4 Jan, the ONWRC count of 1164 compares with an average Jan count of 102 over the past 11 years there (**E. Pierce, R. Harlan**) with ~400 there 15 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**). Jan and early Feb reports came from *Mahoning* (60 on 16 Jan, **C. Holt**), *Pickaway* (seven 30 Jan, **A. Haslage**), *Portage* (76 on 17 Jan, **B. Bolton**), *Wyandot* (15 on 31 Jan, **R. Sempier**), *Lake* (eight 11 Jan, **Pogacnik**), *Franklin* (four on 14 Jan, **C. Bombaci**), *Cuyahoga* (49 on 15 Jan, **L. Gardella**),



This brant sidestepped through spring-fed ponds in Ashland and Holmes counties for an unusual inland winter record. Photo by Heather Nagy in Holmes Co. 22 Jan 2004.



Some of the ~800 tundra swans seen on the Toussaint River in Ottawa Co. on 25 February 2004. Photographer Gary Meszaros says this flock may represent as much as 10 percent of those that winter on the Atlantic coast.

Greene (3-12 on 21 Jan, **J. Hickman**), *Clermont* (five on 2 Feb, **C. Carver**), and *Hamilton* (11 on 6 Feb, **A. Gaynor**). **G. Meszaros** found ~800 birds on the Toussaint River 26 Feb.

Wood Duck: At least 50 were reported from ten counties in deep winter, the highest count of 20, in *Holmes* 3 Jan (**S. Snyder**).

Gadwall: Persisted in appreciable numbers at spots during January: six at La Due Res 1 Jan (**K. Metcalf**), 14 for the 4 Jan ONWRC, 75 on 7 Jan at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton* (**B. Foppe**), 28 at Lk Phippen, *Portage* 8 Jan (**L. Rosche**), and five at Hoover Res, *Franklin* 16 Jan (**R. Thorn**). After the mid-month clutch of cold, very few were reported, led by six in *Holmes* 16 Feb (**S. Snyder**).

American Wigeon: The Cincinnati CBC had its second-highest total with 89 on 28 Dec, thanks to Camp Dennison. Seven toughed it out at Ottawa on 4 Jan (ONWRC), but most retreated south, where 50 were in *Hamilton* 7 Jan and 20 in *Clermont* 29 Jan (both **B. Foppe**). Thirty at KPWA 29 Feb were returning north (**R. Sempier**).

Blue-winged Teal: Extremely unusual in Jan and perhaps wounded during the fall, two drakes were reported for the Carey CBC of the 3rd (**T. Bartlett**).

Northern Shoveler: Unusual numbers for winter included 24 in Akron 13 Dec (**L. Rosche**) and a record 77 for the 28 Dec Cincinnati CBC, where numbers at Camp Dennison varied between 50 and 68 from 12 Dec through 30 Jan (**B. Foppe**). On 8 Jan, 38 were a surprise at Hoover Res (**C. Bombaci**), as were 19 at Pine Lk in *Mahoning* 5 Feb (**C. Holt**).

Northern Pintail: Remarkable numbers included 50 on the 4 Jan ONWRC, then on 8 Jan eight at HBSP (**D. Russell**) and 27 at Hoover Res (**C. Bombaci**); 42 were in *Columbiana* 8 Feb (**B&D Lane**). Migration was underway 23 Feb, with 35 at KPWA (**D. Sanders**).

Green-winged Teal: Two were in *Knox* 1 Jan (**L.E. Yoder**), and Camp Dennison numbers peaked at eight

2 Jan (**B. Foppe**). Heading north were two at Pickerel Ck WA 28 Feb (**P. Lozano**) and 23 at Eastlake 29 Feb (**K. Metcalf**).

Canvasback: The high count was of 1000+ apparently southbounders on the 4 Jan ONWRC. Small numbers were reported inland at many locations through the period.

Redhead: Sixty at Eastlake 31 Jan (**L. Rosche**) represented birds persisting in Lake Erie, while only single-digit reports emerged inland. Large northbound movements began as early as 20 Feb, with 70 at BCSP (**D. Overacker**), culminating in a massive ~3500 at Metzger Marsh the 29th, a personal high count for veteran **T. Kemp**.

Ring-necked Duck: Wintered locally in good numbers, continuing a recent trend. The Cincinnati CBC garnered its second-highest count with 504 on 28 Dec, where **B. Foppe** counted 300 on 31 Dec, 175 on 22 Jan, and 35 on 16 Feb at Camp Dennison. **E. Snively** tallied 24 in Canton 1 Jan, **L. V. Fazio** 240 at Wellington Res 7 Jan, **L. Rosche** 32 on 9 Jan and 90 on 2 Feb in *Portage*, **D. Dister** 256 in *Montgomery* 10 Jan, and **R. Thorn** 80 in Columbus 11 Jan. Smaller but appreciable numbers persisted through Feb.

Greater Scaup: High count ~400 at Eastlake 31 Jan (**L. Rosche**). At Camp Dennison in *Hamilton* were as numerous as lessers, with 10 on 29 Jan (**B. Foppe**). Appeared in small numbers well inland elsewhere, too, with seven in *Butler* 18 Jan (**M. Busam**).

Lesser Scaup: Began gathering in large numbers offshore as early as 6 Dec, with 2500+ at MBSP (**B. Whan**), and huge rafts of indiscriminable scaups were periodically visible far offshore through the period.

Harlequin Duck: A female spent at least 31 Jan (**L. Rosche**) through 14 Feb (**K. Metcalf**) in the warm water outflow at Eastlake PP.

Surf Scoter: Forty-six reported for winter, with a high count of 21 on 20 Dec for the Lorain CBC of 20 Dec. Three singletons reported inland. Latest report 25 Jan at Eastlake (**C. Holt**).

White-winged Scoter: Eleven reports, mostly in Jan, the highest (and latest) count of three surprisingly at Camp Dennison 10 Feb (**B. Foppe**).

Black Scoter: Forty reported, all from Lake Erie or nearby, the latest of two 22 Feb at LSR (**J. Pogacnik**).

Scoter sp: **J. Pogacnik** counted 24 black or surf scoters passing LSR 11 Jan.

Long-tailed Duck: Reported as follows: ♀ HWSP 6 Dec (**D. Dister**), 14 Dec *Clermont* (**P. Wharton**), 16 Dec Lk Buckhorn (**B. Glick**), Cleveland 18 Jan (**P. Lozano**), 23 Jan LSR (**J. Pogacnik**), two 4 Jan Metzger Marsh (**V. Fazio**), and 2 Feb at Eastlake (**H. Armstrong**).

Bufflehead: Highest numbers came from the Lk Erie islands CBC, with 1487 off Kelleys Isl and 603 off Bass Isl 14 Dec. The Cincinnati CBC had a record 75 on 28 Dec.

Common Goldeneye: Large reported flocks were of 722 for the Toledo CBC 14 Dec, 581 at Metzger Marsh 4 Jan (**V. Fazio**), and 2842 passing LSR 22 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**). Highest inland number was 26 at EFSP 11 Feb (**B. Foppe**).



A handsome greater scaup joined the gulls at E. 72nd Street in Cleveland. Photo by Robert Royse in February 2004.

Hooded Merganser: Scarce during the cold latter half of January, but previously **L. Rosche** reported 250 in Akron 13 Dec., and the Cincinnati CBC set a new record with 157 on 28 Dec.

Common Merganser: Many seen through the period, with 1950 on the 14 Dec Toledo CBC, 1900+ on Sandusky Bay 2 Jan (**V. Fazio**), 853 for the ONWRC 4 Jan (best numbers since 1980), 521 at LSR 11 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**), 1700+ n. of the mouth of the Grand River 19 Jan and 700+ at Eastlake 31 Jan (both **L. Rosche**), and 2842 at LSR 22 Feb (**Pogacnik**).

Red-breasted Merganser: The accustomed multitudes included 5000+ at Eastlake 11 and 20 Dec (both **L. Rosche**), 11,000 off the Old Woman Creek estuary in *Erie* 7 Jan (**V. Fazio**), and 11,040 off LSR as late as 22 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**).

Ruddy Duck: **L. Rosche** had 60 in Akron 13 Dec, and the Cincinnati CBC 26 on 28 Dec. Three were found in *Knox* 1 Jan (**L.E. Yoder**), and from 1-15 were regularly seen at Camp Dennison in *Hamilton* through January and February (**B. Foppe**).

Red-throated Loon: Only one, in Dayton 4-5 Dec (*vide* **C. Mathena**).

Common Loon: A poor showing. A dozen birds were reported, all inland, in Dec, the high count of four at Caesar Ck SP on the 6th (**L. Gara**). Two birds delighted January listers on the 1st, one at Buckeye Lk (**J. Estep**) and one oddly in alternate plumage for the Gypsum CBC (**C. Rieker**).

Pied-billed Grebe: A record high was 98 on the Cincinnati CBC of 28 Dec, and 45 remained in Camp Dennison 17 Jan (**B. Lacker**). Others utilizing unfrozen water included two 3 Jan in *Coshocton* (**L.E. Yoder**), one in Cleveland's Flats 18 & 22 Jan (**P. Lozano**), and two at Summit Lk in Akron 1 Feb (**G. Bennett**).

Horned Grebe: High ct 20 at Caesar Ck SP 5 Dec (**S. Corbo**). Unusual deep-winter birds were at BCSP 18 Jan (**D. Overacker**, **N. Smith**) and in *Butler* 10 Feb (**C. Betrus**).

Red-necked Grebe: One bird, at Eastlake 1 (**J. Pogacnik**) and 2 (**J. Lehman**) Feb.

Double-crested Cormorant: A few probably wintered locally, as at Hoover Res (**R. Thorn**). Two for the 28 Dec Cincinnati CBC was a record high, and the second record ever. On 1 Jan, 120 was a record high for the Gypsum CBC, and on 7 Jan 18 were already hanging around Turning Pt Isl in Sandusky (**V. Fazio**).

Great Blue Heron: At Ottawa, 88 tarried through 7 Dec (ONWRC). By 22 Feb, 30 were paired and on nests in *Summit* (**K. Ostermiller**).

Great Egret: One was southbound in a 24 Jan snowstorm near Zanesville (**L. Daniele**).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: CBCs reported five 14 Dec (Toledo), one 14 Dec (Columbus), and six 20 Dec (*Ashtabula*). **H&S Hiris** reported one at Magee 21 Dec.

V. Fazio found 12, including 5 adults, at Turning Pt Isl in Sandusky 7 Jan.

Black Vulture: In the south, the *Adams* CBC tallied 53 on 14 Dec, 91 was a record for the Cincinnati CBC on 28 Dec, two roosted at the HWSP lodge 2 Jan (**D. Dister**), 19 were over *Brown* 19 Jan (**D. Graham**), and on 25 Feb 30 were noted in *Clermont* (**D. Morse**). The Millersburg CBC tallied 60 birds 16 Dec, **P. Knoop** counted five in *Hocking* 6 Jan, and **J. Larson** saw 32 in *Knox* 14 Jan.

Turkey Vulture: A winter-long presence in *Holmes*, with 60 on 2 Dec in Walnut Ck (**J.A. Miller**) and 55 on 17 Jan in e. *Holmes* (**E. Schlabach**). Birds far to the north were one in *Cuyahoga* 16 Dec (**D. Horn**), three in *Conneaut* 1 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**), and one over Akron 14 Feb (**S. Hanse** *vide* **P. Lozano**). The Cincinnati CBC posted a record 274 on 28 Dec. **B. Foppe** had 150 in *Clermont* 4 Feb. Daily attentions by adolescent male humans forced the consolidation of the two large *Athens* roosts, with ~500 on 22 Feb at Stroud's Run (**E. McElroy**).

Bald Eagle: Burgeoning. Local highs included five at a deer carcass in *Coshocton* 28 Feb (**L.E. Yoder**),

and five the same day near Pleasant Hill Lk (**B. Glick**). ODOW's winter eagle survey netted 352 birds (271 adults) in 57 counties, a healthy increase over last winter's then-record 304; highest county tally was 67 in *Sandusky*.

Northern Harrier: Noteworthy concentrations included 15 for the *Adams* CBC of 14 Dec, 15 in a single *Wyandot* field 21 Dec (**R. Counts**), ~25 at KPWA 19 Jan (**L. Gara**), ~30 in Meigs Twp of *Muskingum* 19 and 26 Feb (**L. Rosche**), and a remarkable 28 in a single group at MWW in *Hamilton* 14 Feb (**P. Wharton**).

Sharp-shinned Hawk: High count five for the *Ashland* CBC 20 Dec.

Cooper's Hawk: Continues to fill in the urban niche for birds with an appetite for birds. Nineteen on 28 Dec was a record for the *Cincinnati* CBC.

Northern Goshawk: An adult was found near The Wilds in *Muskingum* 25 Jan (**D. Linzell** et al.). An imm was observed 8 Feb in *Avon* Lk (**D. Sanders**).



This unusual young red-shouldered hawk was photographed 18 Jan 2004 at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati by Lori Brumbaugh, who offered the following observations: 'The feet are GRAY, no rufous anywhere except a touch of it on the primaries after the crescent. The bird is white from the front with a few streaks near the throat, few spots down the sides. The brown back has white mottling. The crown/nape feathers stick out.'

Red-tailed Hawk: A dark-morph bird was in *Hamilton* 21 Dec (**D. Brinkman**).

Rough-legged Hawk: A good showing by a species whose summer haunts are as far north of us as Miami is south. **R. Sempier** estimated 25 at Killdeer Plains WA 3 Jan, **T. Bartlett** counted 14 in *Seneca* 24 Jan, and **L. Rosche** ~30 in Meigs Twp, *Muskingum* 19 and 26 Feb.

Golden Eagle: Wintered for the eighth consecutive year at The Wilds in *Muskingum*, with a bird first noted 11 Dec, and a night roost of two through the eop (**A. Parker**), and two imm and at least one adult there 29 Feb (**C. Caldwell** et al.). An imm seen near *Zoar*, *Tuscarawas* (**D. Kramer**) 9 Feb may have been one of these birds, as might an imm seen 8 and 13 Jan at *Egypt Valley* WA (*Belmont*) by **D. Smith**. But

maybe not.

Merlin: About two dozen reports from around the state, including groups at cemeteries in Cincinnati and Cleveland (see short note in this issue), reflecting an increasing presence at urban sites in N. America in recent years. Why they seem to like graveyards so much is an interesting question.

Peregrine Falcon: Eleven winter reports, most of which we can easily attribute to released birds associated with urban nesting sites.

Prairie Falcon: On 15 Feb **M. Flynn** et al. discovered a prairie falcon in Meigs Twp. in *Muskingum*. The bird was seen intermittently by m obs through 7 Mar, when **J. McCormac** and **B. Master** were the last to report it. Details with the OBRC. Ohio's third or fourth record, it elicited memories of persistent, undocumented, but nonetheless interesting reports of this species here and at Killdeer Plains in this and recent years.

Virginia Rail: Three were heard south of Holmesville through Dec and Jan (**B. Glick**). **C. Rieker** found two at *Abram's Lake* 28 Dec for the *Lakewood* CBC, with no subsequent reports. The probable continuation of overwintering at SVWA was signaled by the discovery of one there 8 Feb (**R. Kolde**).

Common Moorhen: Quite unexpected was a young bird found on the 7 Dec ONWRC.

American Coot: At Camp Dennison, 400 on 22 Dec dwindled only to 200 by the eop (**B. Foppe**), and doubtless aided the *Cincinnati* CBC's total of 526 on 28 Dec. A few hung on as always in the frozen north, with the perennial *Lorain Harbor* flock at 31 on 2 Jan (**V. Fazio**) and 10 on the 4 Jan ONWRC.

Sandhill Crane: Over a thousand birds were reported in western parts of the state during Dec, the high count 226 over *Greene* on the 1st (**T. Shively**). This species is wintering further north with each passing year recently: **J. Castrale** of the *Indiana DNR* reported 24,619 at *Jasper-Pulaski SWA* 18 Dec, the high count there for the entire year. Three mid-winter reports, totaling 125 birds, came from the *Cincinnati* area, and returnees were probably involved in **B. Shively**'s report of 21 at KPWA on 22 Feb, and **D. Kramer**'s sighting of a likely local pair and 13 likely migrants at *Killbuck WA* 24 Feb.

Semipalmated Plover: One discovered by the OWNRC census team 7 Dec probably represented a new late record for the state.



A happy killdeer pair frolic in Muskingum County. Photo by Robert Royse in late February 2004.

Killdeer: The EFSP CBC's total of 100 on 21 Dec was quite noteworthy. Mid-winter reports further north included three in *Fairfield* 10 Jan (**J. Watts**), three to seven in *Butler* 10 Jan-30 Jan (**M. Busam**), four at *Caesar Ck SP* 14-21 Jan (**L. Gara**), two in *Holmes* 19-20 Jan (**E. Schlabach**), and two 24 Jan at *Walborn Res.*, *Stark* (**B. Morrison**).

Greater Yellowlegs: One was heard for the *Adams* CBC of 14 Dec (**B. Master**), and a yellowlegs sp. in *Athens* 10 Dec was likely this species (**L. Andrews**).

Purple Sandpiper: Three remained at *Conneaut* 8 Dec (**P. Gardner**), and one was at *HBSP* 11-12 Dec (ph **L. Rosche**). Another

foraging on the ice at *Eastlake* was quite noteworthy on the late date of 25 Jan (**J. Kuenzli**).

Dunlin: The ONWRC had one at *Ottawa* 7 Dec, and **P. Gardner** three at *Conneaut* and one at *Walnut Beach, Ashtabula*, the following day. Birds were reported at *Conneaut* the longest, with four there 29 Dec (**C. Holt**) and two on 3 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**).

Wilson's Snipe: Later migrant high count was six in *Carroll* 7 Dec. January birds are rarer, and included two in Dayton the 1st (**D. Dister**) and singletons in *Wayne* the 10th (**S. Snyder**), *Geauga* the 21st (**P. Lozano**), SVWA the 24th (**R. Kolde**), and *Holmes* the 28th (**G. Miller**). One in *Butler* on 11 Feb (**M. Busam**) must have endured the winter here, but six at MWW 28 Feb were more likely early arrivals (**N. Cade**).

American Woodcock: On the late side were three 14 Dec in Columbus (**E. Grody**). One was detected at Firestone MP in Akron 31 Jan (**J. Reyda**, **E. Pierce**). First reports of probable returnees came 10 Feb from *Washington* (**S. Vincent**) and *Coshocton* (**G. Miller**).

Pomarine Jaeger: One enlivened the Lorain CBC 20 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**).



This third-winter "Nelson's" gull, a hybrid glaucous X herring, was one of several at East 72nd St. in Cleveland on 1 February 2004. Photo by John Pogacnik.

Ring-billed Gull: Their numbers, probably augmented by young birds gathering to retreat with deep cold, reached ~110,000 at Lorain 7 Jan (**V. Fazio**) and ~90% of an estimated 100,000 gulls in Cleveland 12 Jan (**K. Metcalf**). Earlier, 5508 on the Western Hamilton CBC of 21 Dec was an all-time record. **J. Pogacnik** tallied 8960 passing LSR 22 Feb.

California Gull: Birds were well documented in Lorain (ad basic) on 3 Jan, and in Cleveland (third-winter) 8 Jan. Reports are with the OBRC.

Herring Gull: Both **K. Metcalf** (17 Jan) and **L. Rosche** (25 Jan) estimated the E 72nd St flock at

58



Guarding a morsel, this third-winter "Nelson's" gull, a hybrid glaucous X herring, was repeatedly seen at East 72nd St. in Cleveland. Photo by Gary Meszaros on 19 January 2004.

Laughing Gull: Akron's bird of the fall persisted through 1 Dec (**G. Bennett**).

Franklin's Gull: An imm bird made the 20 Dec Lorain CBC list.

Little Gull: A second-year bird was another singularity for the Lorain CBC 20 Dec.

Bonaparte's Gull: Excellent numbers persisted until the onset of bitter cold. **V. Fazio** estimated 38,000 at Lorain Harbor 7 Jan, and **L. Rosche** 2500 at E 72nd St in Cleveland 13 Jan, where only a single straggler was noted by **C. Holt** on 25 Jan. Where they went is hinted at by **S. Landes**'s sighting of three in Columbus 13 Jan, and **C. Carver**'s of four on 16 Jan at EFSP.



This apparent hybrid herring X lesser black-backed gull was at Lorain Harbor, 29 February 2004. Photo by John Pogacnik.

The Ohio Cardinal



Typical first-winter glaucous gull at East 72nd St. in Cleveland on 1 February 2004. Photo by Gary Meszaros.

birds generated 15 reports from Cleveland and Lorain, with the latest of two adults at the latter location 22 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: Inland reports came from Berlin Res 18 Dec (**B. Morrison**) and Castalia 8 Feb (**J. Burtt**). One made the 14 Dec Toledo CBC, but 24 reports arose from the Central Basin, with a minimum of ten birds. High count seven (four ad, 2W, 1W) seen at E 72nd St in Cleveland 22 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**).

Glaucous Gull: Plentiful this season, this big gull had 71 reports from *Lucas* to *Ashtabula*, and a high count of 10+ birds in Cleveland 24 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**). At least five "Nelson's gulls," herring X glaucous hybrids, were found and photographed during the period, three (1W, 2W, and 3W) in Cleveland on 1 Feb and the last 29 Feb at Lorain (both **Pogacnik**).

Great Black-backed Gull: Unprecedented numbers of this, the world's largest gull species, gathered in Cleveland in January, peaking at 1500+ the 25th (**L. Rosche**). In the Sandusky Bay area, ~750 was an

10,000+, while **V. Fazio** judged there to have been 20,000+ in Sandusky Bay 7 Jan. **B. Morrison** discovered an albino bird at E. 72nd 9 Jan.

Thayer's Gull: Unusual indeed was an adult in *Logan* 6 Dec (ph, **T. Shively**). A minimum of five birds were represented in 23 reports from the Lake Erie shore, with maxima of three at E. 72 on several occasions, and the latest report of two adults there 22 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**).

Iceland Gull: A minimum of three



An adult glaucous gull in a shouting match with a great black-backed gull at East 72nd St. in Cleveland on 20 January 2004. Photo by Gary Meszaros.



Unprecedented were over 1000 greater black-backed gulls among the throngs at East 72nd St. in Cleveland during January 2004. These few were captured on film by Gary Meszaros on 6 January 2004.

excellent number for 2 Jan (**V. Fazio**). A new southernmost Ohio record was established with a first-winter bird in Gallipolis, *Gallia* 27 Feb (**H. Slack**), previously discovered over the River itself 24 Feb by **W. Argabrite**. An apparent herring X great black-backed hybrid, possibly the same as last winter's, was seen at E 72 on 17 Jan (**K. Metcalf**) and 1 Feb (**J. Pogacnik**).

Black-legged Kittiwake: Rare, an imm passed LSR in *Lake* 13 Jan (**J. Pogacnik**).

Barn Owl: Three CBCs in *Holmes* and *Tuscarawas* reported 18 owls, including a remarkable 11 on the 26 Dec Ragersville count. Another came from the Kingston CBC, with one in *Pickaway*. **G. Miller** reported a pair incubating in *Tuscarawas* by 11 Feb.

Eastern Screech-Owl: Forty-two on the 14 Dec Toledo CBC was a good number.

Snowy Owl: No reports this season, save for a one-day wonder photographed 23 Jan on a roadside fencepost in *Coshocton* (**C. Crook, L.E. Yoder**).



This snowy owl was located east of Coshocton on 3 January 2004. Photo contributed by Leroy E. Yoder.



These long-eared owls grudgingly accommodated Craig Rieker for a photo 1 February 2004.

Long-eared Owl: Reports totaling at least 100 individuals emanated from *Cuyahoga*, *Darke*, *Delaware*, *Hancock*, *Hardin*, *Holmes*, *Logan*, *Lorain*, *Lucas*, *Muskingum*, *Ottawa*, *Pickaway*, *Tuscarawas*, *Union*, *Williams*, and *Wyandot*. Rather than an explosion in the wintering population of

this species, these reports may simply reflect the widespread quiet presence of these owls in suitable habitats in Ohio. Some misidentifications as short-eared owls are apparently taking place as well. Systematic surveys have radically revised understanding of the wintering status of this species in other Midwestern states, as they might here as well. There is fair evidence that roosts of this species grow during the period, as the one at Killdeer Plains WA had reached 26 birds by 22 Feb (**J. Larson**), twelve of which seemed less tolerant of human presence than the others.

Short-eared Owl: Reports of 150+ short-ears came from *Butler*, *Clinton*, *Columbiana*, *Franklin*, *Hamilton*, *Holmes*, *Lucas*, *Marion*, *Muskingum*, *Noble*, *Union*, and *Wyandot* throughout the period, with high count of 31+ in *Muskingum* 23 Feb (**R. Roysse**).

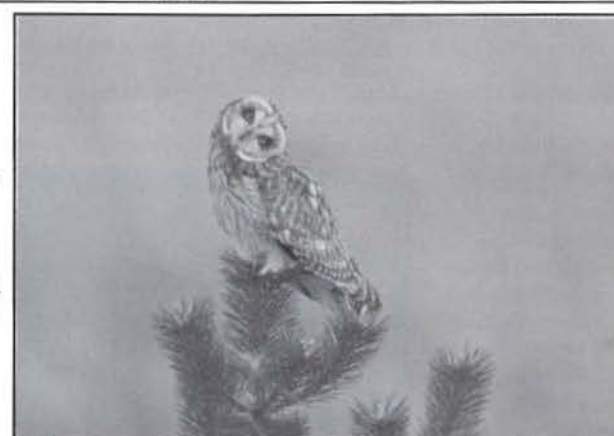
Northern Saw-whet Owl: Ten-plus reported, but we have no idea how many are really around. Many have prolonged stays, such as the Killdeer individuals, two in *Tuscarawas* 26 Dec-eop (**J.A. Miller**), one in a Columbus suburb 25 Jan-20 Feb (**J. Kuenzli, D. Fisher**), and one at Gilmore Ponds again 14 Feb-eop (**B. Lacker, M. Busam**).

Rufous Hummingbird: The recent proliferation of records of *Selasphorus* hummingbirds in Ohio has been abrupt, and explaining this will require time. We had a total of thirteen in Ohio this fall and winter, one more than last year's record total. Birds confirmed as *S. rufus*, either through careful field observation



Diagnostic photo of tail feathers, by Allen Chartier on 15 Dec2003, of state-record longest-staying rufous hummingbird (*Darke* Co). Note that R2 (second tail feather from the right) is "notched," --i.e., not as fully rounded on the outer tip as on the inner.

or in-hand examination, numbered seven, and an eighth report has emerged. This winter's records of *S. rufus* follow: juv ♀ Blendon Wds MP in *Franklin* 1 Nov-25 Dec (**S. Dalton**, m obs); ad ♂ Bath Twp, *Summit*, late Sep-1 Jan (**C&A Miller fide J. Brumfield**, m obs); juv/♀ Carlisle Twp, *Lorain*, 18 Oct-1 Dec (**C. Pribe fide L. Rosche**); juv ♂ Salt Ck Twp, *Muskingum*, early Nov-26 Dec (**M&W Wise fide A. Chartier**); juv ♀ mid-Oct-16 Jan in Middletown, *Butler* (**R. Sauer fide A. Chartier**); juv ♀ early Sept-23 Jan Greenville, *Darke* (new record late date for Ohio) (**C. Fetzer fide A. Chartier**); juv ♀



This short-eared owl entertained photographer Robert Roysse in Muskingum County, February 2004.

two on 10 Jan in *Coshocton*, **R. Rogers** one in *Hocking* 21 Jan, and **C. Wolcott** another in Columbus 27 Jan. As usual, Kelleys Island took the cake, with 23 hermit thrushes on a chilly 24 Jan (**T. Bartlett**).

Gray Catbird: Ten reports came from the far south, and farther north one was in *Williams* 14 Dec (**L. Ohman**), another in *Lake* 20 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**), one in *Wayne* 27 Dec (**T. Leslie**), and one at Pickerel Ck WA 2 Jan (**V. Fazio**). A catbird was in *Hamilton* through 14 Feb (**A. Gaynor**).

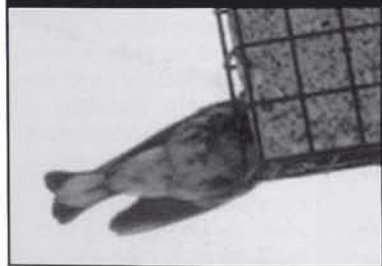
Brown Thrasher: Seven were reported after the really cold weather set in, the northernmost of them one in *Franklin* 30 Jan (**R. Thorn**).

American Pipit: Defied conventional understanding even more than last winter. With only a few CBC results available, reported December numbers totaled 178, led by 46 on the Millersburg CBC of 16 Dec and 76 on the EFSP CBC of 21 Dec. January reports totaled 31 (27 of them past mid-month), including 20+ on 22 Jan in *Tuscarawas* (**W. Sarno**) and three in *Butler* 31 Jan (**M. Busam**). February birds amounted to 36, led by 28 probable migrants on the 29th (**E. Schlabach**) in *Holmes*.

Orange-crowned Warbler: **R. Royle** discovered one in Columbus 8 Dec that persisted through the 15th. Another was in *Tuscarawas* from early Dec (**E. Schlabach**) through 11 Feb (**G. Miller**); a first-winter ♂ of *orestera*, one of the Rocky Mtns/Great Basin race (**Schlabach**), it represented Ohio's latest, surpassing the previous record by one day.



Photographed by Sean Zadar at his feeder in Cuyahoga Co. 24 Jan 2004, this "Audubon's" form of yellow-rumped warbler was a rare occurrence of this western form.



Field Sparrow: The high count of 30 came on the *Adams* CBC of 14 Dec.

Lark Sparrow: Extremely unusual was one found and photographed 21 Dec for the Western Hamilton CBC (**W. Wauligman**). One of two documented Ohio winter records.

Yellow Warbler: Also phenomenal was a first-year ♂ seen 1 Nov through 27 Dec at a feeder in *e. Holmes* (**J. Beachy, E. Schlabach**, ph). Very few winter records of this one.

"Audubon's" Warbler: One of the western race *aububoni* of the yellow-rumped warbler, quite rare in Ohio, frequented **S. Zadar's** suet feeder 24-26 Jan; it was photographed and subsequently determined to be an adult ♂.

Pine Warbler: Two males were in song at Winton Wds in *Hamilton* 18 Feb, representing the second-earliest arrival of the species ever recorded (**F. Renfrow**).

Palm Warbler: One came to a feeder in Walnut Creek, *Holmes* 11-31 Jan (**J.A. Miller**) for a very choice record.

Common Yellowthroat: Four were reported during Dec, but only one in Jan—in the CVNP on the 10th (**D. Chasar**).

American Tree Sparrow: This attractive species was customarily present in good numbers, such as 307 on the 1 Feb ONWRC.

Chipping Sparrow: After the first week of Jan, only three were reported: one, continuously 26 Dec-22 Feb in *Hamilton* (**N. Keller**), on 1 Feb in *Tiffin* (**T. Bartlett**), and another 28 Feb at *MWW* (**N. Cade**).

Savannah Sparrow: Deep-winter records included five on 1 Jan in *Holmes* (**E. Schlabach**), one at KPWA 2 Jan (**D. Sanders**), three in *Stark* 6 Jan (**B. Morrison**), six in *Tuscarawas* 24 Jan (**Schlabach**), one in *Wyandot* 30 Jan (**J. Larson**), and one in *Secor Pk* in *Lucas* 2 Feb (**T. Kemp**).

Grasshopper Sparrow: One at HBSP 27 Dec (**K. Metcalf**) was quite late.

Henslow's Sparrow: One was documented for the Cincinnati CBC of 28 Dec. If accepted, this will be Ohio's second documented winter Henslow's sparrow.

Fox Sparrow: Nineteen reported in the Cincinnati during the period, six in Dayton 10 Jan (**D. Dister**), and a surprising seven wintered in Toledo (**T. Kemp**). Another dozen were reported from *Cuyahoga, Lucas, Franklin, and Hocking* during the period.

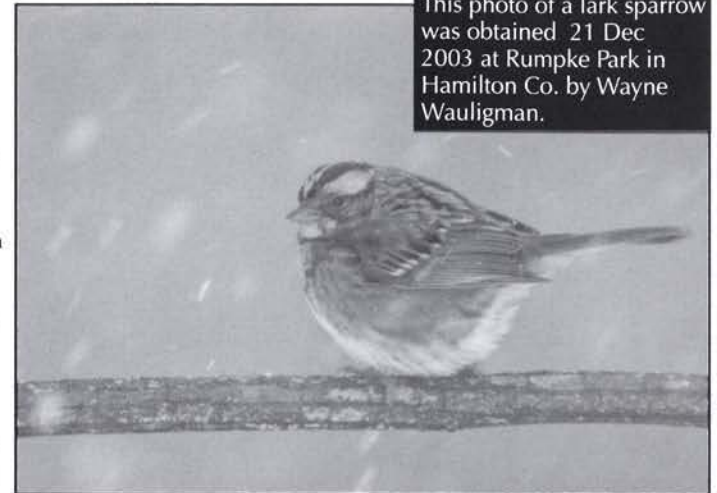
Lincoln's Sparrow: At least three CBCs reported Lincoln's—on 14 Dec the Toledo and Lake Erie Isl counts, and on 16 Dec the Millersburg count.

Swamp Sparrow: The Toledo CBC's count of 285 birds was extraordinary, but they had other enormous sparrow numbers as well. **J. Watts** kicked up 24 in *Franklin* 10 Jan, the same day **D. Chasar** had 2-3 in *Jaite* in the CVNP, and **D. Overacker** two in *Champaign*. **T. Bartlett** reported 17 from balmy Kelleys Island 24 Jan.

White-throated



This photo of a lark sparrow was obtained 21 Dec 2003 at Rumpke Park in Hamilton Co. by Wayne Wauligman.



Robert Royle snapped a shot of this white-throated sparrow bundled up for the snow in Columbus during January 2004.



Lapland longspurs put on quite a show along TH 112 in Wyandot Co. Robert Royle took this portrait there during January 2004.

Sparrow: Present in good numbers this season, a particularly good one being 141 on the 14 Dec Toledo CBC.

White-crowned Sparrow: Not to be outdone by its congener, white-crowns numbered an excellent 225 for the Toledo CBC of 14 Dec.

Lapland Longspur: Agricultural improvements at a favored spot in *Marion* adjacent to KPWA drove Laplands away, but birds were in *Wyandot*: **R. Counts** counted 300+ there on 16 Jan, then 725, some in full song, there 24 Feb, and 1100+ there the following day.

Elsewhere, nine were in *Holmes* 30 Jan (**E. Schlabach**), 80 in *Butler* 1 Feb (**P. Wharton**), and the high count of 1500+ over SW *Lucas* on 29 Feb (**T. Kemp**).



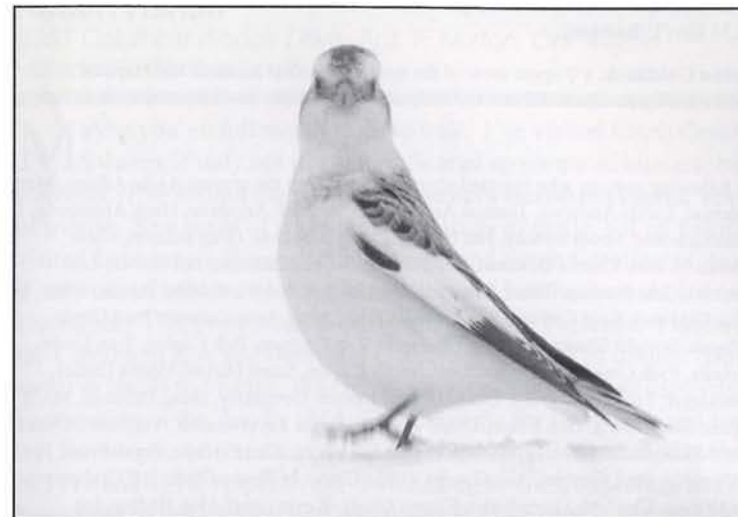
There's nothing like a small pile of manure to gather a crowd, as snow buntings and horned larks line up for tickets. Photographer Bob Finkelstein was in the thick of it along SR 18 south of Bellevue on 31 January 2004.

Snow Bunting: Good numbers by mid-winter: ~100 were in *Portage* 18-20 Jan (**L. Rosche**), "hundreds" near GLSM 25 Jan (**J. Bowers**), 700+ in *Holmes* 29 Jan (**B. Jackson**), then ~500 in a *Wayne* flock 31 Jan (**E. Schlabach**). Elsewhere, 150 were in *Mahoning* 31 Jan (**B&D Lane**), 402 in *Butler* 1 Feb (**P. Wharton**), and 300 in *Wyandot* 7 Feb (**R. Counts**); **Counts** later observed 100+ perching uncharacteristically on utility wires there 28 Feb.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A very rare winter bird, a female was satisfactorily described by **L. Brumbaugh** at a Caesar Ck SP sunflower-seed feeder 18 Jan.

Indigo Bunting: Another winter rarity, an adult ♀ was described at Resthaven WA in *Erie* 1 Jan (**V. Fazio**).

Dickcissel: One photographed at a feeder 23 Jan in *Knox* (**B. Glick**) remained 3 Jan (**N. Lowe**). At a feeder in *Wyandot* was another 25 Jan (**K. Fredritz fide T. Bartlett**). A third was seen but once in *Athens* 4 Feb (**S. Schafer**). Three reports in one winter is highly unusual, but the number of attentive and



Snow buntings, like this individual, were regular visitors along TH 112 in Wyandot Co. Photo by Robert Royse during January 2004.

knowledgeable observers is growing.

Eastern Meadowlark: The *Adams* CBC tallied 123 on 14 Dec, and on 26 Dec 34 were at KPWA (**R. Lowry**). The VOA harbored 30 (**N. Cade**) and e. *Holmes* 45 (**E. Schlabach**) on 1 Jan, an area in *Seneca* 23 on 24 Jan (**T. Bartlett**), and Meigs Twp in *Muskingum* ~100 on 29 Feb (**B. Whan**).

Rusty Blackbird: Mid-winter birds included one at SVWA 1 Jan (**D. Dister**), two in *Clark* 13 Jan (**D. Overacker**), and ~50 at KPWA 11 Jan (**R. Sempier**).

Brewer's Blackbird: Five (three ♀) were reported in *Wyandot* 26 Dec (**R. Counts**), one for the Gypsum CBC on 1 Jan (**C. Rieker**), and two far to the east in *Columbiana* 13 Feb (**C. Holt**).

Common Grackle: Dwarfing numbers of all other species on the Kingston CBC was an enormous flock estimated at 85,000 in *Ross* 3 Jan (**B. Whan et al.**).

Brown-headed Cowbird: **K. Metcalf** reported the last to depart from *Geauga* on 24 Dec. **E. Snively** encountered 300+ in *Wayne* 16 Jan.

Purple Finch: Numbers up this winter, with more in the south as usual. Up to five were in *Coshocton* 5&6 Jan (**L. Deininger**). Six were in *Hocking* (**P. Knoop**) and two in *Logan* 6 Dec (**T. Shively**). Up to 40 were seen through the period at Caesar Ck Sp feeders (m obs). The *Adams* CBC (which has never missed the species, and has a record count of 261) had 51 on 14 Dec. Jan 24 brought 11 to SVWA (**R. Kolde**) and three to Kelleys Isl (**T. Bartlett**). Five were at Slate Run MP in *Pickaway* 30 Jan (**A. Haslage**), one was a find in *Van Wert* 25 Feb (**J. Perchalski**), and five were in *Clermont* 29 Feb (**D. Morse**).

White-winged Crossbill: Reports of a male 7-22 Dec, and a female 7 Dec-13 Jan, came from *Richland* (**J. Herman fide R. Harlan**).

Common Redpoll: Scattered and seldom numerous. Reports from *Cuyahoga*, *Erie*, *Hamilton*, *Holmes*, *Lucas*, *Medina*, *Paulding*, *Preble*, *Richland*, and *Wyandot*. High count 20 on a single occasion in *Hamilton* 22 Jan (**J. Cade**). Two in *Paulding* 9 Dec were the **Dunakins'** third in 24 years. Recorded as far south as Georgia this winter.

Pine Siskin: Local and fairly numerous. Good counts included 30 in *Logan* 1 Dec (**T. Shively**), 30+ in Columbus 8 Dec (**R. Cressman**), 45 in *Lucas* in early Jan (**T. Kemp**), 50 on 10 Jan in *Hamilton* (**L. Brumbaugh**), ~40 in Oak Openings MP in *Lucas* 23 Jan (**J. Watts**), and 27 in Mohican SP 28 Jan (**G. Miller**). Became scarcer in Feb.

Evening Grosbeak: **B. Jacksy** reported a ♀ in *Lucas* 12 Dec, and **D. Horn** one at KPWA 29 Jan. All

other reports came from in or near Mohican SP during Jan (*Ashland and Knox*), with a high count of two at a feeder in the park 31 Jan (**T. Bartlett**).

Exotic species: **Eurasian Goldfinch**: a ♀ spent most of the winter at feeders south of Mt. Hope in *Holmes*; photographed 31 Jan by **B. Glick**. Almost certainly an escaped bird.

We are grateful to the following persons who reported observations during the season: Angie Adkins, Matt Anderson, Nancy Anderson, Lynda Andrews, Thomas Archdeacon, Wendell Argabrite, Hank Armstrong, Tom Bartlett, Erich Baumgardner, James Beachy, Jim Bednarik, Jon Benedetti, Greg Bennett, Chris Betrus, Brad Bolton, Mike Bolton, Charlie Bombaci, Jill Bowers, David Brinkman, Jeff Brown, Lori Brumbaugh, Jen Brumfield, Gina Buckley, Chuck Buechele, Don Burlett, Jed Burt, Mike Busam, Jason Cade, Neill Cade, Craig Caldwell, Kyle Carlsen, Ron Carter, Craig Carver, John Castrale, Paul Chad, Allen Chartier, Ann Chasar, Dwight Chasar, Suzanne Clingman, Tim Colburn, Bob Conlon, Sam Corbo, Ralph Corley, Rick Counts, Rich Cressman, Chris Crook, Becky Cullen, Sarah Dalton, Donna Daniel, Laura Daniele, Leo Deininger, Fred Dinkelbach, David Dister, Russell Dougherty, Doug Dunakin, Micki Dunakin, Curt Dusthimer, Jason Estep, Bob Evans, Ginny Fantetti, Linda Fayerweather, Vic Fazio, Duane Ferris, Cathy Fetzer, Bob Finkelstein, Mike Flynn, Bob Foppe, Tom Ford, Kim Fredritz, Frank Frick, Jim Fry, Larry Gara, Lou Gardella, Paul Gardner, Ann Gayner, Dante Giancola, Bruce Glick, Jeff Grabmeier, Darlena Graham, Bret Graves, Charlotte Greenfelder, Elayna Grody, Kevin Groff, Don Hadley, Joe Hammond, Sharon Hanse, Lois Harder, Betty Hardesty, Rob Harlan, Andrea Haslage, Jim Haw, Christine Hawley, Jeff Hays, Bill Heck, Stan Hedeon, Dave Helm, Michele Hendrick, John Herman, Jim Hickman, Hank Hiris, Sally Hiris, Dave Hochadel, Judy Hochadel, Levi Hochstetler, Dick Hoffman, Jean Hoffman, Craig Holt, Dave Horn, Bill Jackson, Bob Jacksy, Julie Karlson, Ned Keller, Tom Kemp, Isaac Kerns, Molly Kerry, Everitt Kitchen, Ron Kolde, Paul Knoop Jr, Marijo Knowles, Dan Kramer, John Kraus, Mike Kroeger, John Kuenzli, Bob Lacker, Steve Landes, Bob Lane, Denise Lane, Jason Larson, Amy Lavy, Jay Lehman, Gabe Leidy, Tim Leslie, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Norman Lowe, Rob Lowry, Paula Lozano, Bernard Master, Charlotte Mathena, Jim McCormac, Kathy McDonald, Eric McElroy, Joe McMahon, Julie Means, Brian Menker, Gary Meszaros, Kevin Metcalf, Jim McCormac, Bruce Miller, Greg Miller, Kent Miller, Ben Morrison, Donald Morse, Heather Nagy, Ed Neubauer, Melvin Nisely, Lach Ohman, Ann Oliver, Helen Ostermiller, Ken Ostermiller, Doug Overacker, Al Parker, John Perchalski, Stacy Peterson, Haans Petruschke, Ed Pierce, Bob Placier, Don Plant, John Pogaenic, Cathy Priebe, Scott Reeves, Frank Renfrow, Steve Richards, Richard Rickard, Craig Rieker, Bill Rinehart, Bryn Roberts, Keith Robinson, Randy Rogers, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Ed Roush, Larry Rosche, Bob Royse, Dave Russell, Dan Sanders, Randy Sanders, Bob Sargent, Willie Sarno, R.G. Sauer, Steve Schafer, Regina Schieltz, Jessica Schultz, Ron Sempier, Bill Shively, Troy Shively, John Shrader, Diana Shuler, Thomas Simmons, Harry Slack, Tim Smart, Dave Smith, Nick Smith, Tom Smith, Elaine Snively, Su Snyder, Doug Snapp, Chris Spagnoli, Brad Sparks, Bill Stanley, Jay Stenger, Mike Sweeney, John Switzer, Sue Tackett, Carol Takacs, Rob Thorn, Elliot Tramer, Jane Van Coney, Sandy Vincent, Sandy Wagner, Suzanne Wagner, John Watts, Wayne Wauligman, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, John Wilson, Connie Wolcott, Alan Wormington, John Yochum, Leroy E. Yoder, Marvin Yoder, Sheryl Young, Sean Zadar, Bill Zimmerman, Mark Zloba. We gratefully acknowledge information received from the editors of *The Bobolink* and internet resources managed by Ned Keller and Chuck Anderson. Thanks to Allen Chartier for tireless labors and first-rate documentations for many of the season's hummingbird records. 🐦

Further Afield

Robert Harlan

3361 Columbia Woods Drive, Apt. F, Norton, OH 44203
kiskadee96@hotmail.com

Maybe you've followed the same trail. I've visited South Carolina's I'on Swamp, if only out of tribute. Scared up plenty of hunters, but no Bachman's warblers. I've visited the pastures of western Galveston Island, Texas, if only out of tribute. Saw wads of whimbrels and scads of cattle, but no Eskimo curlews. I've visited Louisiana's Honey Island Swamp and South Carolina's Congaree Swamp, if only out of tribute. Saw a pile of pileateds, but the ivory-billed somehow eluded me. I've even made the pilgrimage to the Passenger Pigeon Memorial at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, if only out of tribute. Doffed my cap (a rarity in itself) to Martha, the last of her kind, who lived in captivity all her life until succumbing at the Zoo in 1914. Did the same for Lady Jane and Incas, the world's last known pair of Carolina parakeets, who also lived and died at the Cincinnati Zoo, in 1917 and 1918, respectively. I visited these sites, expecting nothing, and saw what I expected to see. I think that you might do the same, if only out of tribute.

Sometimes it's altogether too easy to forget *why* you do what you do. As Editor of *The Ohio Cardinal* from 1991 through 1996, until just recently Ohio compiler for *North American Birds*, and currently as a member of the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC), and as, it has been my responsibility and privilege, in conjunction with the efforts of others, to monitor Ohio's birding records; it is a responsibility and a challenge that I take seriously. But frankly, the task is time-consuming, endless and monotonous, and can grow somewhat numbing over a period of years. I realize that bird populations and movements are never static, and their fluctuations always demand careful attention. But for the most part, these movements are readily predictable, coming and going at about the same time, year after year, and in roughly the same numbers, given similar conditions. Of course, various populations trend upwards or downwards, but they usually do so quite slowly, and sometimes almost imperceptibly. But it is precisely these slow, almost imperceptible changes that can be the most pernicious, sneaking up on us and melting away what we didn't even know was in danger.

Personally, I found that years of record keeping had almost served to anesthetize me. Fourteen years is barely a hiccup in the big picture of birding history, but it is long enough to instill a sense of sameness and repetition, despite the vagaries of each particular migration season, and despite the occasional spicy dash of rarities. But I'm glad to say it took only a single visit to Columbus this January to remind me *why* I do what I do, and hopefully, in some small degree, it will also encourage you to do what you can do.

This particular visit was to the Museum of Biological Diversity, part of the College of Biological Sciences at The Ohio State University, as a participant on a recent Kirtland Bird Club field trip. In preparation for our visit, John Condit, our host and the Museum's Curator of Higher Vertebrates, made available a wide variety of bird specimens for our perusal, featuring all of Ohio's warbler species (including, Vol. 27, No. 2 ❖ Winter 2003-04