

A friendly reminder . . .

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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: Brian Zwiebel took this remarkable photo of a trusting juvenal buff-breasted sandpiper in Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula Co. on 4 Oct 2004.

Autumn 2004 Overview and Reports

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The world's ten warmest years in recorded history have all occurred since 1990, with 2004 ranking fourth; this October ranked as the warmest ever. Inuktitut tribes living north of the Arctic Circle were puzzled this year by the appearance of insects they'd never seen; it turned out they were the vespid wasps we know familiarly as yellowjackets. Here in Ohio, August was actually cool—2.9 degrees below normal—but the months that followed were warmer than average, with November 2.5 degrees up. October and November were wet, with rains running about an inch above normal statewide, due in large part to the effects of hurricanes to our south.

Warm weather and open water up north kept waterfowl and the scarcer gulls away until quite late in the period, and encouraged some perching birds to linger with the persistence of insect prey. Several observers noticed that insects inhabiting "flags" of dead leaves in trees affected by periodical cicadas this summer had attracted unusual numbers of migrant warblers, vireos, etc. Three big storms out of the southwest in November raised hopes of rarities, as did deep snow in the western mountains. Fluctuations of various seed crops in Canada brought good numbers of pine siskins, purple finches, and red-breasted nuthatches, but there were few signs that grosbeaks or crossbills were to follow suit. Great gray owls, boreal owls, and northern hawk owls in record numbers invaded areas to our north, but did not reach Ohio.

With many reservoirs and impoundments full, shorebird reports were mostly restricted to Conneaut Harbor, Berlin Reservoir, and Ottawa NWR (which commendably and successfully managed a couple of impoundments for migrant shorebirds this fall). Meanwhile, a seemingly unproductive locale on Findlay Reservoir #1---wide slopes of riprap, deep water, and narrow graveled dike-top roadways---produced shorebirds of fifteen species during two weeks---all without a square foot of shallow water or mudflat!

Two individual birds—a prairie falcon and a rufous hummingbird—both rarities from the West, made history by showing up in the same spots in the same county—Muskingum—for the second consecutive fall season. As a friend reminded us, this site fidelity makes it look foolish to call these birds "lost." Eleven other review species were reported this fall: Ross's goose, western grebe, *Plegadis ibis* (6), yellow rail, piping plover, black-necked stilt (4-5), least tern, white-winged dove, varied thrush (2), Kirtland's warbler, and Harris's sparrow. The newly-split cackling goose seems unlikely to receive review species status, as increased scrutiny of Canada goose flocks by birders yielded reports of no fewer than thirteen of these diminutive high-Arctic breeders in their "inaugural" migration. Merlins added two more older urban cemeteries to their chosen haunts during the season. Several six-figure flocks of blackbirds were reported.