

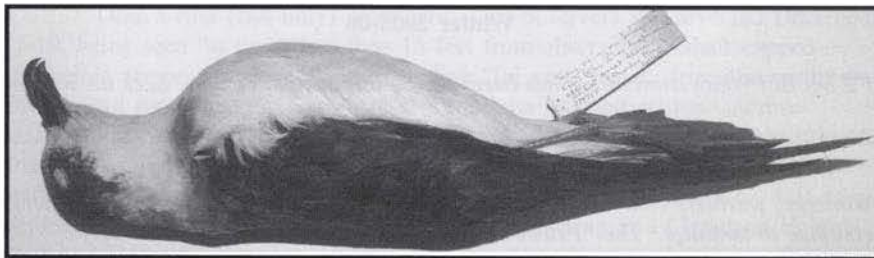
Short Note: Ohio's Black-capped Petrel Records

by Robert Foppe
5476 Mt. Zion Road, Milford OH 45150
fopsinc@aol.com

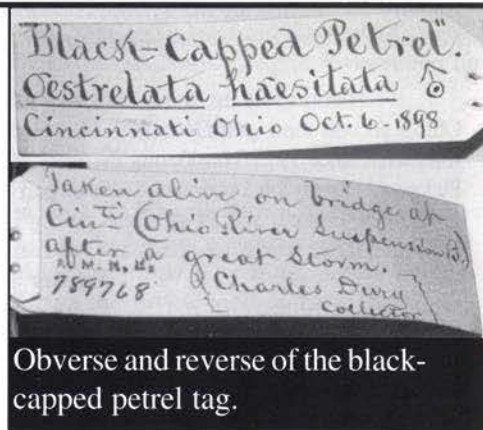
As recently as three years ago there was an effort to uncover some of the mysteries behind the appearance of black-capped petrels in the Cincinnati area after a hurricane passage in October 1898. You can read Bill Whan's article in the *Ohio Cardinal* Vol. 26 (2):71-76.

The article makes it clear some questions remain about the occurrence of the petrels. First, exactly how many birds were involved? Second, were the birds ever actually in Ohio? Third, are there any specimens still in existence other than the one housed at the Cincinnati Museum Center?

While I wish I could answer the first two questions, I do not have any relevant new information. As to the third, I have come across another specimen. The specimen was found in the ornithology collection of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH). Thanks to Tom Trombone of AMNH, we know the specimen was in the collection of Dr. Leonard C. Sanford and the tag reveals it was a male collected by Charles Dury on the suspension bridge in Cincinnati on 10/5/1898. Given this information, it seems this is the specimen dug up from the manure heap at the Cincinnati Zoo by Dury. There were reports that Dury had sold this specimen, but no one was positive as to who bought it, where it went, and where the specimen is today. From the information provided by the AMNH, skin #749105 appears to be that missing Dury specimen. Dr. Sanford (1868-1950), of New Haven, CT, was an enthusiastic collector. As an AMNH trustee, he was a very significant benefactor to its collections.



Lateral view of the Ohio black-capped petrel skin discovered at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.



Obverse and reverse of the black-capped petrel tag.

The 2005-2006 Christmas Bird Counts

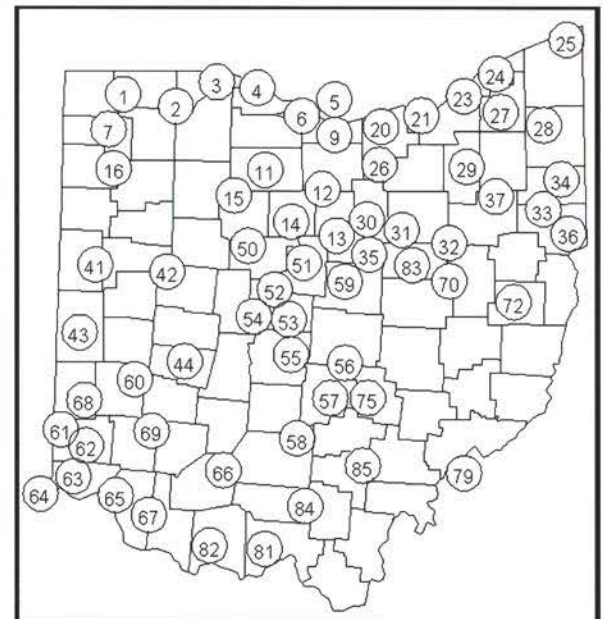
Ned Keller
7899 Bridgetown Rd., Cleves, OH 45002
keller@one.net

The following tables present results from 64 CBC circles, including a new one, Caesar Creek/Spring Valley, whose 88 species were the state's second highest. Millersburg took high species count honors with 95. Other high circles were Cincinnati (87 species); Cuyahoga Falls (85); Adams Co., Brown Family Educational Center, Ottawa N.W.R., and Toledo (all with 84); and Hamilton-Fairfield (84). We found a total of 155 species statewide this year, up from last year's 150, plus three additional species count week.

The list includes fully 23 species found in only a single circle. One species not listed is northern saw-whet owl. A few years ago, I wouldn't have been too surprised that none of this notoriously secretive species were found, though we have in fact found at least one in each of the past ten years. But recent banding studies show they are far more common than we thought. The Lake Monroe, Indiana counters found nine this year by playing tapes. Ohio counters should take that number as a challenge for next year.

In an invasion year for red-breasted nuthatches, we found 869, on 60 of the 64 counts. Over the past ten years, we managed to find them on no more than 50 counts. Other species normally quite scarce were easier to find this year, for example gray catbird and chipping sparrow. Both species are the subject of regular misidentifications, but these numbers are far too high to be explained by errors. Still, the only rare warblers found this year were the semi-expected pine warbler, palm warbler and common yellowthroat.

As in past years, I have attempted to report the results as I received them, without editorial comment on doubtful records. Anyone wishing to use these data for serious purposes should verify them with the individual count compilers.



Map numbers correspond to count numbers in the following reports.

Christmas Bird Count Results

	Tiffin 12/17/2005 (11)	Toledo 12/18/2005 (3)	Trumbull County 12/18/2005 (28)	Wellington 12/17/2005 (26)	Western Hamilton County 12/18/2005 (63)	Wilmore 12/17/2005 (32)	Wooster 12/24/2005 (31)	Youngstown 12/17/2005 (34)	Total	Circles, Count Day	Circles, Count Week
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	cw	39	16	19
Eastern Bluebird	42	2	58	42	79	328	150	14	4524	62	62
Swainson's Thrush	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	2	2
Hermil Thrush	--	2	--	--	10	6	1	--	290	34	35
American Robin	1	151	22	12	9497	20	14	41	45457	61	61
Gray Catbird	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	17	12	12
Northern Mockingbird	--	1	--	--	51	98	12	6	960	45	45
Brown Thrasher	1	--	--	--	2	1	2	--	15	11	12
European Starling	817	4406	612	1840	10012	2638	1656	485	237720	64	64
American Pipit	--	1	--	--	--	cw	1	--	51	10	11
Cedar Waxwing	--	5	91	--	89	19	91	5	1988	39	39
Yellow-rumped Warbler	6	--	6	8	35	26	13	--	861	46	46
Pine Warbler	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	2
Palm Warbler	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	0	0	1
Common Yellowthroat	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	2	1	1
Eastern Towhee	--	--	2	1	72	45	21	1	1055	43	46
American Tree Sparrow	567	655	365	121	536	857	452	42	14759	63	63
Chipping Sparrow	--	--	--	5	1	5	--	--	71	17	17
Field Sparrow	--	4	--	1	41	6	4	--	706	40	40
Vesper Sparrow	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	4	3	3
Savannah Sparrow	--	--	--	--	11	2	1	--	46	11	11
Grasshopper Sparrow	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	1
Fox Sparrow	3	8	--	--	5	cw	2	--	94	35	37
Song Sparrow	109	88	46	54	1024	842	261	36	12632	64	64
Lincoln's Sparrow	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	1	1
Swamp Sparrow	--	12	10	--	79	21	59	2	800	43	43
White-throated Sparrow	10	56	39	40	696	174	115	10	7922	63	64
White-crowned Sparrow	14	4	8	30	22	539	146	5	3696	52	53
sparrow sp.	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	153	7	7
Dark-eyed Junco	542	351	190	287	521	886	208	116	18411	64	64
Lapland Longspur	1	17	--	--	11	22	1	--	1241	21	21
Snow Bunting	49	109	--	--	--	113	2	cw	2563	22	23
Northern Cardinal	225	230	171	177	950	1014	356	60	19462	64	64
Dickcissel	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	1
Red-winged Blackbird	13	13	--	--	88	806	374	cw	5102	37	42
Eastern Meadowlark	--	3	--	--	15	64	4	cw	400	29	30
Rusty Blackbird	2	3	--	--	--	50	--	--	154	14	16
blackbird sp.	--	--	--	--	--	66	375	--	1282	8	8
Common Grackle	45	286	--	--	42	42	862	--	25342	42	42
Brown-headed Cowbird	10	451	--	--	1	299	504	1	3586	44	46
Baltimore Oriole	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	1
Purple Finch	--	--	4	--	--	--	--	cw	171	20	21
House Finch	153	204	113	69	246	260	92	39	8044	62	62
White-winged Crossbill	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	1
Common Redpoll	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	cw	7	1	2
Pine Siskin	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	80	16	20
American Goldfinch	207	274	146	53	447	585	119	80	13080	64	64
Evening Grosbeak	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	cw	0	0	1
finch sp.	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	15	1	1
House Sparrow	999	1352	180	175	818	1411	550	125	33484	63	63
total species	56	84	53	55	75	77	80	53	155		
total individuals	8625	34204	8982	8582	40200	19782	13854	8174	968447		
observers	26	26	7	24	38	67	28	14	1434		
party hours	35.25	58.00	49.50	50.50	98.50	134.50	91.25	35.50	4135.00		

Historical Note: An Extraordinary Harris's Sparrow Record

By Dean E. Sheldon,

4569 Greenwich-Milan Townline Road, Greenwich, OH 44837

seedbed@accnorwalk.com

For the record, it was I who made the initial sighting of the bird that snowy Saturday. I knew it was different upon first seeing it: the black crown, face, and bib, and the pink bill were unique. Steps were taken to verify the sighting. In the old Peterson guide I had used that morning, there is a notation in my handwriting of the date and place: "2/5/72 - Folly." The note is on page 219, just next to the brief reference description of the bird and across from Plate 58 depicting sparrows with unstreaked breasts. The illustration in the field guide immediately validated my observation. With that, I determined that the bird was, indeed, a basic adult Harris's sparrow *Zonotrichia querula*, and set about informing others of my find.

It had happened quite by chance. I was not bird-watching that day. I had gone out to the Folly (since 1979 Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve) to work at a variety of projects as I was wont to do on almost any weekend. I glanced out the west window of the cottage to see if the large feeder mounted on the propane tank needed filling, and there this bird was, on the ground scratching and feeding along with the other birds present. During that time, we fed soybean screenings along with cracked corn at the site. The Harris's sparrow's known propensity for weed seeds in its winter diet may have been a factor in causing the bird to settle in at this location.

We hosted the Harris's sparrow through two full winters. The bird was conspicuously present during the winter seasons of 1972 and 1973, associating with other overwintering sparrows at the feeding area. It was present continuously during those winter months. It was seen only infrequently in the spring, summer, fall and winter of that year, and in 1973 only during the winter. I have no recollection of consistent sightings during any of the other seasons except winter and early spring. It is for that reason that I am unable to comment on any apparent seasonal changes in plumage or appearance. We offered the customary mix of food at the feeders only during the winter and early spring. In those years there were agricultural fields adjacent to the Folly, whose edges and waste corners had plenty of weedy areas. My guess is that is where the bird spent most of its time in the "off season." Its food source of weed seeds and insects was most likely found in those locations. In the late fall, as we resumed feeding, the bird moved back and was usually seen at the bird feeding area.

I do not recall that any twitchers seeking the sparrow came to the Folly except during those times (in the late fall, winter and early spring) when large numbers of birds gathered at the feeding area. After all, that was when the best viewing of the sparrow took place. This vagrant from Canada and the