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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.

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| <b>Seasonal Report Due Dates</b><br>Winter (Dec.-Feb.)-March 25<br>Spring (Mar.-May)-June 25<br>Summer (June-July)-August 25<br>Autumn (Aug.-Nov.)-December 25 | <b>Please send all reports to:</b><br>Bill Whan<br>223 E. Tulane Road<br>Columbus, OH 43202<br><a href="mailto:billwhan@columbus.rr.com">billwhan@columbus.rr.com</a> |
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On the Cover:

Lana Hays took this photo of a banded piping plover at Conneaut on 25 Jul.



## Summer 2006 Overview and Reports

by Bill Whan

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The summer season lasts but two months, and because it represents the breeding season for so many species in Ohio home ranges we do not expect many extralimital rarities. Still, six review species – anhinga, swallow-tailed kite (2), Mississippi kite, piping plover (2), scissor-tailed flycatcher, and loggerhead shrike – were reported (half with photographs); all but the shrike were presumably post-breeding migrants or wanderers. Though both the plovers had nested in Michigan, and the shrike was local, the rest came with distinctly southern accents. Rarities are seldom inexplicably random occurrences, and each comes with lessons to learn.

Why have loggerhead shrikes become rare? Certainly, much of their favored habitat has disappeared, but a lot remains. Though it may not answer this particular question, the new Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas got off to a good start and will greatly expand our knowledge of our nesting avifauna. Increased coverage across the state as a result of OBBA surveys resulted in some interesting new records reflected in the Reports: thanks to the Atlas folks for digging out these data for us. Some very interesting contrasts with the existing Atlas are emerging already, and it will be important to determine whether they reflect distributional changes among birds or merely improved coverage. We will be offering regular reports on the progress and findings of the second OBBA, and encourage every reader to participate: if you cannot take on some blocks of your own, it is almost as much fun to help others with theirs. See the OBBA pages on the OOS web site [ohiobirds.org](http://ohiobirds.org) for details, or use mail and telephone contacts in this issue's *Further Afield*.

As noticed this spring, migratory movements seemed a bit delayed, and a few extraordinary late records were established as a result (an American tree sparrow on 7 June was an all-time record, and a blackpoll warbler on 17 June was at least as rare, though nowhere near as high, as a kite). The number of stragglers found was remarkable. To have reports of 31 warbler species in June and July in Ohio is unusual; last summer it was 23, in 2004 it was 24, and 26 the year before. No doubt the extra scrutiny encouraged by Atlas work led to records of late stays, and of nesting in some new areas. As for the most habitat-sensitive summer migrants, a good showing of shorebirds (in variety, if not in numbers, especially considering only six species breed in the state) veteran observer Craig Holt summarized the situation in this way: "By my reckoning, 23 species put in appearances during June and July [at Conneaut]. I believe five more species were found elsewhere in the state, bringing the total to 28. That's darn good for an Ohio summer season. Imagine how many shorebirds would show up if we had more good habitat." Scan the shorebird reports below to see how important that little scrap of habitat in the NE corner of the state (the only locale for reports of eight shorebird species, and the principal one for many others) remained this season, threatened as it may be in so many ways.

In mid-state, June averaged 1.9 degrees cooler than usual, and July 1.4 degrees warmer; both months were wetter than average, June by .22 inches and July by 1.15. Warm summer air makes for extreme local rainfall, however: Lake County had ten inches of rain on 28 July, with horrific flooding as the Grand River crested 11 feet above flood stage, recreating perforce a lot of prehistoric habitat at Mentor Headlands. The Toledo area marinated in 9.19 inches of rain during July, 6.39 inches more than average. Inconveniences farther south more often involved uncomfortable heat and humidity. Lest readers take hot summers for granted, heed these surprising words from the pen of Ohio's first ornithologist J. P. Kirtland, writing in Cleveland during late June over a century and a half ago: