

Friedman, Jim Fry, Lisa Fusco, Ross Gallardy, Larry Gara, Lou Gardella, Paul Gardner, Sandra Gaunt, Linda Gilbert, Ted Gilliland, Bob Glauser, Bruce Glick, Jeff Grabmeier, Darlena Graham, Lee Gruber, John Habig, Joe Hammond, Ray Hannikman, Betty Hardesty, R&S Harlan, Sandy Harlan, Carol Hathaway, Jim Haw, Lana Hays, Bill Heck, Jim Heflich, John Herman, Dave Hess, Bob Hinkle, Dave Hochadel, Craig Holt, Dave Horn, Gabe Hostetler, Linda Houshower, William Hull, Sally Isacco, Shari Jackson, Bill Jones, Kenn Kaufman, Laura Keene, Ned Keller, Scott Keller, Patty Kellner, Ruth Lapp, Tom Kemp, Bill Kinkead, Ethan Kistler, Jason Krnc, Jo Ann Kubicki, John Kuenzli, Mary Krejci, Frank Kuhlman, Bob & Denise Lane, Jason Larson, Bill



Redpolls staged some impressive movements during the period. John Pogacnik photographed this one at his Lake Co. feeder on 26 Dec.

Leaman, Jay Lehman, Gabe Leidy, Dave Lewis, Greg Links, Doreene Linzell, Jerry Lippert, Bruce Lombardo, Fred Losi, Rob Lowry, Paula Lozano, Carli Martin, Bernard Master, Charlotte Mathena, Bret McCarty, Jim McCormac, Kathy McDonald, Jo McIntosh, Joe McMahon, Steve McNamee, Bob McNulty, Gary Meszaros, Jim Michael, Bruce Miller, Jeffrey A. Miller, Kent Miller, Steve Miller, Mary Misplon, Kathy Mock, Ben Morrison, Donald Morse, Jim Mundy, Scott Myers, E&B Neubauer, Rick Nirschl, Junior Nisely, Nate Nye, Art Osborn, Doug Overacker, Michael Packer, Al Parker, Carol Parsons, Angela Peterson, John Petruzzi, Chris Pierce, Bob Placier, Cindy Ploch, Deb Plotts, John Pogacnik, Bob Powell, Lisa Rainsong, Eric Reiner, Frank Renfrow, Craig Rieker, Bill Rinehart, Bob Roach, Paul Rodewald, Marilyn Rohr, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Jeremiah Roth, Ed Roush, Bob Royse, Dave Russell, Mona Rutger, Bob Sams, Dan Sanders, Linnea Saukko, John Sawvel, Kevin Schieltz, Regina Schieltz, Ed Schlabach, Inga Schmidt, Wilma Seiler, Ron Sempier, Andy Sewell, Walt Shaffer, Paul Sherwood, Julie Shieldcastle, Troy Shively, Darlene Sillick, Bruce Simpson, Shaune Skinner, David Smith, Dennis Smoyer, Doug Snapp, Darlene Snuffer, Su Snyder, Pat Soehnen, Matt Solensky, Greg Spahr, Tim Spahr, Chris Spagnoli, Brad Sparks, Bill Stanley, Jerry Stanley, Gene Stauffer, Ryan Steiner, Jack Stenger, Jay Stenger, Laura Stiefel, Jake Straub, Nina Sudnick, John Szanto, Jill Taber, Rob Thorn, Sandy Tkach, Tim Tolford, Elliot Tramer, Roger Troutman, Tom Uhlman, Manon Van Schoyck, Mark Vass, Doug Vogus, Sam Walker, Ben Warner, Leslie Warren, Mary Warren, John Watts, Wayne Wauligman, Dan Weber, Kirk Westendorf, Bill Whan, Pete Whan, Paul Wharton, Larry Wickliff, Brad Wilkinson, Ransome Williams, Sam Williams, Kelly Williams-Sieg, Scott Wright, Adam H. Yoder, James E. Yoder, Leroy Yoder, Sheryl Young, Scott Younger, Bill Zimmerman, and Brian Zwiebel. We also gratefully acknowledge information received from the editors of the *Bobolink* and the *Cleveland Bird Calendar*, compilers of the fall census of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park D. Vogus and A. Chasar, staff and volunteers for the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II, and internet resources managed by Chuck Anderson, the Ohio Ornithological Society, and Ned Keller.

## Further Afield

by Robert Harlan

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For loyal readers of this column, the following tale should by now be a familiar one. I own a time machine. A real, nuts and bolts time machine. I will purchase it on eBay several decades from now. I keep it out in the garage.

Although many readers readily accept the factual existence of my time machine, especially those residing in the Columbia Woods Drive area of Norton, Ohio, I have been frustrated in my attempts to prove its authenticity to everyone. While I would like to offer every skeptic a personalized guided tour of my time machine quarters, my wife assures me that the garage is far too cluttered at the moment, so that's out. For those grouchy, ill-humored readers who still choose to deny its existence, instead preferring to believe that I compile these columns by gleaning the Ohio ornithological literature and other historical materials, I can only say, as I have said in the past, that the existence of my time machine is every bit as trustworthy as the annual spring arrival of the Hinckley buzzards on precisely March 15. A strong proof, indeed.

Whereas an unkempt garage prohibits me from allowing others to inspect my time machine in person, please instead allow me to take you on a vicarious trip through time. Imagine entering a stylish craft—sleek, dashing, bold—a virtual reflection of its proud owner. Imagine traveling through time to revisit the historical Ohio birding scene at ten-year intervals—an odd application for a time machine, I'll admit, but now its only function, given that (in a fit of technogeekish overconfidence) I jettisoned the owner's manual after programming its original settings. Imagine lurching backwards in time 150 years, from the Fall 2007 season to the Fall 1857 season, and then inching forward at ten-year intervals, all the way back to our day. Imagine what we might find in...

### Fall 1857

*The financial Panic of 1857 is touched off when the New York City branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company fails on August 24. The controversial Mountain Meadows Massacre is committed in Utah Territory September 11; some 120 settlers are killed. The next day, a hurricane engulfs the SS Central America in the deep ocean off South Carolina, carrying at least 15 tons of federal "California Gold Rush" gold to the bottom of the Atlantic.*

Calmly return to your seats as we make our final approach back to the Fall 1857 season. Our search function is set to locate and transport us to interesting Ohio bird sightings as they occur. Our first stop takes us to Rockport (now Lakewood), just west of Cleveland, where legendary naturalist Jared Potter Kirtland reports that a young parasitic jaeger has been shot October 25, accused of harassing local hens. Fowl play is suspected. Moving on....

**Fall 1867**

*Following the close of the American Civil War, President Andrew Johnson extends amnesty to most Confederate leaders September 7. On October 18, the U.S. formally takes possession of Alaska, having purchased it from Russia for \$7.2 million. Many Kiowa, Comanche, Kiowa Apache, Southern Cheyenne, and Southern Arapaho leaders sign a peace treaty with the U.S. government at Medicine Lodge, Kansas, October 21-28.*

We land, only to find no bird sightings during this disquieted season. The recent hostilities may simply be too fresh. Onward....

**Fall 1877**

*Native Americans continue to make headlines. On September 5 or 6, Sioux warrior and leader Crazy Horse is fatally bayoneted at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. Peacemaker Chief Joseph and 418 Nez Perce surrender in Montana Territory October 5, after their 1700-mile journey to reach the Canadian border falls just 40 miles short. Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer is reinterred from the Little Bighorn battle site in Montana Territory to West Point Cemetery, New York, October 10. Thomas Edison demonstrates a hand-cranked "phonograph or speaking machine" November 29.*

On September 15, Cincinnati entomologist Charles Dury adds a cerulean warbler to his esteemed bird collection. Later this season, but well to the north in Ottawa County, a trumpeter swan is a prized addition to the Winous Point Shooting Club collection. Or might it instead, we ask today, be an "overstuffed" tundra swan? Milton Trautman found several such overstuffed tundras in collections, lurking as trumpeters, in his efforts to locate early Ohio trumpeter swan specimens. I wonder if that Fall 1877 swan might still reside in the renamed Winous Point Marsh Conservancy collection. It seems worth a look....

**Fall 1887**

*A low-key season, it seems. On September 9, "Alf" Landon is born; he would go on to carry exactly two states as the Republican nominee in the landslide 1936 presidential election. Billiards world-champion Willie Hoppe is born on cue October 11; William Henry Pratt, later to become Boris Karloff, materializes November 23.*

World events seem rather subdued, and so is the birding. At least Charles Dury, representing the Cincinnati Society of Natural History, is out and about, collecting a Louisiana waterthrush September 8 and a merlin September 24. L.M. Hibby bags a greater white-fronted goose at Winous Point Shooting Club November 18.

**Fall 1897**

*If you enjoyed the somnambulant Fall 1887 season, then Fall 1897 seems equally snoozeworthy. Robert Ringling, operatic baritone and master of circuses, makes his grand entrance August 16. The world's first car dealership opens its doors in London October 22; on the same day in Italy, Ettore Boiardi (Chef Boy-ar-dee) pops fresh from the oven. J.L. Love patents a pencil sharpener November 23.*

I had hoped that the birding would be more newsworthy than snoozeworthy, but no such luck. Oberlin's indefatigable Lynds Jones at least tries to shake the doldrums, turning up a northern shrike November 6 and a very late green heron at the Oberlin Water Works November 13. Can you feel the excitement?

**Fall 1907**

*The excitement can only build. Actress Irene Tedrow (kindly "Mrs. Elkins" on TV's Dennis the Menace) is born August 3. "The Amazing Criswell," fabulous psychic prognosticator and star of the cult film Plan 9 from Outer Space, is manifested on the earthly plane August 18. Actress Fay Wray (love interest of King Kong) is born September 15. The lake freighter Cyprus, built in Lorain, Ohio, is launched August 17. The lake freighter Cyprus, built in Lorain, Ohio, sinks October 11. Oklahoma becomes the 46<sup>th</sup> state November 16. In quasi-birding news, actor Burgess Meredith ("The Penguin" on TV's Batman) is hatched in Cleveland November 16.*

Now we're rolling. Arthur Secor collects a willet at the Cedar Point in Lucas County October 10. An American avocet is observed in Oberlin on the late date of November 4. The same day, Lynds Jones spots a flock of 42 greater white-fronted geese at the Cedar Point in Erie County. Not to be outdone, the first sighting of "The Penguin" is recorded in Cleveland November 16.

**Fall 1917**

*Several unpretentious and peaceful periods, once considered somnambulant and snoozeworthy, now seem not so bad after all. The World is at war. German troops take Riga, Latvia, September 3. On September 26, Australian forces capture the Polygon Forest in France. Mata Hari, accused of spying for the Germans, is executed by firing squad October 15. U.S. Army troops see front-line action in France. Stalled assaults in Flanders ultimately cost hundreds of thousands of British and German casualties. Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks seize power in Russia October 25.*

Hostile tendencies infiltrate the birding world as well. On August 12 at Headlands Beach, a willet is purposely flushed "in order to see the attractive wing pattern," and then is rudely and impudently flushed "suddenly again to hear his call." At New Bremen (Auglaize Co.), a rapacious northern goshawk is gunned down November 8. In Ashtabula County, Sam Wharram reports on

a different sort of European invader—the European starling. First seen there on November 17, it will start to nest in 1918. It remains firmly entrenched and shows no sign of retreat.

### Fall 1927

*On September 7, Philo T. Farnsworth transmits an image electronically using an "image dissector" tube (camera tube) and an "image oscillate" (picture tube). New York Yankees' outfielder Babe Ruth hits his record 60<sup>th</sup> home run of the season September 30, propelling the powerhouse Yankees to their second World Series championship. The Jazz Singer, starring Al Jolson, opens October 6, ushering in the era of talking pictures. Leon Trotsky is expelled from the Communist Party November 12, leaving Josef Stalin as the undisputed leader of the Soviet Union.*

By this season, it's apparent that the popularity of birding, and of bird reporting, is growing rapidly. Observations deemed worthy of reporting this season include a migration of mourning doves October 2, a migration of ring-billed gulls October 17, and a "small flock" of Canada geese on Sandusky Bay November 12. Skillfully identified are seven red knots in Dayton August 17 (viewed for a half-hour with 8x glasses at 50-60 feet), and a red phalarope, collected on the Scioto River in Delaware County September 29. A regional compiler remarks that the many intriguing Toledo-area records supplied by a young Lou Campbell "certainly indicate that all isn't yet 'cut and dried' in Ohio ornithology." Not by a long shot, I'd say.

### Fall 1937

*Throughout August, Japanese forces continue their invasion of China. The Appalachian Trail is completed as a continuous footpath August 14. German Chancellor Adolf Hitler meets with Italian Premier Benito Mussolini September 25. President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicates Timberline Lodge, a WPA project, in Mt. Hood National Forest September 28.*

Birding and natural pursuits thrive between World Wars. Three lark buntings are discovered in Henry County August 9. A flock of 45 upland sandpipers rests near Toledo the same day. Most unfortunately, a black rail is killed during the mowing of a Paulding County oat field September 23. For those interested in such things, the Ohio Conservation Bulletin reports that the fall gray partridge hunting outlook is good for Allen, Clark, Darke, Mercer, and Van Wert counties. The Bulletin also reports "a few" greater prairie-chickens in Marion County, the remnant of recent reintroduction efforts. Get 'em while you can.

### Fall 1947

*The Sporting News names Brooklyn Dodgers' first baseman Jackie Robinson Rookie of the Year September 19. The New York Yankees win the World Series, their eleventh; Ohio Major League teams have combined for*

*three such championships since the Series began in 1903. On October 5, President Harry Truman presents the first televised White House address, asking the American public to help relieve European food shortages in the wake of World War II. On October 14, Chuck Yeager's rocket plane breaks the sound barrier. On November 2, Howard Hughes pilots his huge wooden H-4 Hercules seaplane, otherwise known as the Spruce Goose, on its first, and only, flight.*

Birding takes a back seat as lives are rebuilt after World War II. Eight ruffed grouse in the Cleveland area September 13 would be judged an outlandish number in our day, but are considered far less impressive than four Forster's terns in Cleveland September 27-October 5, which attract "much attention locally." On October 30, a great gray owl is found on Lake Erie's tiny Starve Island (Ottawa Co.); it is being harassed by a welcoming committee of herring gulls, but flies away unscathed.

### Fall 1957

*With the Cold War in full swing, on August 1 the U.S. and Canada agree to create NORAD (North American Air Defense Command) to provide early warning of ballistic missile attacks. American Bandstand debuts nationally August 5. Other television series premiering this season are Wagon Train, Perry Mason, and Leave It to Beaver. On September 9, President Dwight Eisenhower signs the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first federal civil rights legislation enacted since Civil War Reconstruction. On October 4, the Soviet Union launches Sputnik, the first man-made space satellite to reach orbit. For a change of pace, the New York Yankees lose the World Series, although they have won 17 previously. Perhaps not coincidentally, the Broadway play Damn Yankees closes at New York City's Adelphi Theatre October 19 after 1019 performances.*

Birding and leisure activities abound. An adult laughing gull on Bay Point in Ottawa County August 14 provides one of Ohio's first records. Old friend Neil Henderson, professional chemist, bagpipe player, and author of *The loon's yodel: A key to bird sounds in northern Ohio* (1988), finds an American white pelican at Magee Marsh September 2, and it remains for a month. A flamingo of unknown species appears at Clendening Dam September 8, and enjoys a three-week-long holiday in sunny Harrison County. Two pine grosbeaks decorate Waite Hill (Lake Co.) November 25. A fine season.

### Fall 1967

*The U.S. is fully engaged in Viet Nam. The Beatles' All You Need is Love tops Billboard's Hot 100 Chart August 19, but is replaced one week later by Bobbie Gentry's Ode to Billy Joe. In September, three nations formally sign the "Agreement of the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Government of the Republic of Zambia on the Construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway," thus establishing an agreement whose title is as long as its function. Thurgood Marshall, the first African-American Supreme Court justice, is sworn in October*

Birds and birders are everywhere. An influx of Franklin's gulls is noted in Cleveland by mid-August; birds remain through mid-November, peaking at 15 individuals October 12. A piping plover with its "underparts soaked with oil" does little to help Cleveland's environmental reputation September 19. On September 29, a magnificent frigatebird is found dead near Cincinnati; the next day another is found, soaring and perching in dead trees, at Clear Fork Reservoir. It becomes a museum specimen the day after that. Oddly, no hurricanes seem to account for these records. A single double-crested cormorant (an immature) at Lorain October 28 is also worthy of note. An unconfirmed report of a California gull in Cleveland November 21 earns little respect; in fact, a national correspondent remarks "with the great amount of pollution in that locality, the need for verification by collection remains great." He must have heard about that oily piping plover....

### Fall 1977

*Tandy introduces the Radio Shack TRS-80 microcomputer August 3. On August 12, the space shuttle Enterprise successfully touches down after its first flight; it had gone aloft piggybacking a Boeing 747. Elvis Presley, a famous musical performer, is found dead at his Graceland mansion August 16. The Star Wars Theme reaches the top of the Billboard Hot 100 Chart October 1. The New York Yankees win their 21<sup>st</sup> World Series championship October 18. On October 19, Robert N. Harlan, a fan of the lowly two-time champion Cleveland Indians, decides that he doesn't much like the Yankees. On November 19, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat becomes the first Arab leader to visit Israel.*

August is often on the slow side, but not this year. Bill and Nancy Klamm find an amazingly early second-year glaucous gull at Cleveland's White City Beach August 7. The next day, an extraordinary four Le Conte's sparrows are uncovered by three observers at Ottawa NWR. From August 8-27, 1000 black and common terns are estimated along Cleveland's Lake Erie shore. Twelve white-winged crossbills reach Genoa (Ottawa Co.) by September 5. House finches, which were first noted in the Barnesville (Belmont Co.) area in 1976, are now regular there in batches of 10-16. For all of Ohio, three reports of double-crested cormorants and zero reports of merlins are submitted to national compilers. This is not due to any lack of skilled observers—not with Tom Bartlett, Jim Fry, Ray Hannikman, John Herman, Dick and Jean Hoffman, Dennis Kline, Tom LePage, Bert Szabo, and Elliot Tramer all actively reporting—birders still active in our day, some 30 years later. Hats off to them all.

### Fall 1987

*The Iran-Contra hearings end August 3. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop appears September 9 before a presidential special commission on AIDS. On October 6, Microsoft announces Excel, the first application for its Windows operating system. "Alf" Landon, the former Kansas Governor who carried*

*exactly two states in the 1936 presidential election, dies October 12, aged 100 years. Baby Jessica McClure falls into a well October 14, but she'll be just fine.*

We learn from editor Tom Kemp that 289 bird species are reliably reported to *The Ohio Cardinal* during this "outstanding fall migration season," with a scissor-tailed flycatcher at Kidron (Wayne Co.) August 16 providing an elegant start. Ohio's second rufous hummingbird attracts 150 hummingbirders to Delightful (Trumbull Co.) August 22-September 1; another appears in Parma (Cuyahoga Co.) November 5-10. A western kingbird presents itself to Ray Hannikman at Headlands Beach September 20. This record will appear in *American Birds* 42(1):83, being mistakenly credited to Robert Harlan (a fellow RH), who wishes to set the record straight here, some 20 years after the fact. Continuing "their recent surge," "an impressive inland count" of 95 double-crested cormorants is made at C.J. Brown Reservoir (Clark Co.) October 11, and 2000 are tallied on Sandusky Bay November 16.

### Fall 1997

*Timothy McVeigh is sentenced to death August 14 for his role in the Oklahoma City bombing. In Paris, Princess Diana is killed in a car crash August 31. In India, Mother Teresa dies of heart failure September 5. President Bill Clinton offers a strategy to combat global warming October 22. The newbie Florida Marlins, playing in only their fifth season, finish off the Cleveland Indians in game seven of the World Series October 26. For those keeping score, here's a partial tally of World Series championships since 1903—Florida Marlins, one; New York Yankees, 23; Cleveland Indians, two (most recently in 1948). On October 27, Robert Harlan declares all previous World Series championships null and void, except for two. His wife quickly determines that he thinks far too much about such things.*

The state's high count of black terns this season is a paltry 15. A stunning swallow-tailed kite entertains many in Millersburg (Holmes Co.) September 6-18. The peak inland tally of double-crested cormorants is 8600 over Marion County October 15. Up to 20 white-winged crossbills grace Woodlawn Cemetery in Toledo November 20+. Two American bitterns, zero king rails, and zero barn owls are reported to *The Ohio Cardinal* this season; all were once considered common in Ohio. Over 600 sandhill cranes are reported statewide in late November; as recently as the 1970s, this species was considered very rare here. This is why we must watch carefully, and report faithfully....

### Fall 2007

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find a piece entitled "Fall 2007 Overview and Reports." It will provide invaluable insights on our bird populations today, as reported by a small but enthusiastic group of Ohio birders, and as compiled by a dedicated and talented editor. You will want to read it. I believe others will be reading it also, perhaps 25, 50, or even 100 years or more from now. They will surely appreciate the effort we have made.

## The Future??

Now's when I wish I had a time machine that could foresee the future. After I had finished writing this column, I learned that *The Ohio Cardinal* will, after almost 30 years, be changing hands from publisher Ed Pierce to The Ohio Ornithological Society. Ed has been an incredible force, mostly behind the scenes, in Ohio birding for several decades now, and I want to personally thank him for all he's done (often at his own expense) to see that this journal might exist, and continue to publish information on Ohio's birds. Ed's a good friend, and a generous man.

It's been over 20 years now since my first article was published in the *Cardinal*, and not too many years after that, Ed and then-current editor Tom Kemp encouraged me to try my hand as the new editor. This was a task I did proudly, if not always gracefully, back in the days of ultra-tight shoestring budgets, 40 MG hard drives, 286 MHz processors, and nine-pin dot-matrix printers, all now the stuff of computer museums or thrift store bargain bins. I'm glad that we've been able to graduate to the product you now hold in your hands.

And for the past nine years, with the blessings of editor Bill Whan and publisher Ed Pierce, it has been my privilege to write this indulgent little column for a sophisticated audience of Ohio birders. I know it has been a treat for me; I hope it has been of value to you.

*The Ohio Cardinal* represents "citizen science" at its purest. Long-term collections of data are beyond calculable value for tomorrow's birders and researchers, and for tomorrow's birds as well. I don't know what the future holds for the *Cardinal*, but I earnestly hope that it will continue to function as it has for three decades now—to bring birders together in a forum where they can share information on Ohio bird observations in a long-term hard-copy format, accessible to all.

I'll risk sounding preachy here, but as forward-thinking birders, we should expect—better yet, we should *demand*—as complete and accurate a record of Ohio bird observations as possible. We need an ever-growing number of active and skilled field birders who report their observations from around the state. We need dedicated and knowledgeable editors, who are given enough room to properly address these observations in the permanent historical record. We need a strong, fair, and accessible peer-review panel (the Ohio Bird Records Committee neatly fills the bill) to help adjudicate exceptional records, to provide a balanced approach, and to help avoid the dangers that can occur when an individual attempts to act as the ultimate authority. We must not give our combined expertise short shrift; this would be a terrible disservice to the future, especially in our rapidly changing world.

Thanks, and hoping to see you in the field...

## Birdin' the Pits

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It is generally agreed that diminishing habitats are the major threat to bird populations. The gradual but steady losses of wetlands, grasslands, and mature forest garner the most attention, and rightfully so. Many species that depend on these imperiled habitats are in steep decline. Urbanization has taken its toll, and the constant expansion of urban areas into the rural countryside claims many thousands of acres annually.

Fortunately, many species have apparently been able to adapt to these changes to the natural environment and can be found in all sorts of altered habitats. Urban birders learn to recognize these habitats and the birds potentially attracted to them. Airports, garbage dumps, golf courses, residential back yards, urban parks, cemeteries, dams and impoundments, sewage lagoons, cropland, railroad right of ways, and power transmission line cuts are just a few examples of manmade or altered habitats that attract birds, and of course the birders looking for them.

Maybe the most interesting of these types of man-made habitats are gravel pits. Similar sites include quarries, borrow pits, and—to some degree—retention basins and settling ponds. With the exception of a few well-known sites, the vast majority of these pits generally go unrecognized, overlooked, and under-birded. Some of these sites may be better than others, but they all attract birds on some level and certain sites can be downright outstanding in terms of the sheer numbers and diversity of species they attract. Some are productive enough that they have become local hot spots and attract more observers than more pristine natural areas nearby. Here in southwestern Ohio (Hamilton, Butler, Warren, Clermont, Brown, Clinton, Greene, Preble and Montgomery counties), the Camp Dennison and Newtown gravel pits in Hamilton County and the Roxanna-New Burlington gravel pit just north of Spring Valley WA are well known and regularly birded. In the Greater Cincinnati area the Oxbow, a wetland located along the Indiana/Ohio state line, offers a couple of examples of productive borrow pits. Without suggesting that these manmade pits are preferable to the natural landscapes they replaced, they provide surprisingly productive staging areas and habitats for a number of resident and migratory species. In these days of rapid habitat loss, gravel pits and similar sites deserve recognition. And while one seldom hears the words "natural beauty" and "gravel pits" used in the same sentence, a solid case could be made that many of these sites are greatly beneficial to birds and a host of other wildlife.

Gravel pits, quarries, and borrow pits can be found scattered throughout Ohio and the entire Midwest. In southwestern Ohio, however, literally hundreds of gravel pits, both active and abandoned, are concentrated along the banks of the Ohio, Little Miami, Great Miami, and Whitewater Rivers and their larger feeder streams. Few are birded with any regularity. Many are privately owned and trespassing is forbidden. Some are concealed and off of the beaten track, and even birders are unaware of their presence. Apparently owners' fears of liability and lawsuits effectively make many abandoned gravel pits and quarries