

Winter 2009-2010 Overview and Report

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This winter, 180 species were reported — about the same number that breeds in Ohio annually. That total is actually down a few species from the previous two winters and reflects the often-severe weather conditions.

Compilers of winter season reports such as this one benefit greatly from Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data. This winter, 65 counts were conducted in Ohio, and several were cancelled due to inclement weather. Collectively, these counts offer a wealth of data, and I am especially grateful to Ned Keller, who assembles an easily interpreted synopsis of CBC results each year. That said, the responsible use of CBC data requires a firm hand on the rudder. Although much of the data is probably very reliable, especially when put into the context of long-term trends involving easily identified species, one must be cautious. This winter, Blue-winged Teal, Spotted Sandpiper, and House Wren were reported without details. The latter two species came from the same count, and that count reported four of the wrens! Another count reported a staggering 50 White-winged Scoters. Obviously, such reports are highly questionable, and if I include such fare in this

season report, it is generally with my skepticism apparent.

CBC data can be useful for deciphering long-term trends, especially with easily found and identified common species. This winter, record high counts were set for the following species: Wild Turkey, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk (but note my caveat about misidentifications), Cooper's Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Gray Catbird, American Pipit, and Northern Cardinal.

Not all species' numbers were up, though. Almost all waterfowl species were down, and significantly so. Tough winter weather probably pushed most of them elsewhere. However, several extremely hardy ducks were in high numbers, especially on Lake Erie: Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, and Common Merganser. The fortunes of our only native quail continue to fade, as only one report of Northern Bobwhite was received. The American Kestrel seems to continue to decline as well, with predation from the ever-increasing Cooper's Hawk possibly being a factor. It was a lean winter for gulls, with only 10 species reported and most in quite low numbers. Last winter, 13 species were reported, and 14 the winter before that. All of our boreal irruptive species' numbers were way down this winter.

A number of hardy lingerers were reported, especially surprising in a rough winter: American White Pelican, Great Egret, Virginia Rail,

American Avocet, Least Sandpiper, White-eyed Vireo, Purple Martin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting. Six species of warblers persisted into the season, including an astonishing three apiece of Cape May and Yellow-throated warblers, and two Yellow Warblers!

What's up with woodpeckers? All of our widespread resident species are thriving, that's for sure. Discounting the very local Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (as a breeder), every species was reported in record or near-record numbers. I think two factors may account for these spikes. One, the overall maturation of forests in Ohio and throughout much of the east is providing better habitat. This is especially true in many long-established urban and suburban neighborhoods, where trees are protected and are now large enough to harbor thriving woodpecker populations. Another less desirable factor may be the boom of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*). Woodpeckers are fond of the larvae of this insect and are quite adept at finding them. As ash trees are, at least for the moment, abundant — comprising as much as 40% of some woodlands — there is now a new bonanza of woodpecker food.

Finally, everyone loves a rarity and this winter produced a few. A cooperative Eurasian Wigeon made for a state bird for many. Not to rain on that parade, but this species is quite common in captivity, although we typically assume they are all wild. An adult Northern Gannet was reported, which would be unprecedented; all indisputable reports are of immatures. We're up to about a dozen White-winged Dove records since the first occurrence in 2000, and another was

added this winter. The BIG NEWS was an Allen's Hummingbird, which was banded, providing Ohio's first record. It was seen by hundreds of observers. A credible report of two more Common Ravens adds to the growing body of records of this corvid, which is seemingly reclaiming former parts of its range. A Varied Thrush was a two-day wonder at a feeder. One of perhaps a half-dozen records of Spotted Towhee was of one that graced a feeder for the last week of February and was widely seen. And an indisputable Harris's Sparrow turned up on a Cincinnati-area CBC.

Review species' names are underlined in the species accounts; eleven were reported this season. Reports whose documentation has been accepted by the OBRC include the names of the observers; those for which no documentation was submitted or whose documentation was not considered sufficient are listed anonymously. The Committee urges birders to report all sightings of Review List species, of Core List species found at unusual times, of nesting by birds previously not known to nest in the state, and of course sightings of birds never before found in Ohio. Information on how to document rarities is available at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/records/documentation.php>.

Taxonomic order and nomenclature are those of the *Check-List of North American Birds*, 7th Edition (1998) as updated through the 50th Supplement (2009). This document is published by the North American Classification Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union and is available at <http://www.aou.org/checklist/north/print.php>. **County**

names are in bold italics. The term “*fide*” is used in some citations; it means “in trust of” and is used where the reporter was not the observer. Shortened names and a few sets of initials are used for locations and for three organizations that occur repeatedly; these are as follows:

CBC = Christmas Bird Count
NWR = National Wildlife Refuge
WA = Wildlife Area

Greater White-fronted Goose:

Down significantly from the 130 reported last winter. Only about 10 individuals were located.

Snow Goose: Very low numbers were reported in general, although 448 were tallied on CBCs statewide. That is up significantly from last year's CBC total of 87. See Canada Goose account for information about a hybrid involving this species.

Ross's Goose: Only three reports, including one in *Pike* on 06 Jan (Robert Roysse) and one in *Franklin* on 14-15 Dec (Nate Nye).

Cackling Goose: About 32 individuals were reported, mostly in central and northern counties. That is well behind the 52 birds reported last winter. The high count was five in *Delaware* on 11 Dec (Sean Williams).

Canada Goose: The 81,910 reported from statewide CBCs was a significant drop from the 133,620 tallied on last year's counts. An apparent **Canada Goose x Snow Goose** hybrid spent much of Jan in the vicinity of downtown Cleveland, *Cuyahoga*, and was documented with a photo (Jared Mizanin).

Mute Swan: This invasive species continues to go strong, with at least 150 reported from around the state. Lake Erie, especially the western basin, is a stronghold, with many dozens of birds overwintering in the region.

Trumpeter Swan: CBCs reported 124 of these brutes, a hefty number but down from last year's record high of 156.

Tundra Swan: The 1,272 found on statewide CBCs was well up from the 788 reported last winter from counts. Typical early-winter migrants were 24 found in *Ross* on 01 Dec (John Wilson) and 302 reported from the Lake Erie Islands CBC, *Erie* and *Ottawa*, on 20 Dec. The motherlode of overwintering birds remains Ottawa NWR and vicinity, *Lucas* and *Ottawa*, where 885 were counted on 08 Feb (Doug Vogus).

Wood Duck: Forty were reported from 16 different CBCs, nearly matching last year's 41. Very few midwinter reports; noteworthy were five found in *Medina* on 21 Jan (Chris Decker).

Gadwall: The 329 reported from statewide CBCs was below average for the last decade.

Eurasian Wigeon: A drake was discovered in *Licking* on 28 Feb (Margaret Bowman). It lingered into March and was seen by many observers.

American Wigeon: Lower than normal numbers lingered into winter — only 34 were reported from statewide CBCs — and even fewer attempted to overwinter.

American Black Duck: Somewhat lower numbers than normal, but widely reported. The 2,658 tallied on CBCs was about 1,200 birds fewer than the previous winter's count.

Mallard: Excepting the Canada Goose, this species remains our most common and widespread waterfowl species. Still, CBC numbers were down by about one-third over last



East 72nd Street in Cleveland, **Cuyahoga**, continues to host many overwintering waterfowl and gulls in the warm-water outflows from the adjacent power plant. This coal-burning plant is slated to close soon, and these concentrations of birds will have to move elsewhere in the region. Dave Lewis visited this site on 10 Jan and photographed this scene of Bufflehead, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Lesser Scaup, Redhead, and Ring-billed and Herring gulls.

winter's total of 45,192. Odd was the discovery of a hen with seven newly hatched chicks in **Franklin** in mid-Dec (Lisa Fosco).

Blue-winged Teal: One bird was reported, without details, from the Columbus CBC. Blue-winged Teal are quite rare in winter and should be thoroughly documented.

Northern Shoveler: Seventy-one lingered into winter and were tallied on CBCs; small numbers wintered at traditional spots such as Castalia Pond in **Erie**.

Northern Pintail: This hardy species was pushed out early, as evidenced by a mere 72 reported from CBCs. The only notable flock reported was 30 at Ottawa NWR on 06 Dec (Doug Vogus). The usual early northward push didn't materialize in late Feb.

Green-winged Teal: Unlike last winter, when numbers well above normal lingered into winter, this year numbers were low. Only 47 were reported from CBCs. Midwinter reports were scarce, but 15 to 20 were noted in **Muskingum** on 16 Jan (Jim McCormac).

Canvasback: Always variable from winter to winter, sometimes wildly so. Extremely lean this winter, with only 135 reported from statewide CBCs — about one-tenth of normal numbers. Most reports were from Lake Erie, but numbers there were also quite low.

Redhead: Small numbers wintered where open water could be found; the 235 reported from CBCs was near the 20-year annual average.

Ring-necked Duck: Down a little but not much, and widely reported in small numbers throughout the season. The CBC total of 713 was down only 184 birds from last winter's count.

Greater Scaup: The 1,406 reported from CBCs was a very high total, and most of them — 1,151 — were found on the Toledo CBC in **Lucas** on 20 Dec. The majority of birds reported were from western Lake Erie, although 323 were reported from **Lake** on 11 Dec (John Pogacnik). 915 was a big count for Kelleys Island, **Erie**, on 20 Jan (Tom Bartlett, Sandy Tkach).

Lesser Scaup: Three-quarters of all the 4,391 Lesser Scaup reported from statewide CBCs came from the Toledo CBC; western Lake Erie's Maumee Bay is a major staging area. Much smaller numbers were reported from widely scattered sites throughout the winter.

eider sp.: The only eider reported was one flyby in with a flock of six Surf Scoters over Lake Erie on 06 Dec in **Lake**. Details couldn't be made out well enough to determine species, but odds favor King Eider. The OBRC did not receive documentation for this sighting.

Harlequin Duck: The only report was of an immature male in **Lake** on 11 Dec (John Pogacnik).

Surf Scoter: Three were found on CBCs; a maximum of two were at Sims Park in **Cuyahoga** (Nancy Anderson). John Pogacnik tallied a total of 18, mostly in Dec, from his Lake Erie lookout in **Lake**.

White-winged Scoter: About seven were found, almost all on Lake Erie and mostly in Dec. Additionally, 53 were reported on statewide CBCs, but 50 of those were found on the Elyria-Lorain CBC, **Lorain**, on 19 Dec. I have no details documenting this extraordinary count.

Black Scoter: Six were reported from CBCs, with five of them found on the Lake Erie Islands CBC on 20 Dec. Non-CBC birds totaled about 28, mostly in Dec and nearly all from Lake Erie. The high count was 10 on 05 Dec at Sims Park in **Cuyahoga** (Nancy Anderson).

Long-tailed Duck: A total of 24 was reported, nearly all from Lake Erie, with high tallies of five on the Lake Erie Islands CBC on 20 Dec, and six in **Lake** on 11 Dec (John Pogacnik). Noteworthy was a bird on the Ohio River in **Muskingum** on 11 Feb (Barb Hohman), and one on Berlin Reservoir, **Portage**, on 05 Jan (Ben Morrison).

Bufflehead: The vicinity of the Lake Erie islands in **Erie** and **Ottawa** remains a major early-winter staging area. Of the 3,545 reported on statewide CBCs, 3,217 were found on the Lake Erie Islands CBC on 20 Dec.

Common Goldeneye: Tough winter weather pushed this hardy species south in above average numbers. Last winter, CBCs reported 3,021; this winter that total was more than doubled to 6,300. Over half of the CBC total



*Hybrids are fairly common between many duck species. This bird is an apparent hybrid between Common Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser, two species that belong to different genera. Gabe Laidy photographed this bird at East 72nd Street in Cleveland, **Cuyahoga**, on 20 Feb.*

came from the Lake Erie Islands CBC, **Erie** and **Ottawa**, which found 3,255. Of great interest was a well-documented **Hooded Merganser x Common Goldeneye** hybrid found in **Cuyahoga** on 20 Feb (Ivan Yoder, Gabe Leidy).

Hooded Merganser: The 846 reported from CBCs was slightly ahead of last year's total of 814. The Scioto River in central Ohio is a wintering stronghold; many individuals were seen in the Columbus area, **Franklin**, on the river on 28 Feb (Rob Thorn). Many if not all of these birds wintered locally. See note under Common Goldeneye about an interesting hybrid.

Common Merganser: These big ducks are tough as nails, as evidenced by the 3,600 found during an aerial survey of the eastern half of Lake Erie on 01 Feb (Jim McCormac). The lake was largely frozen and the mergansers were occupying open leads. The total CBC tally of 7,705 was up considerably from the previous year's 3,445.

Red-breasted Merganser: The 56,015 reported from all CBCs was the third-highest count in the past 20 years. The vast majority of birds were found along Lake Erie, in **Cuyahoga, Lake**, and **Lorain**.

Ruddy Duck: There seemed to be more of these little stiftails around than normal; the 817 reported from CBCs far eclipsed last winter's 445. The Hoover Reservoir CBC in **Delaware** on 19 Dec accounted for 303 of this winter's CBC total.

Ring-necked Pheasant: Below average numbers — 46 — were reported from CBCs. Other reports barely mentioned pheasants, although Robert Royse mentioned seeing “many” at Deer Creek WA, **Fayette**, on 11 Jan, and a self-sustaining population that probably numbers a few hundred birds persists in a 1,000-acre Conservation Reserve Program grassland in **Pickaway** (Jim McCormac).

Ruffed Grouse: This secretive species is seldom reported, especially when males are not drumming. The five reported from all CBCs is not an accurate barometer of their Ohio status. Although the species is at or near historic lows, the violent wind storms that cut a broad swath across southern Ohio forestland in winter 2003-04 created locally abundant grouse habitat and their numbers have spiked in some of those areas. Censuses conducted statewide by the Ohio Division of Wildlife in 2009 resulted in reports of 262 birds, and 208 in 2010.

Wild Turkey: Last year's record CBC count of 2,424 was barely edged out by this winter's CBC total of 2,479. Turkeys are gobbling everywhere these days, it seems.

Northern Bobwhite: The wild rollercoaster ride of our only native quail continues. Last year, 35 were reported from three southern Ohio CBCs; this year there were no CBC reports. The only report made came from **Meigs** on 26 Dec, when a covey of 10 was found (Tracy Morman).

Red-throated Loon: Six individuals were detected by John Pogacnik in

Lake as part of his long-term Lake Erie surveys: singles on 05 and 12 Dec, an impressive three on 11 Dec, and one on 01 Jan. One was found elsewhere in **Lake** on 31 Dec (Nate Nye). All of these preceding birds were on Lake Erie. The only non-Lake Erie bird was one found in **Clark** on 13 Dec (Michael Hatfield).

Common Loon: The 23 reported on CBCs was 10 more than last winter, but still about 10 under the annual average of the last decade. There were only about a half-dozen other birds reported in Dec, and no reports from Jan or Feb.

Pied-billed Grebe: CBCs reported 154 statewide, which is a big increase over last winter's 86 reports, but still a bit under the annual average for the past decade.

Horned Grebe: Only 15 were reported from CBCs; well under the annual average of 45 over the past decade. About 23 others were reported from scattered locales statewide.

Red-necked Grebe: The only report was of one bird on Lake Erie in **Lake** on 06 Feb (John Pogacnik).

Northern Gannet: An observer spotted what he believed to be a bird of this species in flight near New Bedford in **Coshocton** on 06 Feb. Some of his description included the following: "a large seabird flying — white with long-pointed wings, and the bird was close enough that he even saw the tan coloring on the head" (Bobolink Area rare bird alert phone line). This description obviously points to an adult, and of the several dozen confirmed Ohio records, all are of

juvenile birds. Also, nearly all records come from the Nov through early Jan period; there is only one documented Feb occurrence. The OBRC did not receive documentation for this sighting.

American White Pelican:

Amazingly, three were found. Jill Bowers discovered two on Grand Lake St. Marys in **Mercer** on 06 Dec; they apparently were present for much of the month. Another was found on the Great Miami River in **Butler** on 14 Dec (Sam Fitton); it remained until at least 20 Dec.

Double-crested Cormorant:

Only 24 were found on CBCs, well under the 149 reported last year and the 326 of the winter prior to that. Cormorants are semi-hardy and their low numbers reflect a tough winter. A few overwintering birds were reported from the Cleveland lakefront and the Scioto River in **Franklin**.

Great Blue Heron: The 906 reported from CBCs statewide was one of the lowest tallies of the past decade.

Great Egret: Always a major wintertime rarity, thus the one seen on 01 Feb in **Delaware** was a surprise (Craig Moore).

Black-crowned Night-Heron:

This winter, a record high 105 were reported from CBCs. Perhaps there are more of these secretive herons sticking out the winters, or birders are becoming more adept at finding their roosts; most likely it is a combination of these factors.

Black Vulture: This year's CBC total of 501 birds was the lowest tally of the past five winters, and only about half of last year's total of 995. Highly mobile vultures are opportunistic winterers in Ohio, moving farther south when severe winter weather makes feeding difficult.

Turkey Vulture: A situation mirroring that of the Black Vulture, with tough winter conditions pushing this species southward. The 613 found on CBCs was the lowest tally of the past seven winters.

Bald Eagle: This species continues to boom; the 418 reported from CBCs shattered the previous year's record of 304. Although most birds, such as the 22 counted on an aerial survey from Cleveland to Conneaut on 01 Feb (Jim McCormac), are found along Lake Erie, reports were scattered around all parts of Ohio.

Northern Harrier: The 255 tallied on CBCs was the lowest count in three years, but only slightly lower than the annual average of 278 over the past decade. Numbers were low at traditional hotspots such as Killdeer Plains WA and The Wilds.

Sharp-shinned Hawk: Your season editor is an avowed skeptic of CBC data as it pertains to this often-misidentified raptor. That said, CBCs statewide reported 131, which would be an all-time high. Away from CBCs, only small numbers were reported, from widely scattered locales.

Cooper's Hawk: Although branding this species as the default wintertime *Accipiter* in Ohio is perhaps going too far, it is by far the most likely. There

were 560 reported from CBCs this season, a new record. This species has adapted to human habitat alterations far better than has the Sharp-shinned Hawk, and numbers have steadily increased over the past two decades. The CBC total in the winter of 1989–90 was 180 — about average for that era.

Northern Goshawk: Amazingly, this giant *Accipiter* has been reported in all but six of the last 30 CBCs. Some of them were probably even correctly identified. This winter, two came to light, one from the Rudolph CBC on 19 Dec and one on the Grand Rapids–Waterville CBC on 22 Dec. Although I have not seen details on these birds, both counts are in northwestern Ohio, where Northern Goshawk is probably most likely, and both counts are vetted by expert birders. The only other report was of an immature bird perched on a telephone wire in *Cuyahoga* on 27 Jan (Gabe Leidy).

Red-shouldered Hawk: The 300 reported from CBCs statewide was the second-highest total ever, and it offers more evidence that this beautiful *Buteo* is continuing to expand its population as Ohio's forests mature.

Red-tailed Hawk: There is no risk of this species losing its position as Ohio's most common raptor. The 2,666 reported from CBCs is the third-highest count ever, and it far eclipses the CBC total of the next most frequent raptor, the American Kestrel.

Rough-legged Hawk: These Arctic-breeding meadow vole munchers show fairly regular peaks and valleys in their wintertime wanderings into Ohio (see the graph in *The Ohio Cardinal* 32[2]:

57). Two or three consecutive winters of high numbers are followed by one or two years of low numbers. This winter, 97 were reported from CBCs, well below the annual average of 136 reported from CBCs over the past decade.

Golden Eagle: One bird was seen throughout the season at the Wilds, *Muskingum*, and on 24 Jan, two were reported (Doug Vogus). Is Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot* becoming a regular winter haunt? One was there much of last winter, and another or the same bird was found on 15 Feb (Matt Carity, Heather Chute, John Kuenzli). An injured subadult bird was found in *Adams* on 04 Dec and taken to Raptor, Inc., a rehabilitation facility on Cincinnati (Jeff Hays).

American Kestrel: One has to go back to the CBC of winter 2000-01 to find a lower kestrel count than this season's, in which 845 were reported from CBCs statewide. That is the third-lowest tally in 30 years. See *The Ohio Cardinal* 32(2): 59 for a chart documenting the steady downward slide of this charismatic little falcon.

Merlin: Only slightly behind last year's CBC total of 20 was this year's tally of 17, the second- highest CBC count ever. At least a dozen others were reported elsewhere throughout the season, and large urban cemeteries such as Spring Grove in Cincinnati, Green Lawn in Columbus, and Calvary in Cleveland continue to host one to a few wintering birds. Birders should check golf courses as well; these tend to be largely open habitats with scattered trees and may also harbor wintering Merlins.

Peregrine Falcon: Peregrines are wintertime fixtures at the approximately 35 sites where they now nest, most of them in large urban areas. There were few reports away from known breeding sites, and all or nearly all other reports likely pertained to wandering permanent residents.

Virginia Rail: The only report was of a bird found "in a snowdrift" in *Summit* on 08 Jan. It was taken to the Medina Raptor Center.

American Coot: Our hardiest rallid was found in good numbers. The 2,436 reported from CBCs was nearly the same as the 2,445 reported last winter and well above the annual average of the last decade.

Sandhill Crane: An incredible tally of 974 was reported from CBCs, obliterating last year's record count of 508 and reflective of the rapidly increasing eastern populations of this species. There was a conspicuous — and later than normal — passage of cranes through the western half of the state on 11 and 12 Dec, with numerous reports totaling nearly 800 birds. The largest roost was noted at Deer Creek WA in *Fayette* on 13 Dec, where up to 1,000 birds were noted (Jean Foor, Mary Alice Sims).

Killdeer: The number of Killdeer found in winter is largely dictated by the severity of the weather. This winter, 262 were reported from CBCs, which is just a tad above the annual average of 256 of the past decade. There were hardly any midwinter reports, and no obvious push of northbound migrants had become apparent by the end of Feb, as is usually the case.

American Avocet: An exceptionally late bird was found at Toledo's Cullen Park, **Lucas**, last November and lingered until at least 05 Dec (Chuck Anderson, Matt Kemp). This is one of only perhaps three Dec records.

Spotted Sandpiper: One was reported on the Brown Family Environmental Center CBC, **Knox**, on 20 Dec. This is an extraordinary report, and it would be one of only a half-dozen or fewer Dec records. I have seen no details.

yellowlegs sp.: Barb Hohman made the following report from **Washington** on 20 Feb: "I saw a bird flying southbound close to the side of the road about eye level. It had the shape and color of a yellowlegs. I did note the long yellow legs sticking out behind the tail. I'm not sure if the tail was white, but the rest of the bird, color, wing shape and size are all right for the shorebird." Greater Yellowlegs do sometimes appear by late Feb in southern Ohio.

Calidris sp.: A dark-legged *Calidris* sandpiper that was either a Semipalmated or Western was found at Maumee Bay SP, **Lucas**, on 05 Dec (Chuck Anderson, Matt Kemp) and it was again observed the following day. Photos and video were made, but they are not good enough to determine the species with certainty. All positively identified Dec records — there are few — have been Westerns.

Least Sandpiper: Up to three spent much of the season in the vicinity of a large gravel bar on the Great Miami River in **Hamilton**. One was last reported on 14 Feb (Mike Busam). An amazing seven were reported from

CBCs, but three of those were on the Ohio River (IN–OH–KY) CBC and are the three aforementioned birds. Three others were reported from the Wooster CBC, **Wayne**, on 26 Dec, and another was reported from the Hamilton–Fairfield CBC on 19 Dec.

Purple Sandpiper: One was discovered on the Lake Erie Islands CBC on 20 Dec, and this bird, incredibly, was the only report of the season. Harsh winter weather apparently discouraged them from lingering. Last winter, a more typical tally of five birds was reported.

Dunlin: Above-normal numbers were reported: one in **Cuyahoga** on 10 Dec (Steve Cagan); one on the Lake Erie Islands CBC on 20 Dec; an impressive five at Sheldon Marsh SNP in **Erie** on 20 Dec (Charles Crawford); and one at Huron, **Erie**, on 24 Dec (Gabe Leidy).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Five late and undoubtedly juvenile birds were seen at Huron, **Erie**, on 05 Dec (Gabe Leidy).

Wilson's Snipe: The 30 reported from CBCs statewide sounds impressive, but it is below the annual average of 39 over the past decade. Ten others were reported from widely scattered locales throughout the season.

American Woodcock: Noteworthy for its absence, there were no reports of this semi-hardy species. A displaying male was reported the day after the season ended, on 01 March in **Clermont** (Donald Morse).

Bonaparte's Gull: Sparsely

reported. Only 5,935 were tallied on CBCs statewide, which is about one-seventh of the usual numbers. Most reports from CBCs and otherwise were from Lake Erie, but no concentrations over 5,000 individuals were reported.

Little Gull: Only two reports, which is well below average (at least 10 were reported last winter). An adult was in **Lake** on 12 Dec (John Pogacnik), and a first-cycle bird was at Huron, **Erie**, on 24 Dec (Gabe Leidy).

Ring-billed Gull: The 137,255 reported from CBCs statewide is the second highest count in the past decade. Although most were counted along Lake Erie, good numbers were also tallied along inland rivers and reservoirs.

California Gull: The only report was of an adult at Lorain Harbor, **Lorain**, on 24 Jan. The OBRC did not receive documentation for this sighting.

Herring Gull: The 27, 272 reported from CBCs was the second-highest total in the past decade. Nearly all of them were found along Lake Erie, as is typical.

Thayer's Gull: Only six were reported — about half of last year's number — and all were along Lake Erie.

Iceland Gull: Lower than normal numbers — perhaps nine individuals — were reported along Lake Erie throughout the season. Impressive were six birds found along the Maumee River, **Lucas** and **Wood**, on 18 Jan (Tom Kemp, Steve Stockford).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: This European species was first found in Ohio in 1977. It was first recorded on a CBC in winter 1981-82, and has been found on CBCs every year since, in ever-increasing numbers. This year's CBC count of 37 shatters last winter's total of 19. Twenty-eight of the gulls were found on Toledo-area counts. All reports were from Lake Erie or its immediate vicinity.

Glaucous Gull: Following last winter's record-setting numbers, this Arctic visitor was way down this winter — perhaps only a third as many as last winter were reported, nearly all of them from Lake Erie. Noteworthy was a first-cycle bird found on the Great Miami River, **Montgomery**, on 12 Jan (Dave Collopy).

Great Black-backed Gull: The 408 tallied on CBCs statewide was a bit below the average of 486 reported over the past decade. The only significant one-day tally was 500 counted during an aerial survey in the vicinity of the Avon Lake power plant on 01 Feb (Jim McCormac). No reports away from Lake Erie were received.

Pomarine Jaeger: The only report was of a bird in **Lucas** on 27 Dec (John Pogacnik).

Rock Pigeon: As no observers generally comment on this species, CBC data provides the most useful barometer of the overall population. This season, CBCs statewide tallied 17,767, a bit below the average of 19,508 reported over the past five years.

White-winged Dove: One turned up at Dick Beery's feeders in **Wayne** on 24 Dec; it remained until at least 02 Jan. This is at least the 10th Ohio record; our first was in 2000.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: The only report was of three in **Mercer** on 08 Jan. The OBRC did not receive documentation for this sighting.

Mourning Dove: Not often commented on by observers, so CBC data are exceptionally useful to gauge populations. The 22,678 counted this winter is just a tad below the 24,754 annual average of the past decade.

Barn Owl: This threatened species has been reported on the last 12 consecutive CBCs, with a high tally of 43 in winter 2006–07. This winter, 13 were found, well under the annual average of 17 over the past 12 years. The only other reports were of singles in **Clinton** on 18 Feb (Bob Powell), **Ross** on 26 Dec (Dave Graham), and **Jefferson** on 01 Dec (Scott Pendleton). The latter bird was brought to a veterinarian in an emaciated condition and suffering from a slight injury. As of the last report, it was accepting food and gaining weight.

Great Horned Owl: CBC data are quite useful for assessing owl populations, as special efforts are often made to census owls. This season, 182 Great Horned Owls were counted statewide — one more than last winter's total and the highest count of the last eight years.

Snowy Owl: Only two reports: one on the Sandusky Bay Bridge, **Ottawa**,

on 19 Dec (John Pogacnik), and one was found at Burke Lakefront Airport, **Cuyahoga**, on 24 Dec (Nick Taylor). The latter bird was seen sporadically through Dec.

Barred Owl: Going strong; the 124 found on CBCs statewide was only two birds shy of last year's record-setting total of 126.

Long-eared Owl: It was either a lean year for this secretive species, or people were not making roost sites known. Only 10 were reported from CBCs. A traditional roost in **Wyandot** had a peak count of eight birds on 20 Feb (Ken Ostermiller). Another roost in **Lucas** had up to four birds throughout Dec (Matt Anderson). Singles were found in **Delaware** on 20 Dec (Sean Williams), and **Darke** on 01 Jan (Regina Schieltz).

Short-eared Owl: Relatively few reports, even from traditional wintering strongholds. The 30 reported from CBCs statewide was slightly below the annual average of 34 over the last decade. The annual CBC average for the previous decade — 1999 to 2008 — was 54.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: Either birders have gotten better at finding these tiny, secretive owls or there were more around to find. CBCs reported a record total of 15, smashing last year's record of nine. Other reports include three caught and banded in **Hocking** on 05 Dec (Tim Tolford); one in **Cuyahoga** on 14 Dec (Jennifer Lenhart); and one in **Lake** on 03 Feb (Sally Isacco).

Allen's Hummingbird: Without doubt the bird of the season. Ohio's first record of this western species was confirmed on 11 Dec, when Allen Chartier captured and banded a bird that had been visiting a *Holmes* feeder since October. It proved to be a hatch-year male. Thanks are due to Mae Miller, the gracious homeowner who kept the feeders stocked and tolerated the hundreds of birders who visited. The Allen's Hummingbird was last seen on 28 Dec. The documentation by Allen, which included detailed photographs of the diagnostic tail feathers, was accepted by the OBRC.



Belted Kingfisher: The 315 reported from CBCs statewide is about average for recent years.

Red-headed Woodpecker: An up year for this woodpecker, whose fortunes are tied to the cyclical production of mast crops, especially acorns (see *The Ohio Cardinal* 32[2]: 66-67). CBCs reported 232, well above last winter's 181.



Red-bellied Woodpecker: Another record obliterated: this year's CBC grand total of 4,709 beats the previous winter's CBC tally of 4,308, which had been the all-time high. Needless to say *Melanerpes carolinus* is still on a roll.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: The CBC total of 133 was well under last winter's record-setting 187. Still, it well above the annual average of 110 over the last decade.

Downy Woodpecker: This winter's CBC total of 6,471 easily bested the previous record of 6,007 recorded on CBCs in winter 2006-07. One must

This hatch-year male Allen's Hummingbird was banded by Allen Chartier, and his excellent documentation was sufficient to establish this as the first Ohio record of this species. Allen's Hummingbird is the sixth species of hummingbird added to the Ohio state list. Differentiating Rufous and Allen's hummingbirds, especially immature and female individuals, is difficult and often requires in-hand examination. The second tail feather from the center (termed rectrix 2, or R2) shows a notch on the inner vane only in Rufous Hummingbird; the notch is absent on this bird. This bird's right R5 is obscured in the bander's fingers, and both R4s are missing due to active molt. The white tip on the left R5 indicates that the feather is retained from the immature plumage, whereas R1, R2, and R3 are freshly molted adult feathers. Both photos were taken 11 Dec by Bruce Glick.

wonder what temporarily beneficial impact the runaway proliferation of the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) is having on woodpecker populations. Downy Woodpecker is notoriously opportunistic and almost certainly exploits borer grubs, which can occur in great densities.

Hairy Woodpecker: Another CBC record: the 1,168 tallied on counts this winter bested the previous high of 1,154 recorded in winter 2007–08. In addition to the possible Emerald Ash Borer factor discussed in the Downy Woodpecker account, the overall maturation of Ohio’s forests is likely causing expansion of this species’ population.

Northern Flicker: The 512 reported from CBCs statewide was second only to last winter’s record-setting tally of 614.

Pileated Woodpecker: This species continues to hold its own and is at record highs. CBCs counted 642 statewide, a total topped only slightly by counts in the previous two winters.

Eastern Phoebe: A dozen were found on CBCs, about par for most winters. Outside of CBC reports, there was one Jan report, a bird in **Clermont** on 01 Jan (Jay Lehman).

Loggerhead Shrike: The only report of this Ohio endangered species came from the **Adams** County CBC on 19 Dec, a region that probably still harbors a few nesting pairs. The OBRC did not receive documentation for this sighting.

Northern Shrike: Only eight were reported from CBCs — well below last year’s total of 18. Outside of CBCs, individual birds were reported from the following counties: **Cuyahoga, Delaware, Geauga, Lucas, Medina, Summit, Wayne,** and **Wyandot.**

White-eyed Vireo: One was reported from the **Clark** County CBC on 18 Dec. Although they’re quite rare in winter, there are a handful of Dec records.

Blue Jay: Wintering numbers have an interesting yo-yo pattern over the long term. This winter’s CBC haul of 11,122 is a near record, and it is slightly ahead of last winter’s total of 10,889. During the previous winter, the CBC total was only 9,686. The abundance of wintering jays correlates with tree mast production, especially oaks and acorns.

American Crow: Crow are on a major roll: the total CBC tally this winter was an astonishing 96,625, obliterating the previous record of 61,967 recorded in winter 2001–02. This year’s count was also nearly double last winter’s CBC total of 49,003. The five highest CBC counts were as follows: **Clark** County – 30,000; Mansfield – 24,000; Ragersville – 10,996; Youngstown – 4,227; and Western **Hamilton** County – 3,034. Four of these five count locations are highly urban and harbor long-established roosts.

Common Raven: The only report was of a pair that had been frequenting the vicinity of New Matamoras in northern **Washington**

intermittently through the winter. The OBRC did not receive documentation for this sighting.

Horned Lark: See *The Ohio Cardinal* 32(2):68 for a graph that depicts the roughly every-other-year boom and bust cycle of Horned Lark. Last winter, CBCs reported a total of 6,643; this year the tally was 18,083, lending additional supporting evidence to the alternating year booms and busts.

Purple Martin: An adult female remained in *Wayne* until at least 01 Jan (Jason Larson). It was fed mealworms; free-flying insects — its normal fare — are tough to find in winter. The bird was apparently healthy and capable of flight, and it had successfully nested the previous summer. This is easily the latest Ohio record.

Carolina Chickadee: The 9,628 reported from CBCs statewide is a new record high, easily eclipsing last year's record of 8,511. The annual CBC average over the past 20 years is 6,303.

Black-capped Chickadee: This species is not showing the strong population increases of the Carolina Chickadee, at least from CBC data. CBCs counted 5,004; the annual average over the past 20 years is 4,453.

Tufted Titmouse: Ohio's members of the family Paridae are certainly thriving. A new record high of 8,689 was reported from CBCs, easily smashing the previous high count of 7,615 totaled in winter 2001–02.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: This irruptive species spikes about every other year or two, and this wasn't a boom year. Only 180 were reported from CBCs statewide, down even from last year's poor count of 386. During the winter of 2007–08, 696 birds were reported.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Urban-adapted tree-gleaners such as chickadees, titmice, and woodpeckers are thriving, and add this species to the pool of winners. CBCs reported 5,821, eclipsing the previous record, set last winter, of 5,706.

Brown Creeper: The 661 reported from CBCs is just about average for the past decade.

Carolina Wren: The 1,946 reported from CBCs statewide is the lowest count of the past eight winters, and well down from the record CBC tally of 4,859 in winter 2006–07.

House Wren: All reports came from CBCs, and your season editor is skeptical of House Wren reports with no details reported from CBCs. I concur with Peterjohn's (2001: p. 376) statement: "...averaging one acceptable sighting every two to four years." This winter, five were reported from two CBCs. One was found on the Hoover Reservoir CBC, *Delaware*, on 19 Dec. In what were certainly multiple misidentifications, four were reported from the Brown Family Environmental Center CBC in *Knox* on 20 Dec. This count also recorded a Spotted Sandpiper, which is as astonishing as the wrens.

Winter Wren: The 74 reported from CBCs was close to the 20-year annual average.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: CBCs reported 1,028 statewide, which is nearing the low end of one of this species' peaks. See *The Ohio Cardinal* 31(2): 29 for a long-term graph of kinglet distribution and other thoughts on their winter status.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Always a wintertime rarity, even fewer than normal were reported this year. CBCs claimed 11, and there were only three other reports outside of CBCs.

Eastern Bluebird: Doing well, and these open-country thrushes may want to thank people for all of the boxes that we put up. The 5,304 reported from CBCs is the third-highest tally ever.

Hermit Thrush: The 109 found on CBCs statewide was the fifth-highest number ever recorded and well above the long-term average. This thrush is extremely secretive and easily overlooked in winter, but at least in the hill country can often be found around colonies of fruiting sumac (*Rhus* sp.).

American Robin: This winter, 37,640 were tallied on CBCs — the second-highest total ever. See *The Ohio Cardinal* 31(2): 30 for more detailed information explaining the meteoric rise of wintering robins.

Varied Thrush: One appeared at the feeders of Bob and Judy Gucker in *Wyandot* on 13 Jan; it was last seen the next day (*vide* Tom Bartlett). The Guckers' written report, which included Tom's photo, was accepted by the OBRC.

Gray Catbird: A big winter for this half-hardy species, with a record-setting 23 reported from CBCs and five others elsewhere.



Gray Catbirds are increasingly sighted attempting to overwinter in Ohio, and this winter broke records for the number of individuals reported around the state. Bernie Master photographed this individual at his home in Worthington, Franklin, on 06 Feb.

Northern Mockingbird: CBCs reported 944, about average for the past decade.

Brown Thrasher: Few thrashers remain in Ohio in winter, and those that do are easily missed. The only reports came from CBCs, and totaled 10 birds, which is about average for the past decade.

European Starling: Few observers report on this species, making CBC data valuable for trying to decipher any trends in this invasive species. The 243,168 reported from CBCs gives the starling the distinction of being the most abundant wintertime bird. The next most frequent species was the Ring-billed Gull, with 137,255 individuals reported. Believe it or not, this year's starling tally is well off the CBC record of 321,602 from winter 2003-04.

American Pipit: An all-time CBC high was set with 620 reported and sightings widely scattered across the state. About 50 other pipits were reported from various locales throughout the season.

Cedar Waxwing: Waxwings become highly frugivorous (fruit-eating) in winter, and seem to have benefited from bumper crops of copiously fruiting invasive honeysuckle bushes. However, for unknown reasons, their numbers were very low this winter. The 2,012 reported from CBCs is less than half the number reported last winter and well under the annual CBC average of 2,894 over the past 20 years.

Yellow Warbler: There were two reports, incredibly, from the northeastern part of the state. A male was found by James Yoder in **Holmes**, and either a female or immature was seen elsewhere in the general region (dates and observer of latter sighting unknown).

Cape May Warbler: Most Cape May Warblers winter in the Caribbean, but they are surprisingly hardy and there are at least a dozen winter records. Three more records occurred this winter: one bird appeared at a **Hocking** feeder in early Jan and remained through Feb (Allen Chartier, Jim Fry); another was a one-day wonder at a **Hamilton** feeder (Lori Brumbaugh). The third visited a **Holmes** feeder for part of the winter and was recorded on the Ragersville CBC on 29 Dec.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: CBCs found 782 statewide, which is well above the average of the past 20 years.

Yellow-throated Warbler: An incredible three came to light this winter; there had been only perhaps six previous winter records. One visited feeders in **Hamilton** until at least 01 Dec; it had been present prior to the start of this season (Michael Rohe, Jack Berninger). Another frequented feeders in **Summit** from 15 Dec until it was found dead on 02 Jan (Sue Pryor, Sally Isacco, Paul Kiplinger). The specimen is preserved in the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's ornithology collection (specimen #71123). One visited a **Holmes** feeder for several weeks in Dec (Bruce Glick).

Pine Warbler: Along with Yellow-rumped Warblers, these are the "tough guys" of the warbler world and winter reports are expected. The four reported from CBCs is about average. Surprisingly, only two others were reported.



Ohio always hosts several species of warblers over the winter, and Pine Warbler is one of the more expected species to last through the harsh conditions. Bernie Master photographed this individual at a suet feeder in Green Lawn Cemetery in Columbus, Franklin, on 24 Dec.

Common Yellowthroat: Four were reported from CBCs, the second-highest total ever but a number that has been matched at least four times in winters past. The only other report was from **Summit** on 15 Dec (Nancy Howell).

Spotted Towhee: One turned up at a *Holmes* feeder in the last week in Feb and remained through the end of the season (Su Snyder). The record was accepted by the OBRC.



Only a handful of records exist for Spotted Towhee in Ohio, though certainly some were overlooked during the long era when this species was taxonomically lumped with Eastern Towhee under the moniker Rufous-sided Towhee. Gabe Leidy photographed this Spotted Towhee on 27 Feb at Holmesville, Holmes.

Eastern Towhee: The 591 reported from CBCs was a bit above the annual average of the past decade.

American Tree Sparrow:

Numbers fluctuate considerably from winter to winter, probably due to availability of food crops both in Ohio and elsewhere in the range. This winter, 16,884 were recorded on CBCs statewide, the second-highest tally ever.

Chipping Sparrow: CBCs claimed 24 in total. That seems like a lot — this species is a rarity in winter — but that is about typical for CBC reports. It seems highly likely that many CBC reports are misidentifications. There were only two other reports, both indisputable.

Field Sparrow: The CBC annual average over the past 20 years is nearly 400, so this year's total of 290 seems quite low.

Vesper Sparrow: This is not a hardy species and wintertime records are few and far between. One found on the Toledo CBC on 20 Dec was the only report.

Lark Sparrow: A very rare find, one was recorded from the Western *Hamilton* County CBC on 20 Dec.

Savannah Sparrow: This species is either on the upswing as a wintering species, or birders are becoming more adept at finding them or perhaps more prone to misidentifying them. Whatever the case, 61 were reported from CBCs, the third-highest total ever. It is possible that a significant increase in Conservation Reserve Program acreage and the grassland habitats produced as a result of this program is providing “new” habitat and causing an increase in wintering sparrow numbers.

Fox Sparrow: The 57 reported from CBCs is well above the average of the past decade.



How many Fox Sparrows are visiting your yard? Bernie Master recorded a maximum of three Fox Sparrows at a time in his yard in Worthington, Franklin, over the course of the winter. However, he approached the problem by taking photos through his breakfast window and comparing the shapes and patterns of breast markings on each visitor to assess how many individuals were actually in his yard. This sample of images was taken between 02 and 20 Dec and shows four of the 13 individuals that he was able to distinguish from his photographs. Other markings such as crown, auricular, and back color, as well as extent of the malar, could be used to help distinguish individuals.

Song Sparrow: This is another ubiquitous and easily identified species that is seldom reported on but for which CBC data are useful in evaluating trends. This winter's CBC total was 8,097. The annual CBC average over the past decade is 7,891.

Lincoln's Sparrow: A staggering four were reported: three on the Toledo CBC on 20 Dec and one on the Ragersville CBC on 29 Dec. Indisputable records of Lincoln's Sparrows during winter are extremely few, and three on one bird count is stupefying. This is a species prone to misidentification.

Swamp Sparrow: Numbers of winter Swamp Sparrows have been steadily increasing, and this year's CBC haul of 582 is about 60 birds above the annual average of the last decade.

White-throated Sparrow: A species that is decidedly on the upswing in winter, at least through Dec. This year's CBC total of 5,646 is ahead of the annual average of 5,429 of the last decade (winters 2000–01 to 2009–10). The previous decade (winters 1990–91 to 1999–2000), the annual average was 2,969. It is possible that the incredible proliferation of exotic bush honeysuckles has favored this species; the shrubs form apparently suitable cover for this species and the sparrows may utilize honeysuckle fruit.

Harris's Sparrow: The only report of this western vagrant came from the Western *Hamilton* County CBC on 20 Dec. The documentation submitted to the OBRC did not eliminate other possible species so it was not accepted.

White-crowned Sparrow: The 2,523 tallied on CBCs statewide was a bit under the annual average of 2,981 over the past decade. Noteworthy were reports of three of the 'Gambel's' subspecies (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*): two at Portage feeders during the third week in Feb (Greg Cudworth, Judy Semroc) and one at a Stark feeder on 06 Feb (Shari Jackson, Ronnie Macko). Records of this white-lored western subspecies should always be noted.

Dark-eyed Junco: The most abundant sparrow reported this winter, as evidenced by the 16,918 tallied on CBCs statewide. This is the second-highest CBC total ever. At least four individuals of the western 'Oregon' subspecies group were reported.

Lapland Longspur: CBCs found 2,005 statewide, and that's a lot of longspurs — the third-highest total ever. The Rudolph CBC found 1,205 of them on 19 Dec.



White-throated Sparrows winter commonly in southern Ohio, but their abundance decreases as one moves north through the state. Dave Lewis photographed this individual in Bay Village, Cuyahoga, on 09 Jan.

Snow Bunting: Mediocre numbers were reported, including 1,453 from CBCs, which almost exactly matches the annual average of 1,484 over the past decade.

Northern Cardinal: Once again, our state bird was the most frequently reported feeder visitor, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Project FeederWatch. CBC data bear out their abundance: the 23,294 total is the highest ever and evidence that this adaptable species continues to flourish.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A male in basic plumage turned up at a *Delaware* feeder on 27 Dec and remained through 03 Jan (Ben Warner). There have been over a dozen records from the winter months.



Your typical Rose-breasted Grosbeak spends the winter months in Mexico or points farther south (into South America), but more than 10 individuals have been historically recorded attempting to overwinter in Ohio. Many disappear before winter's end, presumably victims of cold weather. Dave Slager photographed this bird in Delaware, 03 Jan.

Indigo Bunting: There are probably fewer than a dozen legitimate records of this Neotropical migrant in winter, thus it was surprising that two came

to light in a single season. A first-year male appeared at a Perry feeder in mid-November — preceding this season — and remained until at least 08 Feb (Joe Faulkner). It had an injured wing but was free-flying. Another was photographed at a feeder, but with no specifics on exact locale or dates, in northeast Ohio (Yvonne Surfronko).

Red-winged Blackbird: Wintering blackbirds typically fluctuate significantly in numbers from year to year, depending on the severity of weather and whether any large roosts are found and reported. This winter's CBC total of 34,763 was a near record, and the big number was due in large measure to large roosts found on the Ottawa NWR CBC on 03 Jan (11,241 birds), and the Fremont CBC on 20 Dec (19,924 birds).

Eastern Meadowlark: Some always stick out the winter, probably more than we think; wintering meadowlarks can be hard to find. This winter's CBC total of 415 was well above the approximate annual CBC average of 250 and is the second-largest tally ever.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: A male was detected among a mixed flock of 200 Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles on 23 Jan in *Cuyahoga* (Craig Rieker), and one was reported on the Ottawa NWR CBC on 03 Jan.

Rusty Blackbird: This species is thought to be in a rapid state of decline, thus this winter's CBC total of 1,233 was encouraging; it is the second highest count ever. Away from CBCs, however, reports were sparse.

Brewer's Blackbird: Always a wintertime rarity and prone to misidentification. Two were reported from the *Adams* County CBC on 19 Dec, and “a few” were reported mixed with large blackbird flocks in *Sandusky* on 06 Jan (Craig Caldwell).

Common Grackle: See remarks under Red-winged Blackbird about winter blackbirds. The CBC total was 83,489, and 72,183 of them were found on the Fremont CBC on 20 Dec.

Brown-headed Cowbird: The 9,058 found on CBCs statewide is well above the average of 6,372 over the past decade.

Purple Finch: This species is cyclically irruptive, and tends to be present in relatively large numbers two or three winters in a row, followed by one or two “bust” winters with lean numbers. CBCs reported 236, which is fairly high; we are due for a bust winter next season or the one thereafter. It should be noted that Purple Finch is very easy to miss in winter, and one should become familiar with their soft wooden “tock” call notes to locate them.

House Finch: The 7,725 reported from CBCs is just above the annual average of 7,378 of the past decade and evidence that this non-native species is holding its own.

White-winged Crossbill: Almost non-existent, and it will probably be many years before we see another irruption like the one in winter 2008–09. Two were found on the Hocking Hills CBC on 02 Jan; one visited

a *Geauga* feeder on 22 Dec (Lyn Miller); and one briefly visited a *Lake* feeder on 01 Jan (John Pogacnik).

Common Redpoll: Last winter, there was a small “shadow” irruption following the massive showing of winter 2007–08 (see *The Ohio Cardinal* 31[2]: 40-42). This winter, redpolls were almost absent. Only eight were reported from CBCs, and there was a total of three others reported: two in *Lake* on 03 and 08 Jan (John Pogacnik) and an unattributed report from *Wayne* in late Jan.

Pine Siskin: A lean year for this cyclical irruptive, with only 37 reported from CBCs statewide. Last winter, CBCs reported a record high 3,205. Siskins tend to occur in large numbers every other year.

American Goldfinch: The 13,800 reported from CBCs is the second-highest tally ever, and goldfinches show steady increases in winter, with four of the five highest counts coming from the past five winters.



The year that follows a major winter irruption of winter finches sometimes sees a minor follow-up irruption event, but this did not materialize after last year's White-winged Crossbill invasion. Only four individuals were recorded, including this one that John Pogacnik photographed in his North Perry, Lake, yard on 01 Jan.

Evening Grosbeak: The only report was of two from the *Preble* County CBC on 14 Dec. These thick-billed finches have become great rarities in Ohio (see *The Ohio Cardinal* 31[2]: 43 for a graph of their history in the state).

House Sparrow: This much-maligned invasive is seldom reported, and is yet another case where CBC data provides one of few data sets that includes numbers on this species. The 45,034 tallied on CBCs is the highest count in years, and with no apparent explanation; one must go back to the 1980s to find numbers this high. See *The Ohio Cardinal* 31(2): 43 for a graph and thoughts about the long-term trend of House Sparrow in Ohio.

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At least 277 contributors made their reports directly available to the staff of *The Ohio Cardinal*, or contributed observations via the Ohio Birds listserv or other public web-based sites. Thanks to all who make the effort to provide the results of their field work to the editors of this publication and the birding community as a whole.

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