

COMMENTS ON THE SEASON

By Craig Caldwell

This issue marks the last for Laura Keene as Photo Editor. Since her debut in the spring 2002 issue (Vol. 35, No. 3), she has selected for us a series of 14 remarkable front covers and other color or shots plus an interesting and informative array of black-and-whites to accompany the species accounts. I and the other volunteers who bring you the *Cardinal* will miss her, and we wish her well on her current endeavor: a Big Year.

Christopher Collins is Laura's successor. He's a former photography instructor, currently an IT manager, and has been a frequent contributor to the *Cardinal* and to the BirdsEye apps. He's also a founding member of RogueBirders.com, a website for "die-hard Ohio birders with a focus on education, conservation, and making birding 'cool'". Christopher is already hard at work choosing the photos for the winter 2015-16 issue.

Ah, the weather. Aug led off this season with below-average temperatures and rainfall. What rain did fall, however, was far from evenly distributed. The southwest received up to eight inches (double its average), as did a few pockets elsewhere. Stations in the northeast and central east had as little as 10% of their average precipitation. Sep reversed that pattern, with the sixth-highest average temperature on record. Though the statewide average rainfall was solidly in the middle of the historical range, several areas received up to triple their usual amounts.

Oct's temperatures were also above average, though not as dramatically as Sep's. Rainfall was slightly above the long-term mean, with most of the state receiving between 50 and 125% of normal. Nov's average temperature again jumped, to the fifth-hottest of the 121 years with records. Perversely, rainfall was below average, with the Cincinnati area being the only part of the state to exceed its norms. And I say rainfall advisedly – snow arrived only late in the month and in very small amounts.

Weather data are from the National Weather Service (<http://water.weather.gov/precip/>), the NOAA (<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/maps.php> and <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/extremes/records/>), and the *Plain Dealer*.

Elliot Tramer commented on the dearth of shorebird habitat in the Lake Erie marshes, and many other usually reliable locations also provided only ephemeral mudflats. This phenomenon is an unfortunate repeat of several recent fall sea-

sons. However, observers were able to find all of our regular migrants and added Piping Plover and Ruff as bonus species.

Elliot also noted lower than normal numbers of migrating warblers during late Aug in his usual *Lucas* haunts. Statewide, the first sightings of only two of the 36 species reported were later than usual, and four were early, so his experience wasn't widespread. Three warbler species also departed earlier than usual but a remarkable 22 were last sighted anywhere from a few days to several weeks after their usual departure dates. No doubt the balmy (or hotter-than-balmy) weather provided insect food much later than in many previous years.

Robert Roysse had a banner day in the Deer Creek area on 06 Oct, when he saw House, Winter, Sedge, Marsh, and Carolina wrens.

This issue includes the results of the Fall Census conducted in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Because it is an effort by many teams covering a large area, its counts are usually not included as the high numbers cited in the Species Accounts; those are limited to numbers by single individuals or parties.

We now have achieved four seasons in a row, a full year, in which every county contributed at least one sighting to every issue of the *Cardinal*. This fall, three species (Turkey Vulture, Mourning Dove, and American Goldfinch) were reported from all 88 counties and five others were seen in 87. Nineteen appeared in 80 to 86 counties. Well done!

This issue contains accounts of 301 species, a lower number than the recent average for fall. Nine additional accounts are at the family or genus level and three hybrids are also noted. Sixteen Review Species, birds whose occurrences (generally speaking) are rare and unpredictable, were reported. Sightings of a very encouraging 12 of them were formally documented for the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC). The other four were informally documented through postings to various internet venues. In addition, some sightings of species for which there are formal reports, but from different locations, were only informally documented.

The names heading Review Species accounts are underlined. In a departure from my previous practice, some sightings are attributed to the reporters though the OBRC hasn't yet voted on the documentation. The Records Committee and this editor urge birders to formally report all sightings of Review List species, of Core List spe-

cies 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>.

Data for the following Species Accounts come from reports submitted directly to *The Cardinal* and *The Bobolink*, the latter courtesy of its publisher, Robert Hershberger; eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/ebird>); the Ohio-birds listserv (<http://birding.aba.org/maillist/OH>); rarebird.org (<http://rarebird.org/forum/default.asp>); and the Cincinnati Bird Sightings Log (<http://cincinnatibirds.com/goodbird/sighting.php>).

Taxonomic order and nomenclature follow the *Check-List of North American Birds*, 7th Edition (1998) as updated through the 56th Supplement (2015). 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. Locations whose counties are of the same name, for example Ashtabula (city) and Delaware Wildlife Area, usually do not have the counties repeated. County names for sites described in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, and Dayton are also omitted. Shortened names and a few sets of initials are used for locations and organizations which occur repeatedly; these abbreviations are listed here. The term "fide" is used in some citations; it means "in trust of" and is used where the reporter was not the observer.

Abbreviations:

Alum Creek = Alum Creek Reservoir, **Delaware**, unless otherwise noted
 Armleder Park = a Cincinnati city park on the Little Miami River, **Hamilton**
 Berlin Lake = Berlin Lake (or Reservoir), Mahoning and **Portage**
 Big Island = Big Island Wildlife Area, **Marion**
 Blendon Woods = Blendon Woods Metro Park, **Franklin**
 The Bowl = a limited-access area near the **Harrison** airport
 BRAS = Black River Audubon Society
 BSBO = Black Swamp Bird Observatory, **Ottawa** (<http://www.bsbo.org>)
 Buck Creek = Buck Creek State Park, **Clark**
 Burke Airport = Cleveland Burke Lakefront Airport, **Cuyahoga**
 Caesar Creek = Caesar Creek State Park, **Warren**
 CCE = Crane Creek Estuary, **Lucas** and **Ottawa**, viewable from both ONWR and the CCE

Trail which originates at Magee Chapel Drive = a road off Ohio 83 south of Cumberland in **Noble** which traverses grasslands
 Clear Creek = Clear Creek Metro Park; the eastern 2/3 is in **Hocking**, the rest in **Fairfield**
 Clear Fork = Clear Fork Reservoir (or Lake), partly in **Morrow** but most of the birding is done in the larger **Richland** Section.
 CLNP = Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (the former Dike 14), **Cuyahoga**
 CMM = the trio of Jon Cefus, Greg Miller, and Ben Morrison
 CNC = Cincinnati Nature Center, a non-governmental entity whose Long Branch Farm and Rowe Woods units are in **Clermont**
 Conneaut = the mudflats to the west of Conneaut Harbor, **Ashtabula**
 CP = County Park
 CPNWR = Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge, **Lucas**
 CVNP = Cuyahoga Valley National Park, **Cuyahoga** and (mostly) **Summit**
 Darby Creek = Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, **Franklin**
 Deer Creek = the State Park is in **Pickaway**, the Wildlife Area is in **Fayette**, and Deer Creek Lake is in both but mostly **Pickaway**
 East Fork = East Fork State Park, **Clermont**
 East Harbor = East Harbor State Park, **Ottawa**
 Edgewater = the Edgewater unit of Cleveland Lakefront Metroparks, **Cuyahoga**
 Fernald = Fernald Preserve, **Butler** and **Hamilton**
 Findlay Reservoirs = several contiguous water bodies east of town in **Hancock**
 Funk = Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, Ashland and (mostly) **Wayne**
 GLSM = Grand Lake St. Marys. The State Park, state fish hatchery, and the eastern 20% of the lake itself are in **Auglaize**. The rest of the lake is in **Mercer**.
 Great Miami WMB = Great Miami Wetlands Mitigation Bank, **Montgomery**
 Headlands = Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve, Headlands Beach State Park, and adjoining waters, **Lake**
 Holden = Holden Arboretum, **Lake**, except for its Stebbins Gulch unit in **Geauga**
 Hoover NP = Hoover Nature Preserve, **Delaware**
 Hoover Reservoir = the northern 80% is in **Delaware**, the rest and the dam are in **Franklin**
 Indian Lake = Indian Lake State Park, **Logan**
 Jones Preserve = Jones Preserve at Long Point, on Kelleys Island, **Erie**
 Kelleys Island = the island and adjoining waters, **Erie**

Killbuck = Killbuck State Wildlife Area, **Holmes** and **Wayne**
Killdeer = Killdeer Plains State Wildlife Area; a bit is in **Marion** but it's mostly in **Wyandot**
LaDue = LaDue Reservoir, **Geauga**
Lake Erie Bluffs = a **Lake** Metroparks parcel whose popularity among birders is blooming.
Lake Hope/Zaleski = Lake Hope State Park and surrounding Zaleski State Forest, **Vinton**
Lake Loramie = Lake Loramie SP, **Shelby**
Lorain = the dredge spoil impoundment east of downtown in the city and county of the same name, unless otherwise noted
Lost Bridge = a Great Miami River crossing on Lawrenceburg Road near Elizabethtown, **Hamilton**, where a covered bridge was lost to fire in 1903
m. obs. = multiple observers
Magee = the boardwalk and immediate vicinity in Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, **Lucas**, unless otherwise noted. The northern third of the causeway is also in **Lucas**, the rest in **Ottawa**.
Maumee Bay = Maumee Bay State Park, **Lucas**, unless otherwise noted
Medusa = Medusa Marsh, **Erie**, an informally named and privately owned area between Sandusky and Bay View
Metzger = Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area, **Lucas**, not to be confused with Metzger Reservoir, **Allen**
Mill Creek = Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, a limited-access area in **Mahoning**
Mohican = Mohican State Forest and State Park. Many trails cross the boundaries so some reports include sightings from both without distinction.
Mohican SF = Mohican State Forest, **Ashland**
Mohican SP = Mohican State Park, (mostly) **Ashland** and (slightly) **Richland**
Mosquito Lake = Mosquito Creek Lake, also called Mosquito Creek Reservoir, **Trumbull**. Mosquito (Creek) Wildlife Area adjoins it.
MP = Metro Park, MetroPark, or Metropark depending on the system
NC = Nature Center
NF = National Forest
NP = Nature Preserve, except as part of CVNP
OBBA II = the second Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas
OBRC = Ohio Bird Records Committee
Old Highland Stone = that company's water-filled gravel pits, **Highland**
OOPMP = Oak Openings Preserve MetroPark, **Lucas**
ONWR = Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, **Lucas** and **Ottawa**
Pickerel Creek = Pickerel Creek Wildlife Area, **Sandusky**

Pickerington Ponds = Pickerington Ponds Metro Park, **Fairfield** and **Franklin**
Pipe Creek = Pipe Creek Wildlife Area, in the city of Sandusky, **Erie**
Rocky Fork = Rocky Fork State Park, **Highland**
Sandy Ridge = Sandy Ridge Reservation, **Lorain**
Seneca Lake = most of the lake and the (non-state) Park are in **Noble**, while the dam is in **Guernsey**
SF = State Forest
Shawnee = Shawnee State Forest, **Scioto**, unless otherwise noted
Shawnee Lookout = Shawnee Lookout County Park, **Hamilton**
Sheldon Marsh = Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Erie**
SNP = State Nature Preserve
SP = State Park
Springville Marsh = Springville Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Seneca**
SWA = State Wildlife Area
TNC = The Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org>)
Villa Angela = the Villa Angela unit of Cleveland's Lakefront Reservation
WA = Wildlife Area
Wake Robin = a trail and boardwalk in Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Lake**
Wendy Park = a lakeshore Cleveland park, **Cuyahoga**
Wilderness Road = a road which traverses Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, **Wayne**, and adjoining farmland
The Wilds = a limited-access big-mammal breeding and research facility in **Muskingum**, also used generically to include the surrounding reclaimed strip mines
Zaleski = Zaleski State Forest, **Vinton**