

COMMENTS ON THE SEASON

By Craig Caldwell

Laura Keene's departure and Christopher Collins' arrival as Photo Editors have reminded me how much I depend on my volunteer helpers. Roger Lau has done a magnificent job of turning each issue's host of Word documents, Excel files, and photographs into a coherent whole since he began with the winter 2013-14 edition. Proofreaders Tim Colborn, Mike Egar, Rob Harlan, and Laura Peskin do more than just correct spelling errors and awkward syntax; they (especially Rob) also question some sighting reports which I should have questioned myself. Victor Fazio III, Andy Jones, and Bill Whan provide valuable ornithological and historical advice whenever I ask. My thanks go to all of them.

Our weird weather continues. Mar temperatures were among the highest on record: The overall average and average maxima and minima were at or above the 95th percentile. Precipitation was also above average, though not so dramatically; the month ranked in the upper third of the 122 years with data. The western 2/3 of the state (except the far northwest) received up to triple its usual rain and snow and the rest of the state's precipitation amounts ranged from average to 1½ times normal.

Apr and May temperatures were in the middle of those months' historical ranges. Precipitation, however, was below average in both months, ranking at numbers 57 and 46 of their respective 122 years' of data (with number one being the driest). Only the far southeast, and only in Apr, did any area exceed 150% of its normal rain and snow. And snow it did – on 09 Apr, Toledo received eight inches of the wet stuff and the Cleveland area up to five. Eastern *Cuyahoga* got a late couple of inches on 15 May.

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*.

The trend to earlier arrivals from the south continues. Eleven shorebird species, nine warblers, and four of our six swallows arrived earlier than their historic norms, some by as much as a month. And many of the early sightings were soon followed by more, which to me means the first arrivals weren't outliers. (Three warblers

were first seen later than usual, but that doesn't mean they weren't here on time.)

This issue of the *Cardinal* contains reports of 305 species, slightly above the previous five years' spring season average of 303. Seven hybrids and 10 reports at the genus or family level are also included. Four of the accounts are of exotic species which were most likely released or escaped, though one could have wandered a couple hundred miles from an established population. Ten review species or forms were reported to the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC); four of them also have other sightings not formally reported. Ten review species generated only postings to eBird, Ohio-birds, Facebook, or other on-line venues. Fortunately many of these posts include a photograph or detailed description which will enable OBRC review.

As always, the OBRC and this editor urge birders to formally 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. An easy-to-use on-line form is available at <http://www.ohio-birds.org/records/documentation.php>.

Random notes:

1. Once a month, ONWR opens its gate to allow birders to drive through otherwise closed areas. The Refuge used to call the event and route the Auto Tour; now it's Wildlife Drive.
2. Stand by for some more big changes to the taxonomic order in the summer *Cardinal*. As this issue was in production, the North American Classification Committee of the American Ornithologist's Union (NACC/AOU) released its annual update. Several entire families have been moved to reflect relationships revealed by the latest DNA data.
3. This season generated more than 890,000 eBird entries. 231,000 (26%) of them were from Lucas and another 64,000 from Ottawa.

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>); and the Ohio-birds listerv

(<http://birding.aba.org/maillist/OH>). In the species accounts, “normal” arrival dates are from Harlan *et al.*, *Ohio Bird Records Committee Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Ohio*, 2008.

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 NACC/AOU 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 (*Hamilton*), Cleveland (*Cuyahoga*), Columbus (*Franklin*), Dayton (*Montgomery*), and Toledo (*Lucas*) 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:

- A/R Corner = fields at the corner of Angola and Raab Roads, *Lucas*
- Alum Creek = Alum Creek Reservoir, *Delaware*, unless otherwise noted
- Armleder Park = a Cincinnati city park on the Little Miami River, *Hamilton*
- Audubon = the National Audubon Society (<http://www.audubon.org>)
- BBS = the North American Breeding Bird Survey, a joint project of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Canadian Wildlife Service
- Berlin Lake = Berlin Lake (or Reservoir), *Ma-honing* 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, *War-ren*, unless the lake is specified; a bit of the lake is also in *Clinton*
- CBC = Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count
- 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, almost entirely in *Franklin* but with bits in other counties as well
- 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*
- Grand Lake = Grand Lake St. Marys. The State Park, the 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 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**
Loran = 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**.
Mallard Club = Mallard Club Marsh WA, **Lucas**
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**
Old Woman Creek = Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, **Erie**
OOPMP = Oak Openings Preserve MetroPark, **Lucas**
ONWR = Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, **Lucas** and **Ottawa**
ONWR Boss and Navarre = units of ONWR separate from the main area, both **Ottawa**
Pearson MP = Pearson Metro Park, **Lucas**
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**
Salt Fork = Salt Fork SP, **Guernsey**
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
Springfield Lake = in Greater Akron, **Summit**
Springville Marsh = Springville Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Seneca**
Spring Valley = Spring Valley Wildlife Area, almost entirely in **Greene** but extending into **Warren**
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 breed-
ing and research facility in *Muskingum*, also
used generically to include the surrounding
reclaimed strip mines

Willow Point = Willow Point Wildlife Area, *Erie*

Winous Horseshoe = a limited-access part of
Winous Point Shooting Club, *Ottawa*

Winous Point = Winous Point Shooting Club,
Ottawa

Zaleski = Zaleski State Forest, *Vinton*