

OHIO RECORDS COMMITTEE

This issue is the first where every documented bird reported has been reviewed by the Ohio Records Committee.

The committee was formed during the Spring of 1981 to aid the editors of the Ohio Cardinal. As the Ohio Cardinal grew in subscribers and report contributors, so has the volume of documented bird reports. For example, each committee member reviewed 44 documented birds for this issue and is currently reviewing 64 for the Fall migration.

The editors simply did not have the expertise necessary to determine which reports to publish. However, it is important to have records with a high probability of accuracy for review later. If, for example, you wanted to know whether the black-legged kittwake has increased in Ohio over the last twenty years, or what season it is most likely to appear in Ohio, you would want to review records which had a high probability of accuracy. Also, it didn't seem fair to place the entire decision to accept or reject a record in the hands of one man. Thus, the records committee was formed.

The committee is composed of five members. Each member represents a different geographical area of Ohio and is a recognized expert in field identification of Ohio birds. Each documentation submitted to the Ohio Cardinal is reviewed twice by each committee member. The documentations are photocopied and sent to each member simultaneously. Each member reviews the record without knowing the others views. The written reviews are sent to the editor. He then sends each member the views of the other four members for each documentation. Each member then reviews the documentation a second time and either changes or maintains his opinion. If three or more of the committee members approve a record, it is accepted. The object is to determine the probability that the viewer actually saw the bird named. An acceptance means that the bird described was probability seen. A rejection means only that the description given was inadequate to make this determination.

A rejection does not mean that the observer did not see the bird he names. Some observers simply do not write well. The major cause of rejection to date has been the failure of the observer to give a precise detailed description of the bird. As an observer, the rarer the bird, the more you try to get an excellent look at it to be sure of your identification. Thus the better you saw the bird, the more detail you can put into your written description to enable others to come to the same conclusion.

The committee members serve without any compensation. They obviously must devote much effort and time to this work and we feel very lucky to have their service. They worry that bird report contributors, many of whom they know as friends, will stop reporting if they have a documentation rejected. They hope that if they are objective and fair in their reviews that the contributor will not take their response personally as a blow to his ego but rather realize that they could not form an opinion from his description to verify his sighting. Again, they emphasize, it does not mean that the observer didn't see the bird named.

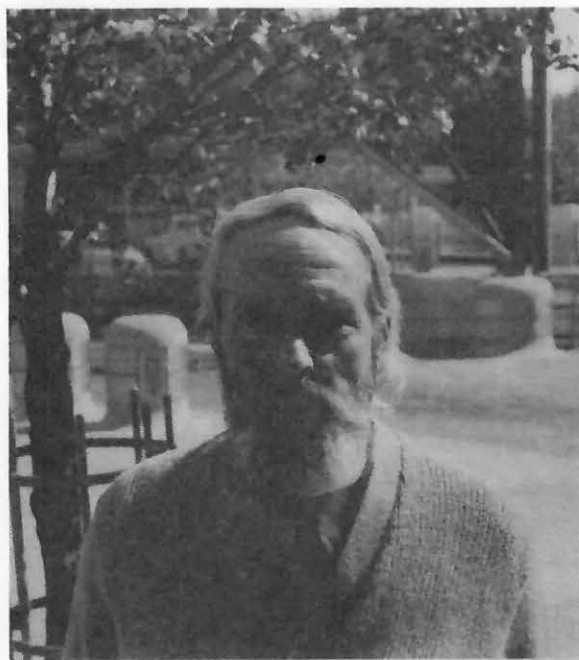
The committee members are: Bruce Peterjohn, Columbus, Ohio; Dr. Elliot Tramer, Toledo, Ohio; Worth Randle, Cincinnati, Ohio; Ray Hannikman, Cleveland, Ohio and Jean Hoffman, Cleveland, Ohio.

Bruce Peterjohn is the regional editor for American Birds for the Middle Western Prairie Region. He has worked for the last five years as a field biologist for the Ohio Department of Transportation. His most exciting birding experience occurred last year when he discovered an arctic tern at the Huron dredge disposal area and felt an earthquake tremor under his feet and scope as he was watching the bird. He is a member of the Columbus Audubon Society, Cooper Ornithological Society, American Ornithological Union and American Birding Assn. Bruce has been birding 17 years and has a life list that was at 530 birds last June. His Fall birding vacation trip to Washington and Oregon added more species. He believes that the most important future goal for current birders is correct identification. The biggest change he's witnessed in birding in the last ten years is its increased popularity.



Elliot J. Tramer is a professor of biology at The University of Toledo. He has worked there 13 years and specializes in ecology. He has over 30 articles published in scientific journals (about half on birds) and numerous popular articles on nature subjects. He is a life elective member of the American Ornithologists Union and also is a member of the Toledo Naturalists Assn., Wilson and Cooper Ornithological Societies and National Audubon Society. His most exciting sightings include quetzals and bellbirds in Costa Rica, sunbitterns in Panama and condors in California. After 29 years of birding, his North American life list stands at 590 species. Elliot sees the increase in number and quality of birders leading to much better coverage as the biggest birding change in his lifetime.

Jean Hoffman works as a computer programmer for the U.S. Navy Finance Center in Cleveland. She has also been a freelance fiber artist for the last fourteen years. In ten years of birding, she has accumulated a North American life list of 483 birds and with 296 species in Ohio. She has written two articles for the Ohio Cardinal: Identification of Winter Red & Northern Phalaropes and Site Guide to the Cleveland Lakefront. She is a past president of The Kirtland Bird Club (1978-1980) and also a member of the American Birding Association and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Her most exciting moment came in December of 1975 when she saw an adult ivory gull on the Cleveland lakefront. Jean is most frequently seen birding with her husband Dick. To her the most important future goal for current birders is to save birds and their habitat for future birders.



Worth Randle is presently the center director for the National Audubon, Cincinnati & California Woods Nature Centers, a lecturer and nature photographer for the Cincinnati Country Day School and biology teacher for the Bleitz Wildlife Foundation. He also is a bird bander. He has been birding the Cincinnati area for 50 years. He is the co-author of the book Birds of Southwestern Ohio, written at a time when he was the park naturalist for the Hamilton County Park District. Although he has seen the white-tailed kite, Swainson's hawk, artic loon & trumpeter swan in Ohio, he lists his sighting of a gannet and a skua at Meldahl Dam as his most exciting birding moment. Worth does not record the number of species seen in either Ohio or North America. He believes that the biggest change in birding in his lifetime has been the severe loss of habitats that he used to frequent. This makes the preservation of habitat his most important goal for current birders.



Ray Hannikman is an accountant working in Cleveland for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District. He handles their money and investments. He's probably best known in the Cleveland area as the editor of the Cleveland Bird Calendar, a quarterly publication of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Kirtland Bird Club. He's been the editor since 1975. His most exciting bird sighting was a Siberian rubythroat in 1978 at St. Lawrence Island, Gambell, Alaska. In ten years of birding, Ray has seen 640 species in North America and 287 in Ohio. His view of the biggest change in birding in his lifetime is the additional birders who do more chasing of birds. He feels the most important future goal for current birders is to develop more ability to write documentation forms.

The Records Committee also will compile a state list of birds seen in Ohio. This list will differ from Troutman's Annotated List in that it will be current and not necessarily require a specimen as a pre-requisite for listing.

Their state list should be completed by the Fall of this year.

