

The Reports

Spring Migration

1 March - 31 May
1985

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Each year more and more birders eagerly await the northward passage of spring migrants. It is the time to seek rarities and absorb the flashy colors of breeding plumage. To some it means a "big day" excursion, while to others it is time for their annual hegira to Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and its environs. Indeed, it seems as though birders outnumber the birds on the now famous bird trail at Crane Creek State Park. Locally it is a time when Tennessee warblers seem to be more prevalent than the ever increasing house finch.

This spring may be remembered as one of the warmest and driest in recent history. An abnormally warm March and April allowed the foilage to emerge well in advance of the usual dates. The continuous southerly breezes made nearly every observer feel that flycatchers, vireos, warblers, and sparrows passed through unnoticed. There were no apparent early over-flights or wave days to speak of, just a continual trickling of small numbers of passerines. It does seem odd that with few movements noted by reporters that the number of outlandish rarities was at a high. Save for the co-operative Swainson's warbler in Columbus and a clay-colored sparrow in Cleveland, nearly all rarities were reported from the western basin area.

As noted, this spring gave many the opportunity to increase their ever-burgeoning state lists, while at the same time providing many a chance to experience an unprecedented shorebird movement in Lucas and Ottawa counties. In fact, upon reading this report, it may seem more like "The Crane Creek Chronicles" as opposed to The Ohio Cardinal. (If only the rest of the state had such coverage.) An attempt has been made to summarize the sightings reported and in the case of common migrants and sedentary species several have been deleted. It is felt that most are interested in reading about the more noteworthy occurrences whether they be local rarities or first state records. Several of this season's top birds were seen and photographed by more than a single competent observer and in some cases well over fifty people were gathered behind spotting scopes viewing a "state bird." There were also those birds seen fleetingly by one person and therefore remain unverified. The sightings deemed truly rare will be submitted to the Ohio Cardinal Records Committee (OCRC) for review. A report on the acceptance of such sightings will be forthcoming.

Loon - Cormorant: Common loons and grebes were unusually scarce during their normal movement period. Interesting was an influx of loons in the northern counties during the latter half of May. Double-crested cormorants were reported in good numbers inland and along Lake Erie.

Common Loon

High: 3/31 Caesar's Creek (Montgomery Co.) (16) (J. Hickman). Late birds were 5/22 Beaver Creek Reservoir (Seneca Co.) (TB), 5/28 Lucas Co. (TK).

Horned Grebe

Late: 5/31 Gordon Park (Cuyahoga Co.) (TL).

Red-necked Grebe (D)

3/9 South Bass Island (Erie Co.) (*KA).

American White Pelican (D)

5/27 Magee Marsh SWA (Ottawa Co.) (*J. Pogacnik). To OCRC.

Brown Pelican (D)

5/1 Magee Marsh SWA (*S. Hiris, *J. Pogacnik). To OCRC.

Double-crested Cormorant

Widespread reports from as far south as Montgomery Co. (CM, RM) and Hamilton Co. (Hugo Honschopp) and as far east as Mosquito Creek Reservoir in Trumbull Co. (CB). High: 4/15 (120) East Harbor SP (Erie Co.) (AT).

Bittern-Ibis: Herons were reported widely and in good numbers. The rarities included white-faced ibis and tri-colored heron in the western basin.

American Bittern

Reported from several areas in the state, which was encouraging. Early 4/7 Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (hereafter ONWR) (Ottawa Co.) (ECP), 4/13 Spring Valley SWA (Greene Co.) (CM et al), 4/20 Little Portage SWA (Ottawa Co.) (RCo).

Least Bittern

The usual western basin locations, whereas an early bird at Big Island SWA (Marion Co.) (LR) 4/21 was locally noteworthy as was a trio of birds found by Marian Zehnder in the Cuyahoga National Recreation Area (Summit Co.) which subsequently delighted many.

Great Egret

Widespread reports of small groups from Franklin to Trumbull counties and west.

Snowy Egret

Up to 11 were reported from the Magee Marsh area while the only inland report was from Big Island 4/14-21.

Little Blue Heron

4/21 Toussaint SWA (Ottawa Co.) (RCo, KA), 4/22-5/31 up to 2 at Magee (m.obs.), 5/20 East Harbor SP (AT). Inland: 4/22 Portage Co. (LR).

Tricolored Heron (D)

5/22-31 Cedar Point Div. of ONWR (Lucas Co.) (*m.obs.)

Cattle Egret

4/2 Great Miami River (Hamilton Co.) (HH), 4/17-5/31 Up to 13 present around Magee Marsh (JP, MS, ECP).

Black-crowned Night-Heron

There were only three reports away from the western basin. 3/26 Greenlawn Cemetery (Franklin Co.), 4/13 Gordon Park, 5/8 Lake Rockwell (Portage Co.).

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

4/30-5/31 Columbus (m.obs.), 5/4 Miami River (Montgomery Co.) (CM).

White-faced Ibis (D)

5/18-24 ONWR (*E.Pierce, J.Fry, J.Pogacnik, JK.Alexander). To OCRC.
See cover of this issue.

Swan - Dabbler: Tundra swans departed early and no great numbers were noted. Reports indicate that a breeding population of mute swans may be in the near future. White-fronted geese were far more widespread than expected. Snow geese put in an excellent showing in the western basin. Dabblers were in good numbers overall, with green-winged teal, pintail, and gadwall particularly high. Eurasian wigeon was a local notable in Greene as well as in Ottawa Co. where it has become a regular.

Tundra Swan

3/9 Funk (Wayne Co.) (110) (JVH), 3/17 Mosquito Res. (20) (CB).
Late: 5/16-17 Beaver Creek Res. (TB).

Greater White-fronted Goose (D)

3/8-4/6 Magee Marsh SWA (up to 18) (m.obs.), 3/9-21 Funk (up to 62) (JVH), 3/14 Oxbow area (24) (adjacent to Hamilton Co. in Indiana) (MM, Alan Knue), 3/16-17 C. J. Brown Reservoir (Clark Co.) (J. Gallagher et al), 3/16 Stage's Pond (24) (Pickaway Co.) (*KA), 4/3 L.Rockwell (LR).

Snow Geese

3/8-10 ONWR (500+) (JP), 3/10 Mosquito Res. (CB), 3/16 Funk (8) (JVH), 4/3 Big Island SWA (4) (KA).

Brant (D)

5/26 Crane Creek SP (28) (*JK.Alexander). To OCRC.

Green-winged Teal

4/3 Big Island SWA (140) (RCo), 4/6 Ottawa Co. (300) (KA). Late: 5/31 Barberton (Summit Co.) (4) (ECP) (a possible nesting attempt?).

American Black Duck

High: 4/7 Big Island SWA (1000) (RCo).

Northern Pintail

Local highs: 3/3 Mosquito Res. (39), 3/6 L.Rockwell (80), 3/25 (28) Seneca Co., 4/3 Big Island (495).

Blue-winged Teal

Highs: 4/7 (780) (RCo), 4/10 (900) (KA) Big Island.

Northern Shoveler

Highs: 4/7 (215) (RCo), 4/10 (150) (KA) Big Island, 4/13 Navarre Marsh (Ottawa Co.) (110) (MS).

Gadwall

3/3 Mosquito Res. (18), 3/10 Cedar Point NWR (114), 4/6 Ottawa Co. (300), 4/7 Big Island (200).

Eurasian Wigeon (D)

3/3-11 near Magee Marsh (JP,MS), 4/2 near Maumee Bay SP (Lucas Co.) (JP), 4/2-3 Ottawa Co. (2) (JP), 5/4-11 Spring Valley SWA (*J.Kallas, et al).

American Wigeon

3/31 Mosquito Res. (20) (CB). Highs: 4/3 (1400) (KA), 4/7 (780) (RCo) Big Island.

Divers: Divers peaked early and all but redheads and red-breasted mergansers received good reports. Tom Lepage (a longtime Lake Erie observer) felt that, while still numerous, red-breasted mergansers were well below peak years. Ring-necked and ruddy ducks received excellent ratings for their numbers. Oldsquaws and all three scoter species were reported from several locations. Much data is felt to be needed in understanding the movement of scoters through Ohio.

Canvasback

3/5 Ottawa-Lucas Co. (1200) (JP), 3/6 Lorain (Lorain Co.) (200) (TL), 3/17 Mosquito Res. (38) (CB), 3/25 Barberton (BW).

Ring-necked Duck

3/5 Ottawa-Lucas Co. (1800) (JP), 4/3 Big Island (1000) (KA).

Greater Scaup

3/17 C.J.Brown Res. (8) (C&B Berry), 4/6 Holmes Co. (DK).

Lesser Scaup

High: 3/20 Perkins Beach (Cuyahoga Co.) (4000) (TL).

Oldsquaw

3/2 Oxbow area (7) (David Styer), 3/5-6,3/29 Lorain (Up to 3) (AT, JP), 3/9 Barberton (BW), 3/29 Sheldon's Marsh (Erie So.) (AT), Crane Creek SP (JP).

Black Scoter (D: inland)

3/5-7,4/19 Lorain (JP,AT), 3/6 Bayshore (Lucas Co.) (JP), 4/3 Ottawa Co. (JP), 4/16-19 Beavercreek Res. (2 males) (TB).

Surf Scoter (D: inland)

3/5,3/29-4/1 Lorain (up to 3) (JP,AT), 5/4 Barberton (*LR,ECP).

White-winged Scoter

3/4-5,3/14,3/29 Lorain (JP), 3/10 Cedar Point NWR (JKo), 4/3 Big Island (KA), 4/15 Pippin Lake (Portage Co.).

Hooded Merganser

High: 4/10 Big Island (80) (KA). A successful nesting (JP) at Carlisle Metro Park in Lorain Co. was extraordinary for the region.

Common Merganser

Highs: 3/10 Cedar Point NWA (2500) (KA), (416) (JKo)?

Ruddy Duck

Highs: 4/11 Lorain (680) (AT), 4/13 Metzger Marsh (Lucas Co.) (700) (KA), 4/19 Cedar Point NWR (350) (MS).

Vulture - Falcon: The hawk watching near Ottawa NWR indicated that 3/10 and 4/19-20 were days of much movement. There are, however, many discrepancies in the reports. It is hard to imagine that 8 golden eagles as compared to 4 bald eagles is correct. As usual goshawks, merlins and peregrines were submitted without details.

Black Vulture (D: central and northern)

3/18 Clearcreek (Fairfield Co.), 5/31 Adams Co.

Turkey Vulture

Dr. Tramer indicated that a "heavy" movement was noticeable in the western basin in late March and early April. The famed buzzard roost at Hinckley (Medina Co.) had 47 on 5/12.

Osprey

Few reports away from Hamilton and Ottawa Co. Early: 4/6 Winton Woods (Hamilton Co.) (HH), 4/7 ONWR (TB). High: 4/19 ONWR (19) (JKo). Late: 5/16 Wayne Co. (DK), 5/19 Lucas Co. (RCo).

Mississippi Kite (D)

5/11 one bird, Cedar Point NWR area (*LR, Bruce Peterjohn, Don Tumblin). See photo in this issue.

Bald Eagle

3/10 Ottawa Co. (6), 5/26 Spencer SWA (Medina Co.) (only migrant away from western basin reported). Nesting at Mosquito Res.

Northern Harrier

Fair numbers reported from 8 counties, with late dates of 5/4 in Medina and Lucas. High: 4/13 ONWR (13) (JKO).

Sharp-shinned Hawk

Only one observer felt excellent. Highs: 4/18 Sheldon's Marsh (33) (AT), 4/19 ONWR (112) (JKo). A report of a possible nesting in Lucas Co. was locally noteworthy (MA).

Red-shouldered Hawk

3/10 Lucas Co. (38) (TK), ONWR (55) (MA), Cedar Pt. NWR (19), 3/14 ONWR (52), Brecksville (Cuyahoga Co.), 3/23 Cuyahoga Valley NRA (Summit-Cuyahoga Co.).

Broad-winged Hawk

Early: 4/6 Hamilton Co. (Paul Hellmann), 4/14 Ceasar's Creek SP (Ida Suttman), 4/14 Holmes Co. (DK). Highs: 4/19 Sheldon's Marsh (200) (AT), ONWR (4283), 4/20 (667) (JKo).

Red-tailed Hawk

3/10 ONWR (73) (JKo), Oregon (Lucas Co.) (42) (TK), Cedar Pt NWR (10), 3/27 Perkins Beach (16) (TL).

Rough-legged Hawk

Few reports from 6 counties with up to 7 at Funk (BW) and a late bird at ONWR 5/5 (ECP).

Golden Eagle (D)

4/4,4/21 Magee Marsh SWA (*JP). To OCRC.

Merlin (D)

3/10 Magee Marsh SWA (*JP), 5/9 Lucas Co. (*KA), 5/10 Mosquito

Creek SWA (2) (*CB), 5/23 Maumee Bay SP (*JP). To OCRC.

Peregrine Falcon (D)

3/10, 4/5, 4/20 Magee Marsh SWA (*JP), 5/7 ONWR (*KA). To OCRC.

Pheasant - Sandhill Crane: Pheasants remain scarce throughout the state but ruffed grouse and bobwhite reports were encouraging. King rail was reported from the usual western basin areas and an individual at Big Island was locally exceptional. Virginia rails and soras were widespread while moorhens and coots were reported to be below average. Sandhill cranes moved through the state in relatively good numbers (for Ohio). Cranes were locally exciting on the Great Miami River where they were "dancing," in Cleveland (William and Nancy Klamm), and Funk (fide J. Bruce) where they are, at best, casual.

Ruffed Grouse

Reported from Adams, Holmes, Portage, Richland, and Ross Co.

Northern Bobwhite

Much improved in the northwest (TK,MA), encouraging reports from Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Portage and Wayne Co., but "very small numbers" after severe weather of past winter in Hamilton Co. and only an occasional bird is heard calling (AW).

Wild Turkey

Only reports were from Tar Hollow SP (Ross Co.). 3/24 (8) (KA).

King Rail

Scattered reports from Lucas and Ottawa Co. where they are fairly rare. 4/21-5/14 Cedar Pt NWR (RCo,JKo), 4/23-5/31 Magee Marsh SWA (MS), 5/11 Little Portage SWA (KA).

Virginia Rail

Early: 3/24 Spring Valley SWA (CM).

Sora

Early: 3/28 Charlie's Pond (Pickaway Co.) (KA), 4/14 Mentor Marsh (Lake Co.) (TL). Highs: JP reported excellent numbers at Magee Marsh, 4/20 Little Portage SWA (27) (KA). 5/14 Coshocton Co. (female with chicks) (EM).

Common Moorhen

Few reports. Early: 4/9 Spring Valley SWA. High: Mosquito Res.(3).

Sandhill Crane

3/6 ONWR (4) (JP), 3/10 Maumee Bay SP (11) (ET), Magee Marsh SWA (82) (JP), 3/19 Catawba Is. (Ottawa Co.) (JP), 3/31-4/4 Spring Valley SWA (CM), 4/3 Big Island SWA (3) (KA), 4/4 Funk, 5/11 Maumee Bay SP (JP), Cedar Pt NWR (2)(KA). Late: 5/19 ONWR (BO). Hamilton Co.: "seen in larger numbers than in many years" (AW): 3/2-14 (21 birds total with the ten on

3/2 "dancing" in courtship ritual).

Shorebirds: This group was the story of spring 1985, with 30+ species reported it was one of the best years of recent history. Extraordinary numbers of avocets, ruffs, and a cooperative curlew sandpiper. Long-billed dowitchers were reported from Barberton, Magee Marsh, and Mosquito Res. It was an excellent year for white-rumped sandpipers and dunlin. Whimbrels were reported in fair numbers in the last part of May.

Black-bellied Plover

4/22 Wayne Co. (DK), 5/11 Navarre Marsh (26) (MS), 5/15 Lucas Co., (80) (KA), 5/22 Bayshore (22) (ET). Late: 5/27 Ottawa Co. (55) (RCo), Barberton (3) (BO).

Lesser Golden Plover

Early: 3/31 Barberton (BW). 4/10 Lucas Co (4), 4/16 Funk (7) (JVH), 4/23 ONWR (400) (JP), 5/11 Navarre Marsh (26) (MS).

Semipalmated Plover

Reported from Cuyahoga, Erie, Marion, Medina, Portage, Summit, and Trumbull Co. as well as the western basin. High: 5/17 Ottawa Co. (80).

Piping Plover

5/5 Ottawa Co. (*J.Pogacnik). To OCRC.

Killdeer

3/5 Magee Marsh SWA (10,000) (JP)!

American Avocet

4/22 Bayshore (32) (ET).

Greater Yellowlegs

Widely reported in good numbers with up to 350 in Ottawa Co. Early: 3/10 Funk (J.Wert).

Lesser Yellowlegs

Excellent numbers throughout state where habitat existed.

Solitary Sandpiper

Highs 5/6 Ottawa Co.(45), 5/10 Mosquito Res. (18).

Willet

4/19 Greenlawn Cemetary (8) (KA), 4/21-22 ONWR (JP), 4/24 Bayshore (2) (ET), 5/10 Lucas Co. (MA,KA,JP).

Upland Sandpiper

Early: 4/12 Franklin Co., 4/16 Burke Airport (Cuyahoga Co.). 5/11 Killdeer Plains WA (Wyandot Co.), Ottawa Co. (8).

Whimbrel

Early: 5/7 Bayshore (KA). Lucas Co. 5/21-22 (AT,ET), 5/24 (47) (JP). 5/28 ONWR (2) (JP). 5/26 Lodi (Medina Co.) (40+)(LR).

Long-billed Curlew (D)

5/22 Cedar Pt NWR (4) (*M.Shieldcastle). To OCRC.

Ruddy Turnstone

Early: 5/8 Ottawa Co. Highs: 5/22 Bayshore (82), 5/26 Ottawa Co. (92), 5/29 Erie Co. (21).

Red Knot

5/9 Lucas Co., 5/10 ONWR, 5/22-24 Bayshore.

Sanderling

5/6, 5/20 (3) Bayshore (ET), 5/18 Ottawa Co. (28) (RCo).

Semipalmated Sandpiper

Highs were up to 350 at Bayshore and 200 at Barberton.

Western Sandpiper (D: spring only)

Only reports: 5/22 Bayshore, 5/26 Spencer SWA (2).

Least Sandpiper

Early: 4/18 Pickaway Co.(4). High: 5/7 Ottawa Co. (180).

Dunlin

Many thousands reported from Ottawa Co. Early: 3/29 Barberton.

Curlew Sandpiper (D)

5/10-20 Ottawa Co. (*m.obs.). To OCRC. See photo in this issue.

White-rumped Sandpiper

Excellent numbers reported from all suitable areas except Bayshore. Ottawa Co. 5/8 (3), 5/11 (4), 5/30 (16). Summit Co. 5/18 (10), 5/28 (15), 5/30 (3). 5/27 Cedar Pt NWR, 5/31 Lorain.

Baird's Sandpiper (D: spring only)

5/17 Bayshore (3) (*E. Tramer). To OCRC.

Pectoral Sandpiper

Early: 3/25 Barberton (51) (BW). Local Highs: 3/29 Barberton (370), 4/6 Ottawa Co. (500), 4/8 Dayton (25), 4/12 Franklin Co. (420), 4/22 Bayshore (125), 4/23 Big Island (1200).

Stilt Sandpiper

Up to 4 were reported from Ottawa Co. (m.obs.). 5/15-17 Bayshore, 5/18-19 Barberton.

Ruff (D)

Up to 3 males and a reeve were found in the flooded fields near ONWR (*m.obs.) 5/4-11.

Short-billed Dowitcher

High: 5/12 Ottawa Co. (175) (KA).

Long-billed Dowitcher (D: spring only)

3/29 Ottawa Co. (*JP), 4/27 Barberton (3) (calling) (BO et al), 5/6-10 Ottawa Co. (*KA), 5/10 Mosquito Creek SWA (*CB).

Common Snipe

5/1 Coshocton Co. (locally good) (EM), 5/12 Irwin Prairie (Lucas Co.) (chicks) (ET).

American Woodcock

Widely reported. 4/11 near Dayton (eggs) (D.Nolin), 5/4 Firestone Metro Park (Summit Co.) (young) (ECP).

Wilson's Phalarope

4/28 Barberton, 5/8, 5/21, Bayshore, 5/8 Portage Co., 5/18 ONWR (2).

Red-necked Phalarope

5/23-24 Bayshore (AT,ET), 5/29-31 Barberton (LR).

Gull - Tern: Gulls are not usually a major topic of spring migration but ten species were reported highlighted by black-legged kittiwake, Franklin's, Iceland, laughing, and little gulls. Tern reports were not encouraging although black terns were found away from Lake Erie.

Laughing Gull (D)

4/1 Edgewater Park (TL), 4/19 Lorain (JP), 5/3-31 Bayshore (ET, KA).

Franklin's Gull

4/7,5/2,5/17 Ottawa Co., 4/29 Bayshore.

Little Gull (D: away from Lake Erie)

3/29 Lorain, 4/2-3 Ottawa Co. (2nd year), 4/14-15 Ottawa Co. (1st year), 5/3, 5/24 Bayshore (adult) all submitted by J.Pogacnik.

Bonaparte's Gull

Good along Lake Erie and inland they were found at Funk (75) and Mosquito Res. (72).

Thayer's Gull (D)

3/5 Lorain (JP).

Iceland Gull (D: away from Lake Erie)

3/17, 3/30 Lorain (TL,JP).

Lesser Black-backed Gull (D)

4/5-6 Ottawa Co. (JP).

Glaucous Gull

3/5,5/17 Lorain (JP), 3/10-17 ONWR (JP).

Black-legged Kittiwake (D)

3/5 Lorain (JP). 3/28 Bodi Road area (Ottawa Co.) (4 im.) (JP) (extraordinary number), 4/6 Bodi Road (2 im.) (*KA,JP), 4/5-5/2 Bodi Road (1 im.) (JP) (*ECP on 4/13).

Caspian Tern

Highs: 4/16 Lorain (TL), 4/20 Barberton (20).

Common Tern

No concentrations noted, with a high of 40 at Mentor.

Forster's Tern

Very scarce (MA), with high of only 12 at Edgewater Park 5/9 (TL).

Black Tern

Small numbers in the western basin. Inland: 5/4 Big Island, 5/6,5/30 Barberton, 5/8 Beaver creek Res.

Cuckoo - Woodpecker: Both cuckoos were exceedingly scarce or late. Migrant owls received poor reports while residents are faring better. Goatsuckers were reported below par as were sapsucker movements. Several expressed concern over flickers and red-headed woodpeckers in the west.

Black-billed Cuckoo

Reported from Adams, Erie, Holmes, Lucas, Mahoning and Summit Co. High of 5 at Oak Openings (Lucas Co.).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Few reports from the same areas as previous species with high of 4 at Oak Openings (MA).

Common Barn Owl

Nest locations found in Guernsey and Ottawa Co. (MS).

Snowy Owl

3/1 Maumee Bay SP (JP).

Barred Owl

Now nesting in Oak Openings (ET).

Long-eared Owl

3/27,4/4 Magee Marsh SWA (JP), 4/2 Lucas Co. (ECP), 4/6 Reno Beach (Lucas Co.) (KA), 5/23 Jericho Farms (Knox Co.) (*EM). Nesting was apparently successful in Wyandot Co.

Short-eared Owl

Only reports were from Maumee Bay SP where 2 remained as of 5/31.

Northern Saw-whet Owl

Poor showing. Only reports 3/10 ONWR, 3/27,4/4 Magee Marsh SWA.

Common Nighthawk

Arrivals: 4/19 Columbus, 5/12 Mentor, 5/17 Lorain, 5/23 Toledo.

Chuck-will's widow (D: north and central)

4/28 Adams Co. (2) (RCo, KA). But see Block Busters article.

Whip-poor-will

4/19 Jericho Farms (EM), 4/26 Barneby Center (Hocking Co.) (MS), 4/28 Adams Co. (32), 4/30 Richland Co. (JVH), 5/9 Cleveland (TL).

Chimney Swift

Later than usual in the north. 4/10 Dayton (CM).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

A moribund individual in a Tipp City garage (Miami Co.) 3/29 (fide CM).