

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

Autumn Number

Published by

Cleveland Audubon Society

and

The Kirtland Bird Club

[Published in Vol. 3, No. 4 of *The Cleveland Audubon Society Bulletin*, November, 1957]

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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

From U. S. Weather Bureau Records (Cleveland Hopkins Airport)

- September - Mild and temperate in all respects. The first frost occurred on the morning of the 28th, and there was frost again on the 29th.
- October - Temperature was 2.6° below the monthly average; precipitation was about normal. Heavy frost on the 13th and 14th, and the first snow on the 25th. Much heavier snow on the 27th when depths of 5 to 7 inches were reported in the eastern and southern suburbs.
- November - Precipitation and temperature averaged just above normal, and there was very little snow.

All records, observations, and comments should be sent to Donald L. Newman, 14174 Superior Road, Cleveland 18, Ohio.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

The Common Loon is undoubtedly more numerous on Lake Erie during the spring and fall than our rather scanty records indicate, but only rarely is it observed extensively. On November 3, however, Loons were scattered along the lake from Rocky River Park to Perkins Beach (Klamm).

A narrow cold front on the weekend of October 26-27, accompanied by snow from out of the northeast, coincided with the first reports of diving ducks along the Cleveland lakefront. Of the ten species which normally occur here in some numbers during the fall and early winter, six species — Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, and Red-breasted Merganser — were first reported on either of those two days. Their numbers were very small, though, and in the case of four species consisted of only two or three birds.

On November 9 and 10, a second cold front with a light fall of snow — this time out of the west — brought with it an influx of diving ducks, and seven species were reported in considerable numbers. Most numerous was the Ruddy Duck, of which some 1,200 were observed on November 10 off Perkins Beach "in small and large groups or chains" (Klamm), while at Edgewater Park there was a flock of about 375. They were not again observed in such abundance during November, though on the 24th at Perkins Beach 477 were counted. A flock of nearly 600 Lesser Scaup, which is the commonest of our wintering ducks, occupied the waters off Perkins Beach on November 9, together with some two dozen Ring-necked and Canvasback Ducks. On November 16 a great raft of Lesser Scaup, estimated at 1,500 birds, was lying off the bluff at the Lakeshore Hotel, and on November 30 at Perkins Beach the congregation of Scaup Ducks consisted of approximately 1,700 birds.

For the last several years the Red-breasted Merganser has been uncommonly scarce during the fall and winter. This November, however, it was abundant for a period of about one week — from the 9th, when a total of 554 was counted along the Cleveland lakefront, to the 17th when at Perkins Beach a huge shifting raft of as many as 1,400 Mergansers was busily feeding while a "storm of gulls hovered overhead trying to rob them of their catch" (Klamm). By the end of November fewer than a hundred Red-breasted Mergansers were observed along the lakefront.

At the same time that the diving ducks were beginning to appear in the region about October 26-27, flights of Whistling Swans and of Canada Geese were passing through. There were five reports of the Swans, including a flock of 96 off Wagar Beach, Rocky River, on October 28 (Morton). At Madison-on-the-Lake, not far beyond the eastern boundary of our region, 110 Swans were recorded on October 27. With the coming of the second cold front on November 9 and 10, Whistling Swans and Canada Geese again arrived over the Cleveland region. Eight separate flocks of Swans were sighted on the 10th and 11th. Among them was a group of 13 birds which landed on the Sherwin Pond in Waite Hill, where two other flocks were heard going over. At Holden Arboretum on November 10, at about 8:30 a.m. a "splendid squadron of 60 flew low enough to show their black feet and bills. All were white except one which was presumably in immature plumage" (Henderson).

The effect on waterfowl population of changing weather and the advent of cold fronts is clearly reflected in reports from two separate localities. A careful and regular study of the birds of Clague Pond revealed 53 Mallards present on October 16, 92 on the 27th, and 107 on November 1 (Morton). Similarly, to the east of Cleveland, on the Sherwin Pond in Waite Hill, Mallards increased from approximately 175 on October 17 to 400 on the 31st and 500 on November 10, while the figures for Black Ducks on those same dates were an estimated 100, 200, and 300, respectively. Though far less numerous, the population of Baldpates and of Wood Ducks on the Sherwin Pond showed much the same pattern of increase but fell off sharply after October 31.

The leveling and filling of most of the remaining portion of the dump north of the Lakefront Airport, together with the scantiness of rain in September, brought to an end the flights of shorebirds which in former years had stopped to rest and feed in the shallow ponds and the blackish mire. As a result, our records of sandpipers and plovers in the region resumed the pattern of pre-dump days. For example, there were just three reports of the Pectoral Sandpiper and none for the Dowitcher, both of which species were observed frequently at the dump in the autumn of 1956. Despite the changed character of the dump area, a few rarities stopped there. An account of each of these species — Stilt Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope — is contained in the Noteworthy Records section which follows this discussion. Also of interest at the dump was a banded Least Sandpiper observed on September 2. In all likelihood this was one of the birds banded there by Stephen Harty during the late summer and early autumn of 1956.

By the end of August the numbers of all three species of gulls commonly seen along the Cleveland lakefront seemed to have decreased considerably. Yet on September 1, at the dump and the breakwall offshore, there was an assemblage estimated to contain 5,000 Herring and 7,000 Ring-billed Gulls. Thereafter these two species appeared to be somewhat less abundant, though on October 19 and 20 some 2,000 Herring and 5,000 Ring-billed Gulls were either on or in the vicinity of the Lakefront Airport. The Bonaparte's Gull, as well as the other two species, was much more numerous this autumn than in the autumn of 1956, and a flock of 1,600 was reported at Perkins Beach on September 21. But in October the Bonaparte's seems to have disappeared, for there was just one report of a mere two birds on the 27th. Early in November this species reappeared and was commonly seen along the lakefront to the end of the month.

Among the passerine birds, the Winter Wren seemed to be more abundant. In October, chiefly from the 5th to the 17th, there were 19 reports totaling 36 birds, whereas in October 1956, almost entirely between the 20th and 30th, there were 11 records totaling 12 individuals. The Carolina Wren, which was quite commonly reported during the summer, remained abundant and was observed in 14 separate localities well distributed throughout our region. In all there were 72 reports of this species totaling 170 individuals as compared with 35 records of 62 birds last autumn.

During the autumn of 1956 the Hermit Thrush occurred principally between October 9 and 21, in which period there were 14 records of 35 individuals. In contrast, this autumn produced twice as many records of somewhat more than twice as many birds, nearly all of which were observed between October 1 and 19. The other thrushes (not considering the Robin and Bluebird) appeared at about the same time and in the same numbers as in 1956.

Both the Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets were first reported in some numbers on September 27. Thereafter the former was commonly seen until November 3, while the latter was reported frequently to the end of October, though less so toward the end of that month. The periods of greatest abundance for both species, according to our records, were October 12-13 and October 19-20.

The largest movement of warblers appears to have occurred at about mid-September, particularly for such species as the Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Wilson's and Redstart. The Palm Warbler, which seemed to be quite scarce in the last several autumns and for which there were just five records last autumn, was somewhat more abundant this season. All but one of the total of 20 records was for the period between September 19 and October 13, but most of the reports were of single birds although on October 6, in Lakewood Park, 15 Palm Warblers were observed moving through the trees in the company of Myrtle Warblers (Klamm).

While there was no widespread incursion of the northern arboreal finches, five species — Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak, Redpoll, Pine Siskin, and White-winged Crossbill — were reported, and only the Red Crossbill was lacking. The Evening Grosbeak was observed principally in the Rocky River Reservation, where five birds were reported as early as October 5, after which their numbers increased to a maximum of 30 on the 17th

and again on the 19th of October. These Grosbeaks were not recorded in the Reservation again until November 29, when a flock consisting of one adult male and eight immatures or females was encountered near the Trailside Museum (Wallin). They were observed feeding at various times on the seeds of the white ash, box elder, and sycamore.

During the autumn of 1956 there were just two reports of the Purple Finch: one bird on September 1, and four on October 14. This autumn, however, produced 26 records from six localities, though the largest number of reports originated in the Rock/ River Reservation. Flocks of several dozen were present there in late September and in October, but after November 3, when two bands totaling 34 birds were observed in the Reservation, this species was not recorded anywhere within our region.

In the BIRD CALENDAR year now ended, that is, from December 1, 1956 to November 30, 1957, 348 species and subspecies were reported in the region. This compares with 250 for the preceding year. There were no records of the Least Bittern, which is a summer resident, nor of Baird's Sandpiper, a regular though uncommon migrant. Also missing from the species list for the year is the rare Yellow-crowned Night Heron, which in each year from 1953 through 1956 was observed in the Rocky River Valley either in late August or in September or October — sometimes in all three months.

For annotation in the "Birds of the Cleveland Region" are the following records:

New Earliest Fall Date

Ring-necked Duck (1) — September 19, Clague Pond (Morton)
Evening Grosbeak (5) — October 5, Rocky River Reservation (Klamm)

New Latest Fall Date

Northern Waterthrush (1) — October 13, Lakeview Cemetery (Storer)
Baltimore Oriole (1) — October 10 and 11, Lakewood (Davies)

EARLIER RECORDS OF THE LAUGHING GULL IN OHIO

The last issue of the BIRD CALENDAR (Summer 1957) contained two records of the Laughing Gull which, so far as could be determined, were thought to be the first records for this species in Ohio. The one bird was observed on May 27, 1957 at Walnut Beach, Ashtabula by Jon Ahlquist and Paul H. Savage and was seen there again on June 9, while the second record was of a bird sighted on August 14, 1957 at Bay Point, Marblehead, by James F. Akers.

We have now been advised by Dr. Emerson Kemsies, Curator of Ornithology, University of Cincinnati, that there are several records which predate these 1957 records. One of these earlier records is of a bird which was taken within the Cleveland region, at Fairport Harbor, in May 1951 and is now in the collection of the University. This record of the Laughing Gull brings to a total of 336 the number of species and subspecies reported within our region.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Brant — Twenty-six of this Atlantic coastal species were observed off Wagar Beach, Rocky River, on November 4, as they flew west in a long line low over the water (Morton). This is the first autumn record for the region and is only the third record in all, the last previous report having been of 20 birds seen near Painesville on March 23, 1930.

Snow Goose — A flock of 20 birds flying east over the lake at Lakewood Park on November 10 is the only record for this autumn and is the first autumn record since 1953 (King and Perner).

Peregrine Falcon — Observed on October 26, near the Manakiki Golf Course, this bird was preying upon the diners at a feeding station (P. Smith). The last previous report of this species in the region was on February 3, 1956.

Stilt Sandpiper — On September 22 — a cool, rainy day with the wind out of the north and northwest — this rare visitor, in complete winter plumage, stopped at the lakefront dump and, in the company of a few "peeps" and a Lesser Yellowlegs, was feeding on the expanse of mud flat that yet remained (Klamm).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper — A band of five appeared at the lakefront dump on September 1 and was there again the next day (Klamm). Each of our five previous records in this century is of a single bird rather than of a small group.

Wilson's Phalarope — This bird which was seen at the lakefront dump on September 2 (Klamm and Davies) and on September 5 (Carrothers) was presumably the same individual that was there on August 31. These are the first September dates of occurrence for this species, which had not been definitely reported in the region at all prior to August 1956.

Short-eared Owl — Not very often has this owl been reported in September — indeed it is uncommon in any season — but one was present in Lakewood Park on September 7, when some Crows chased it into the park from along the lakefront. It did not remain long, however, after a band of Blue Jays joined the Crows in bedeviling it (Klamm). At the lakefront dump, where a group of some 14 Short-eared Owls lived during the winter of 1956 and where eight to ten were present last autumn, one bird was observed on October 12. Two were reported there on October 19, and four on November 17 (Bush), after which this owl was not seen again.

Mockingbird — The first October records since 1949 are these three, each of a single bird: on the 6th at Lakewood Park where for a period of about 30 minutes the Mockingbird was abused and chased successively by Robins, Juncos, House Sparrows, and Grackles (Klamm); near Painesville on the 24th (Carl Newhous fide Booth); and on the grounds of a residence in Lakewood on the 28th (Davies).

Golden-winged Warbler — One of the few autumn records for our region is of three birds, all of them males, which were feeding, together with some 50 other warblers, in a stand of willows in the Rocky River Reservation at about 9:30 a.m., September 1. After about ten minutes of intensive feeding they all moved on (Ackermann).

Prairie Warbler — An adult in the Rocky River Reservation on September 14 and a second adult there on September 19, constitute what seem to be the first records for this species in the western portion of the Cleveland region. Both birds were in the company of migrating warblers which were moving through the underbrush along the river bank (Ackermann). A third Prairie Warbler was seen, also on September 14, at Aurora Lake (Gaede).

Summer Tanager — A brightly plumaged male was sighted on September 8 in the oak woods near Boston where in early June a male and female were observed (Knight). It was in this same woods that the first and only nesting for this species was reported in 1956.

Pine Grosbeak — At mid-morning on November 21 a female appeared in the backyard bird sanctuary of a residence in north Akron and remained there until 1:30 p.m. while partaking of the berries of a mountain ash tree (Harmon). A second report of this rare visitor is of two birds in Waite Hill on November 25 (Sherwin).

White-winged Crossbill — Six of these birds were perched in the tops of nearby elm and apple trees bordering Green's Pond of the Shaker Lakes system on October 12, which is the earliest occurrence date of record, being about one month ahead of the previous record (Tramer). A solitary male was observed in the pine grove near the boathouse at the Lower Shaker Lake on November 23 (Newman).

Flights of Terns Along the Lakefront. From 8:00 to 9:30 a.m., on September 1, Faye King and I watched a steady, though not unbroken, flight of terns as they moved east along the lake. From our vantage point on the road bordering the Lakefront Airport in downtown Cleveland, we could see small flocks of ten to twelve Black Terns — there were probably 500 in all — coming up over the breakwall and continuing on east low over the water. Unlike the Black Terns, the Common Terns — perhaps as many as 100 — did not boil up over the breakwall but instead flew in a level line and at a moderate height over the water. Most impressive were the imposing Caspian Terns, of which we counted 48. They flew over the land rather than the water and much higher than the other two species. All the while they kept up a constant calling.

Apparently this eastward migration of terns ceased about 9:30 a.m., for other lakefront observers noted only small numbers of them later in the day. —VERA CARROTHERS

Chimney Swifts Settle for the Night. On the evening of September 18, with the temperature at about 70° and a strong wind blowing from the east, a large flock of Chimney Swifts was flying above Longfellow Junior High School, which is located one block from Lake Erie on the east side of Lorain. The school is a one-floor building with about a 50-foot chimney having an opening of 3 x 4 feet.

After observing the birds for some 30 minutes, we arrived at an approximate count of 900. This large flock of Swifts looked like a dark cloud as they circled over the chimney. Occasionally small groups would fly farther away but would always return to join the large group in its circling movement. As the sky grew dark the birds began to fly into the chimney, and after about ten minutes most of them had disappeared inside. — HILDA LEBOLD

Chickadees in Downtown Cleveland. Shortly after noon on October 1, which was a wonderfully calm, sunny day, I watched a band of Black-capped Chickadees flitting about in the planetrees on the Mall just west of the Board of Education Building in downtown Cleveland. Although I counted only eight birds, there were surely considerably more, for their sprightly voices seemed to be dancing through the tops of almost every tree. These birds appeared to be moving in a westerly direction, but I could not be certain of this because my view was obscured by the buildings which border the Mall on all but the north side.

The Chickadees were evidently a part of a general migration of passerine species that day since the Mall and the grounds of the Board of Education were host to such other transients as several Hermit and Olive-backed Thrushes, a few Juncos, one Chipping Sparrow, and a number of White-throated Sparrows.

In October 1954 I often heard Chickadees, as well as Brown Creepers and Kinglets, in the downtown area. Though these few observations are not at all conclusive, they do suggest that the Black-capped Chickadee is not always a permanent resident but does sometimes move about within its range, possibly in response to population pressures. — DONALD L. NEWMAN

Rare Pelican Just Outside the Cleveland Region. A single White Pelican rose majestically from among several hundred ducks, gulls, and terns at McGee Marsh on September 2 at about 10:00 a.m. Allen Valentine and I watched it in flight for perhaps 15 minutes as it circled low, occasionally disappearing into the marsh. The nearest approach to us was about 50 yards, but its marks were unmistakable whenever the bird was in sight. The plumage was slightly dingy except for the black wing tips. The enormous yellow bill always rested on the neck as though for support. Presumably this bird had the typical eight-foot wingspread, for it dwarfed the gulls which were in the air with it. — NEIL HENDERSON

Lincoln's Sparrow — That this species is considerably more common in migration than our records indicate is shown by a report of 18 birds (there were probably even more) which

were feeding, on October 12, among the weeds and grasses fringing Abram's Lake, where a multitude of White-crowned, White-throated, Fox, Song, and Swamp Sparrows were congregated (Morton).

From Neighboring Localities:

Purple Sandpiper — On the exceptionally early date of October 19, one of these rare "Winter Snipe" was feeding in the mud silt near the breakwall at Walnut Beach. Ashtabula (Savage). This species has not been reported in the Cleveland region since December 2, 1954.

Avocet — A single individual was observed for some time as it walked about or made short flights at Bay Point, Marblehead, on September 14 (A. Smith).

FIELD NOTES

Towhees in Migration? At Aurora Lake, which I visit frequently, I noted an exceptionally large number of Towhees on October 9. The birds seemed to be everywhere. While the 14 I reported in my field records is a conservative estimate of their numbers, my general observation would lead me to believe there was a migratory "wave". In the same area just a week previously I recorded only three Towhees. It may be a coincidence that exactly one year ago at the Audubon Bird Sanctuary in Aurora I was impressed by what I conceived to be an unusual local concentration of Towhees, which is normally a non-gregarious species. That day — October 9, 1956 — I recorded ten. - CARL F. HAMANN

Nuthatch Visits Library. As I was walking down the inside stairway of the Main Public Library at about 9:30 a.m. on October 14, I noted a little bird fluttering at the window. When I approached, it flew away a short distance and then returned to the window, which was the only source of light as the electric bulb on the landing was out. After a few misses I caught this unfortunate bird — a Red-breasted Nuthatch. With it in my hand I hurried to the top floor, released the bird at an open window, and saw it rise over the stone parapet to freedom. How the bird got into the inside stairway is a big mystery because no windows are ever opened there and the heavy doors shut off the stairway most of the time. MARJORIE RAMISCH

Unidentified Jaeger on Lake Erie. An immature Jaeger, in the company of some Ruddy Ducks, was resting on the water off Perkins Beach on November 24. About the size of a Ring-billed Gull, the bird had heavily barred undertail feathers, diffused barring on the belly, and more distinct though finer barring on the chest. The wings and back were brownish gray-black, much darker than in an immature Herring Gull. No white showed in the long, slender wings, which revealed only a suggestion of shading at the wing bend and the first primary. The bill appeared to be fairly uniform and heavy, like a gull's bill, the tip being black and the main portion dark. No extension of the central tail feathers could be noted. The bird raised its wings several times and took to the air once when the Ruddies paddled by, but it quickly resettled on the water a short distance away.

The overall characteristics appeared to fit best the immature Long-tailed Jaeger, and this may have been the same bird we saw at the lakefront dump on November 2 but could not definitely identify. (If this bird was a Long-tailed Jaeger, it would be the first to be reported in the Cleveland region. — Ed.) — WILLIAM and NANCY KLAMM