

The Cleveland

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BIRD

CALENDAR



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The Cleveland Bird Calendar was founded in 1905 by Francis H. Herrick of The Western Reserve University. The purposes of the publication are to provide information on the movements of birds through the Cleveland region, to monitor population densities of resident birds, and to help in the establishment of patterns of vagrancy for rarely encountered species of the region.

The Cleveland region includes Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit Counties.

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Due dates for seasonal field reports are as follows:

15 March - winter season

15 June - spring season

15 September - summer season

15 December - autumn season

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December 1989, January, February 1990

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THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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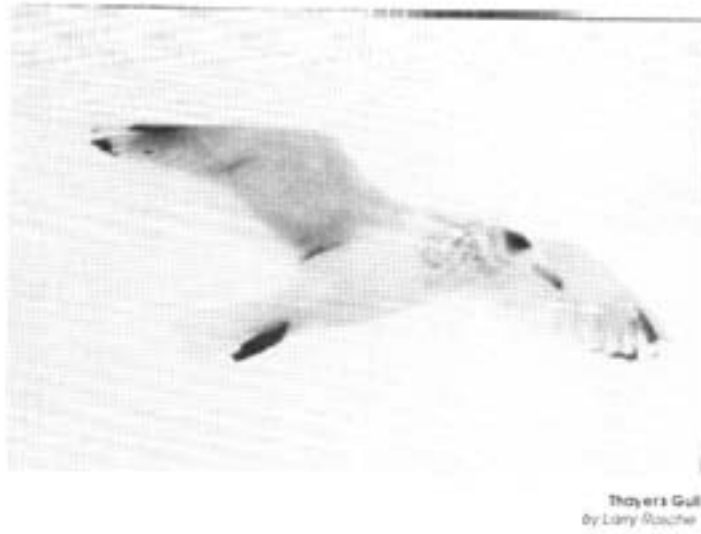
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THE WEATHER

Winter 1989/1990

by William Klamm

December - This was the coldest December on record. No day from the 10th through the 28th went above freezing. Temperatures averaged 19.2 degrees, 11.9 below normal. The extremes reached a high of 46 on the 31st and a low of 15 below zero on the 22nd. The Lake Erie water at 44 degrees on the first dropped to 33 by the 25th and remained constant thereafter. Lake Erie remained open until the 17th when extensive ice cover started to develop. Sunshine prevailed 29% of the time. Precipitation came on 17 days to total 1.72 inches as water, 1.03 inches below normal. As snow, the total was 24 inches and the greatest one day fall came on the 15th at 8.6 inches.

January - This was our sixth warmest January. Temperatures averaged 35.8 degrees,

10.3 warmer than normal. The extremes attained a high of 57 on the 17th, 18th, and 25th. The low of 17 was reached on the 14th. Lake Erie, at 33 degrees, retained ice cover with variable open fissures through the 3rd and remained open thereafter with ice only on the harbor and shoreline areas. Sunshine prevailed 39% of the time. Precipitation on 15 days totaled 2.35 inches, .12 in deficit of normal. Snowfall amounted to 10.5 inches.

February - Precipitation on 14 days totaled 4.70 inches, 2.5 above normal. As snow, we measured 9.9 inches including 3.3 from a notable blizzard on the 24th. Sunshine prevailed 45% of the time. Temperatures averaged 34 degrees, 6.7 above normal. A high of 64 was reached on the 13th and a low of 2 on the 26th. Lake Erie water temperature rose to 36 degrees on the 8th and declined to 34 by the 27th. Lake Erie was open all month.

REFLECTIONS:

Thirty Years Ago: An American Bittern was in Cleveland Heights on 9 Dec. 1959 (Perry). A Brown Thrasher wintered in Cuyahoga Falls (Staiger). A Lincoln's Sparrow was seen at Cleveland Public Square on 16 Jan. 1960 (DeSante). A Brant was observed at East 72nd Street on 23, 24, and 25 Jan. (Carrothers, Klamm). A Black Tern was observed in Lorain from 15 Feb. through 24 Feb. (LeBold). The first winter record of Bewick's Wren was of a stunned bird at Lake Lucerne on 16 Jan. (English).

Twenty Years Ago: An immature Harlequin Duck was reported from Perkins Beach on 21 and 25 Dec. 1969 (Klamm). A Peregrine Falcon was an impressive find in Twinsburg on 22 Dec. (Szabo). A crippled Purple Sandpiper was seen at various locations from Headlands Beach SP to Gordon Park from 7 Dec. to 4 Jan. 1970 (Hammond, Carrothers).

Ten Years Ago: A Merlin raided a feeder in Solon on 6 Dec. 1979 (E. Surman). A Northern Saw-whet Owl was found at Shaker Country Club on 15 Dec. (Dale). A Red-necked Grebe was in Kirtland Hills on 1 Jan. 1980 (Faber). The first January record of Vesper Sparrow was in Lorain Co. on 29 Jan. (LePage). An unprecedented record of a Heermann's Gull was in Lorain 12-18 Feb. (Pogacnik). Grafton Township hosted many Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls in late January through February 1980.

COMMENT ON THE SEASON

by Larry Rosche

The weather was unmerciful in December but made an odd turn towards leniency in January. Contributors found themselves stuck in a very lackluster season and the paucity of reports reflects slow birding. Although 126 species were reported, few were of the exciting variety. If it were not for good waterbirds there would have been little else to look for. The rarest of reports were usually uncooperative for those who sought them. The winter found several male Harlequin Ducks along Lake Erie. Hawks were in better than recent totals. Some contributors mentioned that American Kestrels were being seen more regularly along the freeways. Gulls were very disappointing after last winter. All woodpecker species were well reported. Most unusual, when one considers the bitterly cold weather in December, was the presence of many of our half-hardy species. Not only robins and waxwings but Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Hermit Thrushes, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Rufous-sided Towhees, and a variety of sparrows were in much higher than usual numbers. The winter finch picture remains a mystery to me. After what seems to be many years since any invasion, my hopes were dashed once again. A few siskins and redpolls, brief visits by both cross-bills, and a smattering of Evening Grosbeaks does not constitute an invasion. But as Hannikman says, "the only thing predictable about winter is that [it] is unpredictable."

Christmas Count totals were fairly good when one considers that most were conducted in bitterly cold weather. Birds considered rare were tallied on the report sheets that eventually are deposited in library at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History. All compilers are thanked for sharing their data. Paula Lozano's patience with her group [of] elementary children and their mini-Christmas Counts is to be acknowledged. As I get older, I feel that there are fewer youngsters interested in observing wildlife. Its nice to know that there are instructors who actively get their pupils involved in nonconsumptive outdoor activities. Good birding.

Winter 1989-1990

Common Loons lingered into early December, but one nearly caught in the ice at E. 72nd St. on 30-31 Dec. was tardy (Hoffman, Kellerman, LePage). Another was at Eastlake the same day (Hannikman). Pied-billed Grebes were normal in Akron and one at Eastlake on 4 Jan. was good for Lake Erie. An **Eared Grebe** was in the Cleveland lakefront areas through 3 Dec. (Hall, Hoffman, Klamm, LePage). The Klamms saw one at Rocky River Park on 10 Dec. It was unusual that multiple Horned Grebes wintered on Summit Lake (Kopka). Early migrants were returning in mid-February. Double-crested Cormorants were scarce along the lakefront locations. Great Blue Herons continue to prove their hardiness as several man-

aged to last the winter in the Akron area. A high tally of ten were on the Elyria/ Lorain CBC. Black-crowned Night-Herons were at Eastlake on 1 Jan (Hannikman, Rosche) and 4 Jan. (LePage).

Waterfowl, in general, were plentiful. Bill Klamm reported: "Wintering populations were generally adequate to excellent for many species. However, finding their locations for gathering, feeding, resting, and related activities was often trying and challenging. Some sites traditionally preferred such as E. 72nd St., Edgewater, Lorain Harbor, etc., were nearly abandoned or poorly attended. In some cases, relocation was only a mile or two further down the shoreline and in other cases with little relevance."

Seventeen Tundra Swans were just under the winter season wire on 28 Feb. in Stow (Rosche). Snow Geese received more mention than last year. A Snow Goose was in Mentor on 2 Dec. (Hall). Witt had three 'Blue Geese' at Lake Medina on 9 Dec. The "Blue Goose" returned to winter in Akron for the fourth year (Kopka, Pierce). One was a very good find at Baldwin Lake on 11 Jan. (Klamm). Kellerman saw this species at North Chagrin Reservation on 14-16 Feb. Kopka saw two male Wood Ducks at Summit Lake on 23 Jan. Fondrk had one at Punderson State Park on 6 Feb. Tisdale's count of 29 on 8 Feb. at Frame Bog was impressive for so early in the year. The only wintering Green-winged Teal was at Lake isaac (Harlan). A few drake Northern Pintails win-

WATERBIRD SURVEY FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 1989-1990

LOCATION	C/LN	HBSP	AKL	HBSP	CLF	AKL	C/LN	CLF	GR/P	C/LN	HBSP	AKL	CLF
DATE	1/6	1/13	1/15	1/20	1/21	1/23	1/24	2/9	2/11	2/18	2/25	2/27	2/27
PB GREBE	•	•	11	•	•	4	•	•	•	•	2	6	•
HORNED GREBE	•	•	1	•	•	2	•	•	•	•	•	3	1
MUTE SWAN	•	•	1	•	•	3	•	•	•	•	•	1	•
SNOW GOOSE	•	•	1	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•	1	•
CANADA GOOSE	23	45	470	55	7	400	19	98	58	89	24	640	72
WOOD DUCK	•	•	•	•	•	2	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
GRN-WING TEAL :	•	•	•	•	•	•	2	•	•	•	•	•	•
A BLACK DUCK	31	130	110	75	60	55	42	31	31	17	21	28	16
MALLARD	335	260	1300	300	85	980	179	341	50	146	11	1730	246
N. PINTAIL	•	1	•	•	•	•	•	8	•	•	•	•	•
N SHOVELER	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	1	•	•	•	•	•
GADWALL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	2	4	•	3
A. WIGEON	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	3	3
CANVASBACK	78	4	1	12	12	•	11	4	12	21	•	•	38
REDHEAD	93	8	•	20	45	•	•	•	125	88	20	27	109
RING-N. DUCK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	6	•	59	•
SCAUP (SP)	6400	25	•	12	500	•	3000	•	98	37	40	•	325
HARLEQUIN DUCK	•	•	•	2	•	•	•	•	2	•	2	•	•
OLDSQUAW	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	2	1	•	•
WH.-WIG SCOTER	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	17
C GOLDENEYE	739	30	27	•	•	•	1050	2	32	170	10	12	227
BUFFLEHEAD	43	•	29	2	15	4	3	44	6	56	2	2	44
HOODED MERG.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	4	1	•
COMMON MERG. -	•	18	•	1	•	•	•	•	18	20	12	•	146
RED-BR. MERG.	•	25	•	•	7	•	3	•	20	76	220	•	634
RUDDY DUCK	•	•	7	•	•	5	•	•	•	•	•	4	•
A. COOT -	•	•	65	•	•	55	•	•	•	•	•	55	•

AKL = Akron Lakes; CLF = Cleveland Lakefront; C/LN = Cleveland-Lorain; GR/P = Grand River-Perry; Headlands Beach Sp.

tered along the lakefront. Eight migrants were detected on 9 Feb. in Cleveland(Klamm), Six flew over Headlands Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP) on 10 Feb. (Hannikman). A single arrival was at Springfield Lake on 28 Feb. (Kopka). The only mid-winter Northern Shoveler report was from Cleveland (Hall, Klamm), Gadwall and American Wigeon fared poorly when compared to recent winters, This was especially true for Gadwalls.

Canvasbacks were in fair totals with high counts of nearly 80 birds. Redheads were twice as plentiful. A flock of 68 Ring-necked Ducks at Wingfoot Lake was very early for such a number. Elsewhere they were scarce. The bird at North Chagrin Reservation was noted throughout

the winter (Kellerman, Rickard), Scaup were in very good numbers, with Greater outnumbering Lessers through the period. Oldsquaw seemed more numerous and more regular than in recent winters. Birds were frequenting HBSP and the areas adjacent to Muny Light most of the winter (m.obs.). Surf Scoters were present in Rocky River 1-4 Dec. (LePage, Klamm). White-winged Scoters were as

**RECORD TOTALS
OF COMMON
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WERE
REPORTED...**

expected from early to midwinter except 3 in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area (hereafter CVNRA) on 8 Dec. (Kopka). This species was migrating well with a group of up to 17 in Bay Village 22-28 Feb. (Klamm), Record totals of Common Goldeneyes were reported on Christmas Bird Count's (hereafter CBC). Except for a regular flock off Sims Park, they became fairly difficult for most observers to locate. Common Mergansers were more conspicuous than usual. Red-breasted Mergansers were generally scarce when compared to recent years. Unprecedented, for Lake Rockwell, was a small flock of mixed mergansers in mid-January. The usual five to seven Ruddy Ducks wintered at Summit Lake.

A Turkey Vulture was extremely late on 18 Dec. in Akron (Stover). One was early in Copley on 10 Feb. (Wert). Another drifted over the Seiberling Naturealm the same day (*fide* Szabo). After the middle of February they were relatively easy to find locally. A fair number of Northern Harriers were reported from the rural sectors of all counties. Six were counted on the Wellington CBC. Individuals over Eastlake 1 Jan. (Hannikman, Rosche) and Lake Medina on 19 Feb. (Witt) were unusual for the locations. Accipiters were very visible and it seemed that a higher than normal total of Sharp-shinned Hawks were found. Red-shouldered Hawks put in a good showing for our mostly urbanized region. Rickard had a bird in Pepper Pike on 21 Dec. Another was along the lakefront on 28 Dec. (Klamm). Birds were irregular at Tinkers Creek SP (Hall), Stow (Tisdale), Gates Mills (Kremm), Homerville (Kraps), Bath (Ibsen), Shaker Lakes (Fazio), Spencer, and several locations in the CVNRA (m.obs.). CBC's also reflected higher than normal tallies for this species. Several Rough-legged Hawks wintered near the Grafton Prison Farm. At least two dark individuals were regular there in midwinter (Kraps, m.obs.). Up to two birds lingered near the Gordon Park Landfill into mid-December (Hoffman, Klamm, LePage). The only Ring-necked Pheasants not on a CBC were from Punderson SP on 8 Feb. (Fondrk) and Litchfield on 21 Feb. (Kraps). A Ruffed Grouse was seen intermittently along the Boston Trail in the CVNRA

(Wert). No Northern Bobwhite reports were received. A Killdeer at Lorain Harbor was unusual on 3 Jan. (Kraps). The first returnees were noted on 10 Feb. in Streetsboro and Fairport Harbor (Rosche).

Gulls were very disappointing. Few Bonaparte's Gulls lingered, except for a flock of 25-50 being seen irregularly at the mouth of the Grand River. Thayer's, Iceland, Lesser Black-backed, and Glaucous Gulls were very tough to find except for the Elyria/Lorain CBC. A total of 7 Thayer's, 3 Iceland, 3 Lesser Black-backed, and 16 Glaucous Gulls were reported in Lorain on 16 Dec. None were found the next day, although many gulls remained in the "Hot Waters" vicinity. Upwards to 800 Great Black-backed Gulls were there on 17 Dec. (m obs). This certainly constituted one of the single largest gatherings for this species ever in the region. The only

Thayer's Gull reported away from Lorain was at Eastlake on 1 Jan. (Hannikman, Rosche). Iceland Gulls were found with more regularity. A first year bird was in Lorain on 24 Dec. (Hoffman). Immatures were seen at Eastlake on 3, 12 Dec., and 1 Jan. (Hannikman, LePage, Rosche). Kiwi saw this species at E. 72nd St, on 1 Jan. A first winter bird was seen at Headlands BSP on 4, 24 Feb. (Hannikman, Kiwi, Rosche). LePage encountered Lesser Black-backed Gulls infrequently at Avon Lake, Lorain, and Eastlake. Hall also saw one at Eastlake on 27 Dec. Up to 3 were intermittent in Lorain in December (Hoffman, Klamm, Kraps). Two were in Fairport Harbor on 24 Feb. (Hannikman, Rosche). The same areas hosted a few Glaucous Gulls as well. The post CBC high was 6 in Lorain on 24 Dec. (Hoffman), LePage had one at Edgewater Lakefront SP on 25 Feb. and another at E. 9th St. on 27 Feb.

February 12, 1990

From my office window, I see Peregrine Falcons periodically. Three or so weeks ago there were some very windy days. On one of those days both falcons were "playing" around the Terminal Tower. They were swooping at each other and soaring high above the Tower All of this was in very high winds. It was quite spectacular. There could have been no reason for them to do this other than the joy of flight (or the joy of sex).

My friend, Don Busic, reports that Thursday, February 8, both falcons were seen by him at Public Square. Again they were swooping and diving between the buildings in what seemed to be a mating display. Based on the scan of reports in Arthur Cleveland Bent, the timing and actions seem correct for mating display.

By the way, one of the two peregrines seen by Don was reported to me as being somewhat larger than the other. The larger bird being the female and the smaller the male (tercel). This is promising.

Charles Klaus



Yellow-rumped Warbler
by Victor Fazio III

In general, Great Black-backed Gulls were common throughout the season at many lakefront birding areas. One example was the flock of over a hundred at Headlands BSP in early December (Hannikman).

Our local owls seem to be doing well. Great Horned Owls were nesting widely by the middle of February. Barred Owls may be on the increase. Ten reports were considerably higher than usual. The Barred Owl which delighted so many last year in the CVNRA was less cooperative this year. Tisdale found it only once. A bird near the Ibsen residence in Bath was reported to have been in the area for the past 13 years! The most incredible Barred Owl story was of an individual that had the misfortune to land on a power pole and touch a hot wire. It was seen smoldering near Ravenna 14 Jan.

(Rosche). Kopka commented that Belted Kingfishers were noticeably scarce. Birds at West Branch SP on 20 Jan. (Tisdale) and at the Seiberling Naturealm 26 Jan. (Szabo) were exceptions

Kellerman and Fondrk were the only contributors to find Red-headed Woodpeckers after the CBC period. Both observations came from North Chagrin Reservation. Other woodpecker species were in ample abundance. An impressive total of six Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers was reported on the Cuyahoga Falls CBC. A bird was again in Tallmadge for the winter (Stover) Ibsen had a sapsucker 8-16 Dec. in Bath. Rosche's first Portage County winter sapsucker was at Standing Rock Cemetery in Kent on 17 Dec. A bird was reported from Brecksville Reservation on 2, 11 Jan (LePage, Harlan). Northern Flickers were fairly

common in Portage and Summit Counties. The continuation of mild winters may cause this species to become much more prevalent than in the past. Pileated Woodpeckers received mention from all counties and populations are assumed to be holding steady.

The only good sized flocks of Horned Larks were encountered in the rural areas of Lorain and Medina Counties. Red-breasted Nuthatches were fairly conspicuous in most coniferous areas. The Hoffmans felt that they were numerous at North Chagrin Reservation. **Brown Creepers were regularly** found by many observers. This species has become expected by most and no longer causes eyebrows to be raised when they are reported. Another species benefiting from mild winters is the Carolina Wren. It appears that it has returned to a somewhat stable population after the devastating winters of the late seventies. Golden-crowned Kinglets also fared very well. Chasar reported 20 on 17 Dec. in the CVNRA. Eastern Bluebirds wintered well locally. Fondrk commented that there were many in Geauga County. Rickard noted them on several occasions in Hunting Valley. A pair was inspecting a nest box at Lake Rockwell in mid-January. These reports indicated a fairly healthy local population. Hermit Thrushes were well reported. They were tallied on all local CBC's except Lakewood. Six were on the Cuyahoga Falls Count, and three were on the Mentor Count. Harlan saw one at Lake Isaac on 10 Dec. We should have

been better prepared for what followed. Kraps reported a bird wintered in Elyria being fed bits of hamburger. The Klamms noted one wintering with the House Sparrows at Perkins Beach. American Robins wintered in phenomenal numbers throughout the region. More than 2400 were seen flying from their roosting areas near Headlands BSP on 20 Jan (Rosche). Hundreds could be found at West Branch SP and the CVNRA at any time during the period. Northern Mockingbirds were seen along North Marginal Road on several occasions by various observers

Cedar Waxwings were in good supply away from Lake Erie. Reports from the many areas indicated that this species wintered in much higher than normal numbers. Yellow-rumped Warblers were well represented. A total of 52 were counted on the Cuyahoga Falls CBC. The Hoffmans saw two at Findley SP on 15 Jan. Chaser and Kopka reported 20 to 30 during February in the CVNRA. It was not known if these observers were reporting from the same areas. If not, then there was truly a good supply of Yellow-rumped Warblers this winter (as well as poison ivy berries).

Although it is difficult to understand how they could have survived the frigid blasts of December, up to four Rufous-sided Towhees remained at North Chagrin Reservation through the season (Kellerman and Kiwi). Others were reported in lesser numbers from all counties except Medina. Fifty-nine Field Sparrows on the Cuyahoga Falls CBC indicate

Winter finches were very disappointing.

a higher than usual number, even for our southern areas. A Fox Sparrow on the Cleveland CBC was the only report. CBC reports indicated that White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos were in very good totals. "Oregon Juncos" were reported from Bedford Heights on 22 Dec. (Fazio) and Cuyahoga Falls on 4 Feb (Haddad).

The only report of Lapland Longspur was from the Wellington CBC. Snow Buntings fared much better. Many were reported along Lake Erie in early December. A high of 180 was reported on the Burton CBC. LePage had the only January report at Lakewood City Park on the fifth.

Blackbirds were very numerous after the December cold spell. Literally thousands of cowbirds and grackles have remained in the region in recent winters. Red-winged Blackbirds were less obvious but nevertheless present throughout the winter. A territorial mid-January bird was singing and flashing its epaulets during a brief warm period in Kent (Rosche). Birds were noted along the lake by mid-February (Hoffman). Six Eastern Meadowlarks were near Wellington on 19 Feb. Migrant

Rusty Blackbirds were

in Bath by 25 Feb. (Ibsen).

Winter finches were very disappointing. A few Pine Siskins were widely scattered in all counties. The only report of Evening Grosbeaks after the CBC period was from along the Zimmerman Trail at Mentor Marsh on 7 Jan. (Hannikman, Rosche, Tisdale).

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

KING EIDER - A female was observed lounging at the mouth of the Grand River on 11 Dec. (E. Bacik, Hannikman, Rosche).

HARLEQUIN DUCK - LePage had the first at Huntington Beach on 1 Dec. An immature male was at Eastlake 29 Dec. 1989 through 1 Jan. 1990 (Rosche, m.obs.). Two adult males were found regularly after 20 Jan. as they rested and fed near the lighthouse at Headlands Beach SP (Hannikman, Kiwi, Rosche). Perhaps the increased reports of this species is directly related to the incursion of zebra mussels.

BALD EAGLE - Noteworthy because of the season, an immature was first reported by Barb Baker. It was seen standing on the ice along S.R. 14 at Lake Rockwell on 3 Feb. Soon after, two immatures were repeatedly seen together in a large tree at the south end of the lake. One of these individuals had an entirely white front, indicating that it was a three year-old.

NORTHERN GOSHAWK - A bird was at the entrance to Headlands Beach SP on 7 Jan. (Rosche, Tisdale). The bird was seen perched and in flight.

MERLIN - A typically tame bird was photographed near Lost Nations Airport on 29 Dec. (Rosche).

PEREGRINE FALCON - Klaus and Greenland repeatedly saw the previously reported pair in the downtown Cleveland area and at Burke Airport. A male was harassing Rock Doves and a Bufflehead at E. 72nd St. on 1 Jan. (Hannikman, Rosche). The Rock Doves seemed unusually calm and would simply waddle under the parked cars until the tercel gave up. One was hunting ducks off Headlands Beach SP on 7 Jan. (Hannikman, Rosche, Tisdale). A bird was seeking American Robins for dinner on 17 Jan. at The Seiberling Naturealm (Stover).

PURPLE SANDPIPER - Up to five lingered on the breakwalls at Headlands Beach SP through 12 Dec. (Hannikman, LePage).

PARASITIC JAEGER - Immatures were noted at Edgewater Lakefront State Park on 8 Dec. (Klamm) and at Lorain on 9-10 Dec. (Hannikman, Klamm).

LITTLE GULL - Up to two adults were located at Edgewater on 3 Dec (Hoffman, LePage). The only midwinter sightings were from Headlands Beach SP on 17 and 25 Feb. (Hannikman, m.obs.).

COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL - An adult in fresh alternate plumage was described at Headlands Beach SP on 25 Feb. (Hannikman). As is often the case with this species it proved difficult to locate afterwards.

FORSTER'S TERN - The second January record for this species was at the mouth of the Grand River on 18 Jan. (Hannikman, Rosche). The bird was a winter plumaged adult and flew close to the observers at the end of 2nd St. in Fairport Harbor.

NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL - A bird was located at the Seiberling Naturealm on 5 Dec (Stover). The continual presence of this bird at this location makes one wonder if it ever leaves. Fazio located a bird at Shaker Lakes on 10 Dec.

GRAY CATBIRD - A wintering bird was first seen foraging in honeysuckle, that was still green, along the Zimmerman Trail on 7 Jan. It remained in the same vicinity into March (Hannikman, Rosche, Tisdale).

NORTHERN SHRIKE - The Gordon Park bird from the fall was seen 9 December (LePage) and 1 Jan. (Kiwi) A bird was near Oberlin Reservoir on 8-9 Jan. (Kraps, m.obs.)

CHIPPING SPARROW - A nearly breeding plumaged bird was an infrequent visitor to Pat Haddad's feeding station in Cuyahoga Falls from 5 Jan. to 4 Feb. This constituted the third winter record in the files of the *Cleveland Bird Calendar*.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW - A bird was carefully detailed on the Cuyahoga Falls Christmas Bird Count on 17 Dec. in Kent (Rosche, Stover).

RED CROSSBILL - A flock of forty to fifty were inspecting the trees around Mogadore Reservoir on 12 Dec. (Rosche).

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL - Pierce was surprised by a bird bathing in a puddle on 1 Dec. in Akron. A male visited Paula Lozano's feeder in Lakewood from 1 to 17 Jan.

The Eagle

"He clasps the crag with hooked hands,
Close to the sun in lonely lands;
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands,
He watches from the mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Tennyson

Addendum

Dr Amasa B Ford, of Chagrin Falls, wrote to report a belated **Worm-eating Warbler** on 8 Oct. 1989. A window killed specimen was identified in the hand and is our latest report ever for this species. This ups our 1988-1989 total to a near record 280.

FIELD NOTES

A cooperative White-winged Crossbill in Lakewood

by Paula Lozano

On New Year's day, my sister Jan Ranahan and I were pulling into the driveway, when we noticed two birds at the sunflower feeder. Both were approximately the same size and shape. One was a house finch, but the other, stockier bird, had field marks on its black wings that could be seen from the car...two white wing bars. A look at its cross-tipped bill through 8x40 binoculars confirmed that it was a male White-winged Crossbill. It was much redder than the only other one I'd seen on March 7, 1981, at a thistle feeder on Alderwood Road in Parma Heights. That bird only had dashes of red in its feathers while this one was red on its head, chin, throat, nape and back.

On January 5th, before leaving for work, I went outside to fill the feeders. As I came out of the garage with the refilled sunflower feeder, I literally froze in my tracks because the crossbill was on the thistle feeder right in front of me! Since it didn't seem to be disturbed by my presence, I was able to notice more of its features. I was especially impressed with the nape's rose red color, white-tipped secondaries, a dusky comma-shaped mark behind its eyes, streaking on the belly, and the forked tail. The next day, to my delight, he was back. I became to sense a pattern in the crossbill's early morning visits. As it became light, it would appear in



White-winged Crossbill
by Larry Rosche

the lilac bush next to the back porch along with the ever present House Finches. When they started feeding the crossbill would soon follow. Bill and Nancy Klamm were able to get excellent videotapes of the bird in the lilac bush and on the feeders. The crossbill continued this pattern until its departure.

On January 11th the bird arrived on time and treated a kitchen full of people to a 35 minute display of crossbill behavior. It spent time at both feeders, but also gleaned sunflower seeds on the ground under the bushes behind the garage. Bill videotaped the bird as it sat in the lilac bush scratching itself and stretching its tail feathers. The bird appeared to be picking at the lilac branches and

eating the buds. On the 16th Bill and Nancy Klamm once again captured the feeding behavior of the White-winged Crossbill. When it had retrieved a sunflower seed from the feeder it would hold it with its toes, crack open the shell, and eat the seed.

On January 17th the bird was seen for the last time, in the neighbor's tree at 8:30 A.M.

Special thanks should go to: Bill and Nancy for sharing their reference books, photos, and videotapes, and to my sister for her help in cleaning the house every morning, heading off the garbage men at the tracks on Friday mornings and watching the crossbill on her days off.

Mountain Bluebird visits Tuscarawas County

by Robert Schlabach

On December 14, 1989, my brothers Ed and Steve along with their friend Dwight Miller took a day off from work to try to locate a Northern Shrike which had apparently set up winter territory along the railroad tracks southwest of Sugarcreek, Ohio. It was a cold and blustery day with intermittent flurries and sunshine. The shrike was easily found and observed for a while. The trio then decided to inspect a thicket near Ragersville which has long been a local hotspot for winter birds. They slowly birded their way up the lane which bisects the area looking for (without success) previously reported Hermit Thrushes and a Gray Catbird. Approaching the abandoned homestead at the end of the lane, with its tumbledown sheds and other out-buildings they carefully checked out a group of 25-30 Eastern Bluebirds feeding on the abundant crop of autumn olive and multiflora rose in the immediate area. Dwight noticed a number of bluebirds perched under the eaves of the old barn and almost immediately recognized one as a Mountain Bluebird. The threesome quickly got over their initial euphoria, and Ed and Steve settled down to some serious note taking while Dwight busily photographed the bird.

After they were completely satisfied with their identification and documentation of the bird as a female Mountain Bluebird, they headed for my place to inform me and consult my copy of *The Birds of Ohio* (Peterjohn, 1989). My brothers and I returned to the site in the afternoon and readily relocated the bird. We were able to leisurely study the bird at distances as close as 30 feet under good lighting conditions. In the following weeks most of the local birders and many from around the state added the bird to their lists. It was not always easily found however. Sometimes it just wouldn't show up. At other times it was very cooperative. One local birder went back for the eleventh time before finally finding it, while another found it on each of his first three tries.

My general impressions of the bird are as follows. It was close to an Eastern Bluebird in size and shape. Differences noted were that it was slimmer and

longer-winged than any of the Eastern Bluebirds. As seen from directly underneath the perched bird, its wings extended halfway between the end of the undertail coverts and the tip of the tail. A nearby Eastern Bluebird's wings extended barely past the end of the undertail coverts. It perched in a more horizontal posture than Easterns. The bill was noticeably longer and appeared slimmer. Eastern Bluebird was further eliminated by the lack of any rust color in the plumage.

The Mountain Bluebird generally associated with Eastern Bluebirds although at least once, in early January it associated with American Robins. The pattern seemed to be such that in cold, breezy, snowy weather the bluebirds held tight to the thicket. On warmer fair weather days the birds dispersed from the vicinity the old farmstead by mid-morning. This was not a hard, fast rule because the Mountain Bluebird could show up at any time. When the bird was there it was not a matter of looking very carefully at each female Eastern Bluebird to make sure it was not the Mountain. The Mountain Bluebird just had a different look. With such bright blue wings and tail, it would jump out at you when you first spotted it. The Eastern Bluebird's blue color looked almost purplish besides the Mountain's bright blue.

To my knowledge, the Mountain Bluebird was last seen on January 13, 1990 by two of the three who first found the bird, Ed and Dwight. It was not unexpected that a Mountain Bluebird would show up in Ohio. While it normally occurs no farther east than the Dakotas, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas, it does have a pattern of vagrancy in the east. Most surrounding states have one or more records for this species, mostly in the winter. This occurrence falls neatly into the pattern.

(editor's note)...

From time to time a paper is turned in about a sighting or birding location outside of our seven county area. Since many of our readers live outside the region it was felt that this article would be of interest to all readers.

Rarities of the eighties

by Ray Hannikman

The following is a list and some comments on the birds considered to be the highlights of the past decade. While there have been many rare birds in the past ten years, the birds cited here were documented fully and/ or photographed diagnostically.

Western Grebe - A single bird was photographed impeccably at Huntington Beach on 24 November 1985.

American White Pelican - Two records - in Lorain on 14 and 17 August 1984 and at Gordon Park on 1 September 1985

Ross's Goose - A second state record - a beautiful adult at Lake Rockwell from 21 October through 12 November 1989.

Gyrfalcon - One of Ohio's handful of verified sightings of this species - at Lorain on the rather unseasonable date of 22 October, 1983.

Black Rail - Lucky Lake Rockwell birders found one there on 4 April 1980.

Tufted Duck - Ohio's first record was of a male at Lorain 3-9 March 1980.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper - A juvenile was at the Gordon Park Impoundment 6-23 October 1984. A life bird for the vast majority who ogled this Asiatic species, it was, and remains, Ohio's only documented sighting.



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
by Larry Rosche

Curlew Sandpiper - A handsome breeding plumaged bird at the Gordon Park Impoundment 15-18 July 1984. What an incredible year was 1984. Thank you George Orwell!

Long-tailed Jaeger - Most unfortunately, only one observer saw this bird, a juvenile at Mentor Headlands Beach State Park on 23 September 1989. It does not seem coincidental that the Cleveland area's only two records of this oceanic species have occurred in close proximity to major East Coast hurricanes. I know several birders who will

intently scan Lake Erie swells during September tempests.

Heermann's Gull - I can't think of how this rather sedentary West Coast species got to the Midwest, but it did - at Lorain 12 February to 19 March 1980 and 17-19 January 1981!

Mew Gull - Two first-winter birds - in Lorain Harbor 29 November to 27 December 1981, and a diagnostically photographed bird at Eastlake 11-25 December 1988.

Rufous Hummingbird - An adult male was at a feeder in Parma 5-10 November 1987.

Black-backed Woodpecker - A female was photographed at Lakeview Park in Lorain on 27 September 1984.

Bell's Vireo - The Cleveland area's only record was viewed while it sang by several parties at Headlands Beach State Park on 27 May 1984.

Black-throated Sparrow - From 4 June to 1 August 1988 a beautiful male was at Hambden Orchard State Wildlife Area. This represented Ohio's second record and probably the first summer record east of the Mississippi River.

Smith's Longspur - Two records: a handsome male on 5-6 May 1984 at the Gordon Park Impoundment and possibly three birds, at the same location, on 6 April 1986.

Brambling - Ohio's only record of this Old World finch was at a feeder in Bath from 31 March to 7 April 1987. It appeared after a heavy late March snowfall totalling over twenty inches.

Who knows what the 1990's hold for the North Coast birders, but the above exciting species should prompt birders to keep their eyes open and minds alert for strange looking gray, gull-like birds in September storms or a Bay-breasted Warbler at the feeder after March blizzards. If I am lucky enough to be around in 10 years from now, I hope to write about the birds of the 1990's and expand the summary to include the birds of the 20th century.

A problematical loon off Fairport Harbor

by Larry Rosche

On 28 January 1990 from the bluff at the end of Second Street in Fairport Harbor, Ohio John Vanderpoel spotted a loon swimming next to the breakwall at 10:00 A.M. This was not a typical loon nor was it the typical time of year to be seeing a loon locally, Ray Hannikman, myself, Andy Fondrk, and Vanderpoel studied this individual for the next four hours. As editor of *The Cleveland Bird Calendar* I am fully aware of my ability to print any sighting that I feel is accurate. On this occasion we all felt sure that the loon was indeed a bird of extreme noteworthiness. Unfortunately for the observers, the distance was too great to obtain diagnostic photographs! I know that for me to accept a first regional record of a bird from others I expect a photograph. Therefore, I must abide by my own set of rules for rarity reporting and not identify this bird to species. The following is a detailed description of the loon and it is hoped that it will provide others some characters to look for in future loon sightings.

Distance: Approximately 600-800 yds. **Optics:** Questar spotting scope **Light:** Cloudy to bright sun at our backs

Head and neck: The head was smoothly rounded and gently sloping to the bill. The bird was observed being harassed by gulls and diving. The rounded feature was always present, there were no apparent

bumps. The forehead sloped gently to the bill and never appeared steep, even after surfacing from a dive. The face was dusky below the eye and very dark in the lores. Behind the eye there was a small light area and then the dark color began again. The nape and upper neck were noticeably paler than the back or areas immediately next to the throat and neck front. This gave a three-toned effect to the neck and head. This effect was easily observed at all times and enhanced when the sun came out at 11:30 A.M. As the bird swam directly away from the observers the back of the neck and nape areas actually appeared to be light-gray. This was quite a contrast with the dark back and sides of the neck. The white in the neck was straight with no indentations like those which Common Loons often possess in winter. A chin-strap across the throat was faintly visible, but as the sunlight intensified this feature seemed more prominent. This may have simply been a shadow effect,

Body: The bird was barely larger than nearby Mallards and much smaller than any of a flock of Canada Geese which swam close to it. The overall color of the body was black and no speckling could be discerned on the upper parts. The underparts were white. The bird was feeding and preening and often showed distinct flank patches (a particularly disturbing field character to me). The area where the patches were located was much whiter than the white of the sides. We felt that this may

only have been a result of its movements and preening at the time. Ruffled undertail feathers could give the impression of being flank patches. Nonetheless, the flank patches were very noticeable and visible as often as not.

Wings: The wings were blackish on top and dark underneath to the middle of the wing where the color was white.

Bill and legs: The Questar allotted us the opportunity to study these features in ways no other scope could. The bill was not a prominent feature and, at times, difficult to see. It was small and evenly pointed, while being held horizontally to the water. The bill was a gray color with no black ridge line visible. Black color would have been visible, even at this distance, due to the fact that the light was so good. The legs were dark and the feet were small. These features could be seen occasionally as the bird picked at itself. As the loon stretched its legs the feet would come out of the water but would barely reach to the above the back. (In Common Loons that I have observed stretching their legs, the feet seem disproportionately large and extend well above the back. They sort of drape over the rump). The inner webs were a bright red or red-orange color.

Posture: This individual rode rather high in the water. The tail was almost always out of the water, somewhat like a dabbling duck. The head was held so that the pointed bill paralleled the water. The bird slept with its bill



Ring-billed Gull
by Victor Fazio III

tucked into the back feathers.

Comments: Any loon at this time of year is extremely rare on the Great Lakes. I watched this bird intently and took detailed field notes. Red-throated Loon was clearly ruled out on the basis of color, bill shape, posture, and neck size. At the time, Common Loon was ruled out on the basis of size and the many plumage and bill characters mentioned above. Although the sighting was distant there is no substitute for a Questar view. Those who are experienced with this scope are fully aware of the incredible images it provides. It is only too bad that the bird was too distant for diagnostic photographs. For that reason I feel that it is best to leave this as a loon species. I hope that my fellow observers will understand my reservations.

SITE GUIDE:

Birding the Shaker Lakes Part 1 by Victor Fazio III

The Shaker Lakes are situated along the Doan Brook watershed, at the lip of the Portage escarpment. The park, of about 300 acres, lies along the border of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights. As a green space surrounded by suburban development, the area has attained a reputation as a migrant trap. During the course of at least 85 years of birding history, some 245 species have been reliably reported as being seen here. In the heart of the park area, there are two main lakes. The Cleveland Audubon Society has sponsored spring birdwalks for many years at Lower (Shaker) Lake. It is the better known and more frequented part of the park. However, depending on what birds one is seeking, Horseshoe

(Upper) lake could prove more rewarding. The best plan is to explore as much as possible, as I have tried to do for the last 14 years. Here then, briefly, are some of my experiences in birding this park.

At first glance, the location and size of the lakes will not thrill those wishing to see waterfowl with their potential, yet I am still surprised at what may turn up. The lakes were never very deep and are presently very shallow, at a maximum they are just a few feet in depth. Even so, bay and sea ducks are sometimes common, while puddle ducks are seen more frequently. In the extreme, cormorants and loons have fished these waters on rare occasions in spring. These shallow lakes will dry up enough in the summer to expose some mudflats. In recent years, an island has formed in Lower Lake each summer. It is large enough to lure a few (up to 50) individuals of the more regionally abundant shorebird species. The woody shorelines of the lakes provide well for roosting herons, and it is exposed enough at Horseshoe Lake for a margin of cattail to have developed. What marsh birding one may productively engage in, is limited to the acre or so cattails adjacent to the Shaker Lakes Regional Nature Center. While it is large enough to harbour a colony of Red-winged Blackbirds, rails, and Marsh Wrens are only rarely detected. But these are the park's shortcomings. The highlight here is by far the transient passerines. For them, you must venture into the woods.

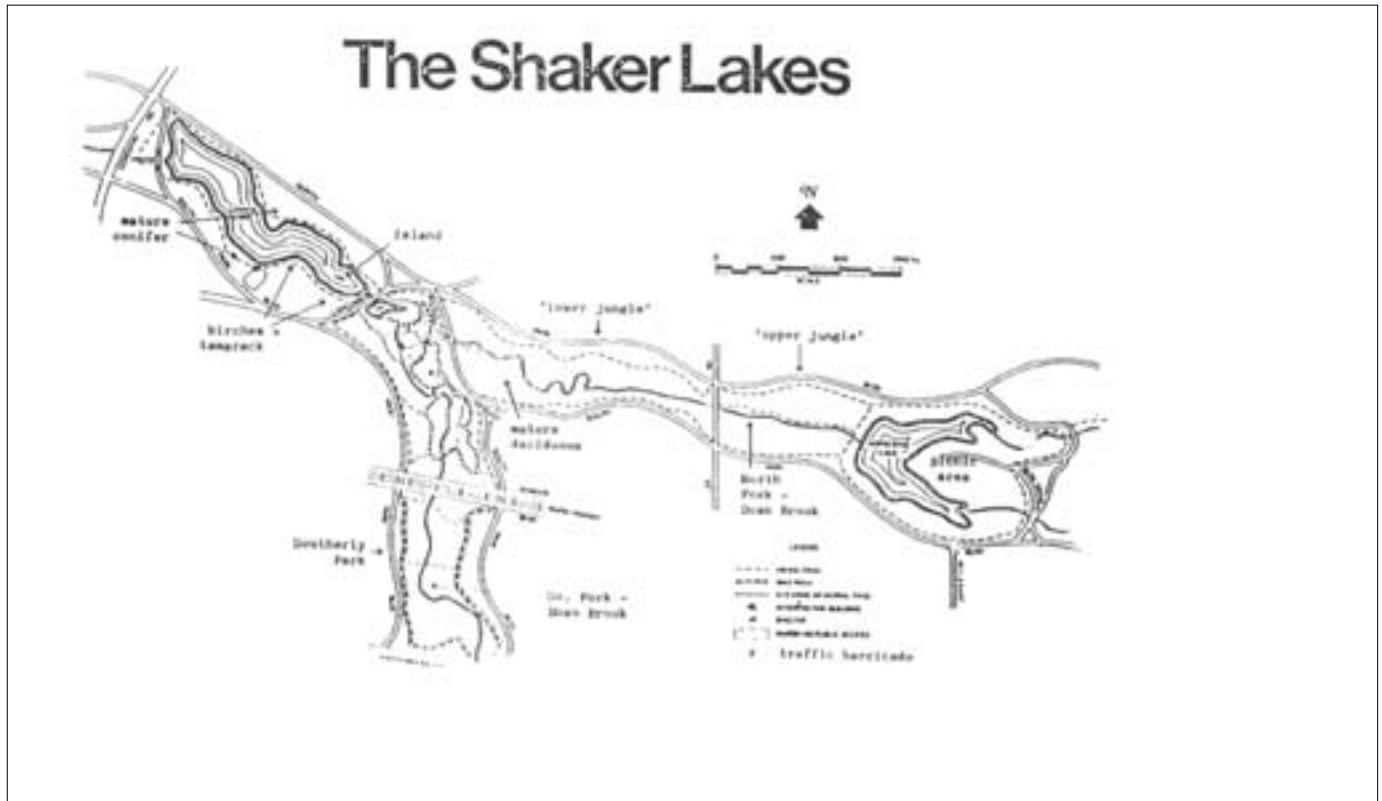
The upland portions of the park have been maturing gradually from a rural setting at the turn of the century to the woodlots of today. Fields were still sufficiently extensive near Horseshoe Lake through the 1940's, as to harbour breeding Savannah Sparrow and Bobolink (D. Newman's personal notes, ca. 1940s). These fields had virtually disappeared twenty years later. What little remains today, is the beneficiary of the nature center's effort to curtail the city's mowing plans. At present, weedy fields persist only at the northwest corner of Horseshoe Lake, along South Park Boulevard by the nature center, and near Lower Lake at Coventry Road. These areas are too sparse for attracting many species, but are still fairly good for migrant American Tree Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, American Goldfinches, Indigo Buntings, and perhaps a surprise or two. I have now twice encountered a November Orange-crowned Warbler and once a December Nashville Warbler foraging at these sites. Regularly mowed areas along South Park Boulevard at both lakes are best for concentrations of juncoes, White-throated and Chipping Sparrows, and Palm Warblers. However, many rural species such as meadowlarks, towhees, pipits, bluebirds, and Bobolinks are scarce except for the few that pass overhead in migration. The remaining park land has progressed into woods of varying degrees of density and age.

For the purpose of this discussion, the Shaker Lakes can be

broken down into the following discrete areas: The Lower Lake, Horseshoe Lake, Marshall and Green Lakes (two small ponds along the north fork of Doan Brook), Southerly Park, and for lack of an official designation, I will make reference to the 'nature center woods', the upper jungle', and the 'lower jungle'. Anyone so intrepid as to venture into these latter woodlots in high summer, should not have a problem with these titles.

Southerly Park is a thinly wooded area of hardwoods that are 45-70 ft. in height. The ground cover is held in check by a relatively high level of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. However, much of the creek is overgrown with thickets. Overall, migrant activity is deceptively low. Usually only modest warbler activity is seen along the creek, although the area may be good for wrens and flycatchers. Elsewhere, the woods may seem to attract little more than woodpeckers, nuthatches, and creepers. But on a wave day the canopy becomes alive with birds. Unfortunately, few observers are keen to strain their neck muscles so as to merely view a warbler's undertail coverts from 60 feet below. Once I saw a male Summer Tanager here, but I am more impressed with the 45 Chestnut-sided Warblers Ivor Kiwi found there in May 1989.

The upper jungle is a small wooded area broken up to a greater degree, than the 'lower jungle' by fallen and dead trees. These trees make good perches for many hawking birds. The area has an



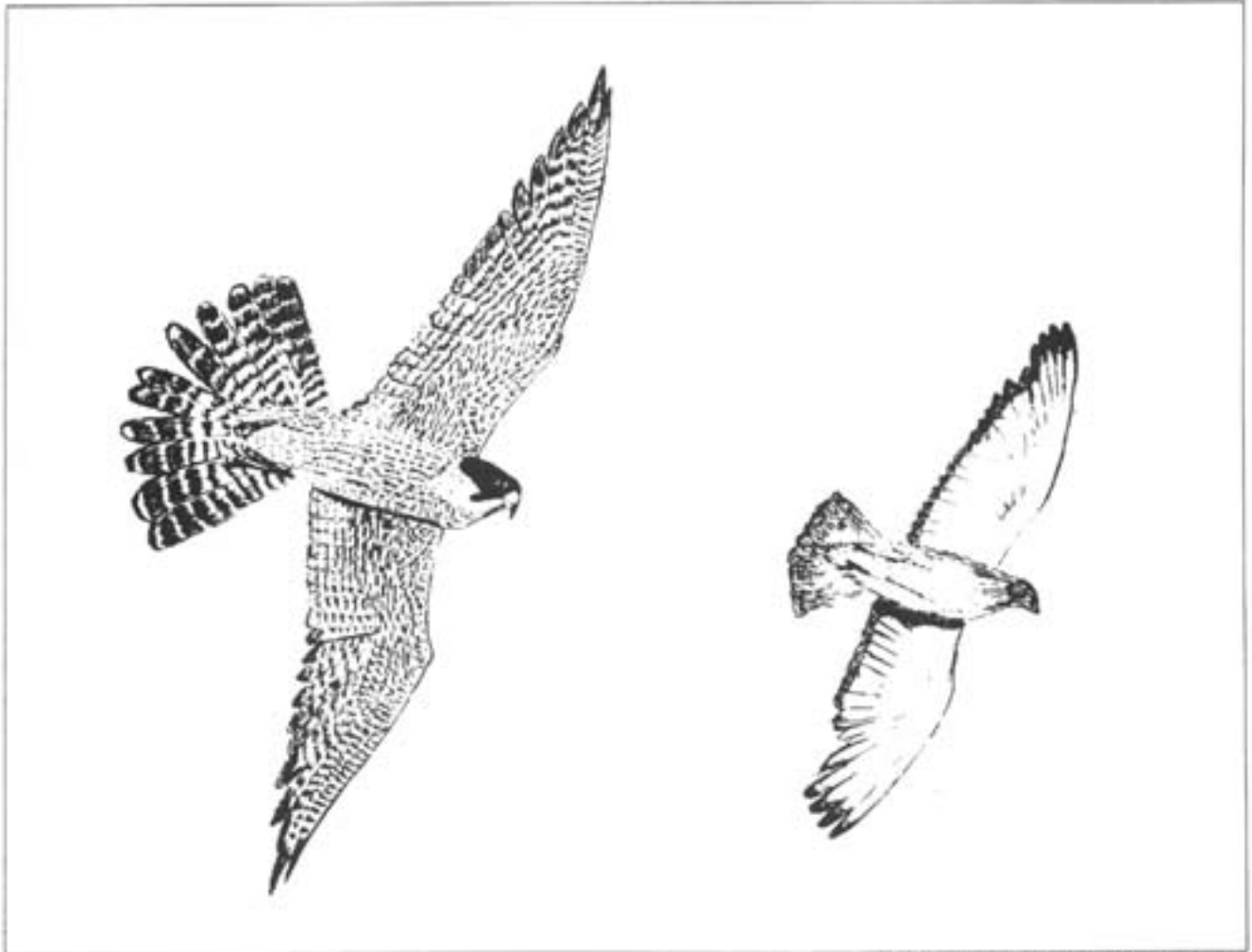
especially thick ground cover. Despite this growth, the interior is accessible by a poorly defined trail paralleling the creek. Though uninviting, this miniature wilderness is one of my favorite haunts. For the less nimble, a circuit of the outer edge is interesting. From the high ground of the south side one can view well into the floodplain, before the leaves appear in the spring. One very good viewing site for migrants is the earthen dam at Horseshoe Lake. Looking west, with the sun at your back, you can survey the woods 35 feet above the floodplain. Bird activity here is highly variable and is only consistently rewarding during migration. 'Lower jungle' is the largest of the woodlots and contains a thick stand of older hardwoods with a canopy reaching to some 90 feet. In the shade below, modest ground cover

allows for mostly easy walking. Edge effect and the attendant grape tangles play a part in the apparent increase in diversity of migrants found here. Better yet, are the wet outer edges of this woodlot. To bird the interior, I have found it practical to don boots and walk the shallow creek area, paying particular attention to skulking warblers and *Catharus* thrushes. Also in the coolness of the interior, there may be a fairly high level of migrant activity later in the day, more so than elsewhere around the lakes. As the least visited part of the lakes, this area deserves greater coverage.

The 'nature center woods' is mostly like the 'lower jungle', but with greater accessibility. The mature woods along the outer edge of the woodlot ring the marshy center. In wetter

years, it was extraordinary for finding *Oporornis* warblers. Overall migrant activity has decreased here, partly due to dry conditions, and one must now work the "front marsh" adjacent to Lower Lake for migrant waves. This is a relatively easy thing to do with advent of the All Peoples Trail. A great variety of warblers and sparrows are more likely here than most other immediate areas. During last autumn there was a surprise fallout of Orange-crowned Warblers. The birds were particularly prevalent along this trail. A built-in blind aids one's approach to the marsh and some feeders. A male Summer Tanager sat in one of these feeders for three days enjoying sunflower seeds. Unfortunately, the marsh itself yields few surprises.

Part II will take an in depth look at Lower and Horseshoe Lakes.



Peregrine Falcon In Pursuit of a Rock Dove
by Victor Fazio III

Rare Bird Hotline: (216) 289-2473 The hotline is sponsored by the Kirtland Bird Club.

Invitation: The Kirtland Bird Club meets the first Wednesday of the month except July and August at 7:45 P.M. at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Visitors are always welcome.

Invitation: On the first Sunday of every month in 1990 a group of Kirtland Bird Club members will conduct a census at Headlands Beach State Park.

The purpose is to study the long term occurrence patterns of migrant and resident birds in the eastern part of the region. Interested parties should meet at Shipman Pond at 8:00 AM January - March and 7:30 April - December. For more information call Larry Rosche at 678-9408 or Ray Hannikman at 261-4047

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Inquiries regarding subscription to The Cleveland Bird Calendar should be addressed to: Joan M. Palmer, The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, 1 Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106. The subscription rate is \$4.00 annually.

Field reports, artwork, papers, and comments should be directed to Larry Rosche 7473 Sylvan Drive, Kent, Ohio 44240.