

The Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC) exists to increase knowledge of Ohio's birdlife by validating bird records, maintaining for the public archives of bird occurrences, and establishing the official state list of bird species. Like this magazine, it relies vitally upon the voluntary participation of the birding public in submitting records of sightings. As a publication of record, *The Ohio Cardinal* does not publish reports of Review List species (see previous issue for complete list of these species rare in Ohio) until documentation of such species has been accepted by the OBRC. We are indebted to the OBRC's Secretary, Jim McCormac, for this update of actions taken by the Committee since our last report in the previous issue.

ACCEPTED RECORDS: Documentation received for the following species on the indicated occasions was judged sufficient to verify the record by at least nine members of the committee.

Purple Gallinule—Hamilton County, 22-30 May 1999, observer N. Keller
 Least Tern—Hamilton County, 14 Jun 1999, observer N. Keller
 Common Raven—Trumbull County, 4 Apr 1999, observer D. Hochadel
 Spotted Towhee—Franklin County, 31 Mar 1999, observer B. Master
 Le Conte's Sparrow—Marion County, 15 Oct 1998, observer V. Fazio III

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED: Documentation received for the following species received fewer than six votes to accept; such votes, it is important to note, do not reflect upon the sighting itself, but on the adequacy of the documentation to validate it for the permanent record.

Ruff—Lucas County, Mar 1999
 Violet-green Swallow—Lake County, May 1999

RECORDS IN RECIRCULATION: These records are currently being recirculated among members of the committee, the documentation for which having received between six and eight votes to accept.

Green-winged Teal, subspecies *crecca*—Holmes County, Feb 1999
 Long-billed Curlew—Lucas County, May 1999
 Ruff—Lake County, May 1999
 Glaucous-winged Gull—Cuyahoga County, Jan 1989
 MacGillivray's Warbler—Stark County, Jan 1999

In addition, documentations are undergoing initial review for the following species: Mississippi kite, yellow rail, ruff, white-winged dove, and a report of a western kingbird during August in *Muskingum*, all from the spring, summer, and fall seasons of the current year. *Bill Whan*

As Jim McCormac points out in his article in this issue, the grassland habitats imposed by strip-mine reclamation on areas of Ohio previously dominated by deciduous forest are inviting new birdlife. Here we—less constrained than McCormac by the sober requirements of science—indulge in a bit of more reckless speculation and exhortation. We are only beginning to learn about these habitats. Next year's continuation of this survey, which reportedly will include a study of the plant associations—most of them exotic—of the birdlife in the study areas, will teach us much more. It seems reasonable to assume that with time the areas' species compositions and numbers among bird populations will change. How likely are these habitats to persist? Are the soils so low in nutrients, or so polluted, that plant successions will be affected? To what extent will management efforts—controlled burns, plantings of native species, etc.—affect these changes?

There are already signs that these areas may attract some breeders rare to Ohio. Western kingbirds seem poised to expand their range further east, with reports just this year of first successful nestings in Louisiana and Tennessee, and what may have been a family group was reported this August in an Ohio reclaimed grassland area. Common ravens are known to breed in very similar habitats just to our east, and a brief sighting of what may have been this species was made in a reclaimed grassland in eastern Ohio this summer. And what about upland sandpipers? These areas look great for this species; will they show up eventually, or is something subtly wrong with the habitat? If the Ohio Division of Wildlife were to reintroduce another extirpated breeding species in Ohio, greater prairie-chickens might thrive in these exotic grasslands.

We are only beginning to learn how many birds are attracted to these areas in non-breeding seasons, as well. Last winter, for example, reclaimed strip-mine grasslands featured high counts on single occasions of 83 short-eared owls, 31 northern harriers, and 51 rough-legged hawks. We know even less thus far about migrants in these areas. It seems clear that birders need to explore these areas more often, and let the rest of us know what they find. More of us should volunteer to help with the grassland bird surveys, and more of us should head out there on our own at other seasons. *The Ohio Cardinal* welcomes news—from interesting bird sightings to entire bird-finding articles on these wildlife areas—from explorers in this new frontier. An article on Egypt Valley WA—written by West Virginia birders—has already appeared in *The Ohio Cardinal* (19(1), Autumn 1995), and we hope to cover the rest of these areas and their avian riches in issues to come. *Bill Whan*