

The Ohio



CARDINAL™

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The Ohio Cardinal is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

The Ohio Cardinal exists to provide a permanent and timely record of the abundance and distribution of birds in Ohio; to help document the occurrence of rare species in the state; to provide information on identification of birds; and to provide information on birding areas within Ohio.

The Ohio Cardinal invites readers to submit articles on unusual occurrences of birds, bird distribution within the state, birding areas in Ohio, identification tips, and other aspects of ornithology. Bird reports and photographs are welcome from any area of the state. Report forms are not a necessity but will be supplied upon request. Unusual species should be documented, and forms to do so are available upon request from the Editor, Publisher, and Records Committee Secretary.

Seasonal Report Due Dates	Please send all reports to:
Winter (Dec.-Feb.) - March 25	Bill Whan
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25	223 E. Tulane Rd.
Summer (June-July) - August 25	Columbus, OH 43202
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25	danielel@iwaynet.net

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On the Cover: Snowy Owl - Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula Co., 20 November 2000.

Photo by Gary Meszaros.

Autumn 2000 Overview

by Bill Whan

Autumn seems so long ago, much longer ago than it did this time last year, or the two before. Many of the birds that lingered so late into last fall hurried on their way, leaving us to accustom ourselves to normal seasonal conditions for a change. The first half of the season was somewhat wetter and cooler than usual, but without extremes, and things even grew a bit warmer until mid-November, when winter stepped in impatiently, with harsh winds and temperatures persistently well below normal. Nationwide, the year 2000's November-December period was the coldest on record, with an average daily temperature of 33.8°F. Among other things this meant that instead of dilatory swallows we got snowy owls, and in place of languid vireos we found early Iceland gulls—not patient gleaners of the insect hordes, but white phantoms out of the storm, ravenous for warm blood.

Few rarities showed up early in the season—none in August, in fact—but later reports of eight Review Species were made. Despite winter's early coming, we had as many as three new record late occurrences, to go with a couple of record early ones—an unusual coincidence. No fewer than thirteen *Plegadis* ibises were seen, three of them well away from Lake Erie, and much was learned about how the two species may and may not be separated in the field. A nice male rufous hummingbird presented no ID problems, but two or perhaps three *Selasphorus* hummers in less definitive plumage this fall gave us fits. Ohio was not alone in hosting an unusual number of western hummers; east of the Mississippi this fall and early winter the following were reported: buff-bellied, black-chinned, Anna's, broad-tailed, rufous, Allen's, and calliope hummingbirds, and an unprecedented green-breasted mango. A count of four Le Conte's sparrows was well above average, as were three photographs obtained; this species probably passes through in good numbers, but finding one is the trick. A western kingbird was briefly present near Cleveland in September. The region had some wanderers from the opposite direction too, as a Manx shearwater was found on a suburban driveway just up the road in Michigan on 19 August; we had, or at least noticed, nothing quite so exciting in Ohio, though a report of a dovekie here—a potential state first—came close.

The scarcer herons—cattle and snowy egrets, and little blue heron—were still scarcer than usual; at Ottawa, for example, there were reports of only two all season: a snowy egret in August, and a cattle egret in October, with no little blues. Waterfowl flights were unimpressive. Among geese, for example, for the second fall in a row no greater white-fronted geese were found. Nor were Ross's geese reported, and we heard reports of only 20-25 snow geese this fall. Brant, by contrast, staged their best come-back in the Great Lakes in years. Among raptors, merlins and golden eagles reprised last fall's excellent showing, but rough-legged hawks and peregrines were noticeably down in numbers, and harriers seemed inexplicably few. The crane flight seemed about average, but the big news was an apparent nesting at Killdeer Plains WA, a first. A whooping crane pair from the Florida introduction program, having eloped to spend the summer in Michigan, was tracked by telemetry to the