

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
Spring (Mar.-May) - June 25
Summer (June-July) - August 25
Autumn (Aug.-Nov.) - December 25

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The Ohio Cardinal

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On the Cover: This common cedar was photographed along Lake Erie in Fairport Harbor, Lake County, on 8 January 2003 by Gary Meszaros.

Winter 2002-03 Overview

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Some said it was just a return to normal. Not so. The winter of 2002-03 was harsh, abnormally snowy and cold. Following November's unrelenting volleys of cold fronts, December's first week delivered daily departures from normal of -13, -4, -15, -16, -9, -14, and -11°F. And that was our mildest month. December had 17, January 22, and February 23 days of below-normal temperatures, with averages of -1.1, -4.5, and -5.1°F below normal respectively. Our winter birds are not much inconvenienced by air temperatures unless their food sources are affected, mainly by snow cover or the freezing of water. And there was plenty of both this time. Cleveland had more than 30 inches of snow in January (and 28 days of it), and Columbus over 26 inches in February. Aerial waterfowl counters reported their near-shore Lake Erie survey areas ice-covered from mid-December through the period in the shallow western basin. From mid-January on, the Ohio shoreline to the east was locked in brash ice and jagged floes except for a few transient leads and pools near warm-water outlets. Inland reservoirs by that time were thickly sealed in sheets of ice.

Lake Erie's nearly 10,000 square miles of surface never froze completely, but it was a near thing. Unusual numbers of waterfowl in swift water in the southwest quarter of the state probably consisted partly of birds driven south by ice and, later in the season, early migrants bottled up by it. At the Camp Dennison gravel pits in Hamilton County the cessation of quarrying, the prohibition of hunting, and by some point the sheer numbers of birds that kept water from freezing, contributed some notable records for the southwest. It seems the scenic virtues of this spot have attracted the attention of developers, and in winters to come we can probably anticipate only Canada geese and mallard X somethings at "Duck Lake Estates." Outflows of artificially-heated water at power plants in Toledo, Avon Lake, and Cleveland hosted good varieties of ducks, and excellent opportunities for observing them. Also quite easy to study there were unusual large gulls—so unusual that species that would be new for Ohio were reported by multiple observers. The OBRC will be studying the documentation of these and other rare gulls, but the rest of us were at least able to enjoy numerous glaucous and Thayer's/Iceland gulls in many (some might say too many) plumage variations at close range.

Rare review species documented for the OBRC or already accepted included northern gannet, Ross's goose, king and common eiders (both remaining from the fall season), black-headed gull, California gull, rufous hummingbird (from the fall season), rufous/Allen's hummingbird, and loggerhead shrike (also since last fall). Winter finches were hard or impossible to find, and followed recent biennial fluctuations. Half-hardy species seemed not much less often reported than in warmer winters. Pipits and sapsuckers put in noteworthy appearances, and certain warblers—ovenbird, yellow-throated warbler, and pine warbler—surprised us all. Golden eagles again wintered in Muskingum County, three of them this time for an extraordinary modern record.

Sixty Christmas Bird Counts—their results once again ably compiled by Ned Keller for this issue—took place during what were to prove the mildest weeks of the winter. As always, their results, presented here in full, play a unique role in describing the birds of the season, and in the Reports that follow we cite CBC reports only in especially significant cases rather than repeating them. Those looking for evidence of ravages of the West Nile virus—such as vindication of fall's often-alarmist predictions about plummeting raptor populations—will find decidedly mixed messages here.

The Reports follow the taxonomic order of the 7th edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 42nd (July 2000) and 43rd (July 2002) Supplements. Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List; documentation is needed to add reports of these species to official state records, or to attributed records in the Reports. When supplied, county names appear *italicized*. Unless numbers are specified, sightings refer to single birds. Abbreviations, conventions, and symbols used in the Reports should be readily understood, with the possible exceptions of the following: BCSP=Buck Creek SP in *Clark*; BIWA=Big Island WA in *Marion*; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley National Park in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in *Cleveland*; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; EHSP=East Harbor SP in *Ottawa*; eop=end of the period, in this issue 28 Feb 2003; fide="in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; GLSM=Grand Lake St. Marys in *Mercer* and *Auglaize*; HBSP=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation in *Lake*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metro Park; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ODOV=Ohio Division of Wildlife; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly bird census at ONWR; ph=photograph; PP=power plant; Res=Reservoir; Res'n=Reservation; SF=State Forest; SNP=State Nature Preserve; SP=State Park; SVWA=Spring Valley WA in *Greene* and *Warren*; WA=Wildlife Area.

Corrigenda

The blue-headed vireo and grasshopper sparrow sightings of 21 Jun 2002 (in Vol 25, No. 4) should have been credited to **Judy Hochadel**.

Vic Fazio pointed out to us an error in Vol 25, No. 4's treatment of mute swan: their first successful nest at Medusa Marsh dates from 1989, with another in 1994 (following a period in which fewer surveys were conducted), and nesting observed annually since that time; the first multiple broods were three in 2001, leading to last summer's five successful nestings. Success for mute swans, anyway.

For the Record

Here are noteworthy reports from earlier dates in 2002 that for one reason or another escaped our notice:

Cattle Egret: One discovered in *Tuscarawas* on 7 Nov 2002 (**David E. Miller**) represented a first fall record for the area.

Eurasian Wigeon: A drake was discovered at ONWR on 3 Nov 2002 (**Tom Bartlett, Ned Bixler**) during the monthly census. 

Winter 2002-03 Reports

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Common Loon: High count five at LSR 1 Dec (**J. Pogacnik**). One lingered at Huron 4 Jan (**G. Miller**). On 8 Jan, two were found trapped in shrinking open water, one in Rocky River, *Cuyahoga* (rescued 12 Jan fide **M. Stetz**), and one in *Union* (**J. Rockenbaugh**). A bird at Bayshore PP, *Lucas* on 21 Feb (**G. Links**) must have been an early migrant.

Pied-billed Grebe: A few toughed out mid-winter weather, with a remarkable 42 at Rocky Fork SP in *Highland* 4 Jan (**D. Dister**) and one 30 Jan in *Zanesville* (**C. Crook**).

Horned Grebe: A handful persisted. One was at Wellington Res, *Lorain* 2 Jan (**B. Morrison**), another at Rocky Fork SP 4 Jan (**D. Dister**), one at Avon Lake 31 Jan (**G. Miller**)-1 Feb (**V. Fazio**), and another at Camp Dennison, *Hamilton* 31 Jan (**S. Corbo**).

Red-necked Grebe: Notable was one 4-12 Jan (**B. Foppe**, m obs) at Camp Dennison.

Northern Gannet: Best numbers since 1947-48. First-year birds crashed inland in *Seneca* 3 Dec (**M. Rutger** fide **V. Fazio**, expired 4 Dec) and in *Ashland* (**N. Thomas** fide **T. Leslie**, expired 10 Dec). An imm at *Lorain* on the late date of 10 Jan was documented for the OBRC. Undocumented reports of other imm birds came from *Lake 1* and 6 Dec and *Cuyahoga* 12 Dec.

American White Pelican: Quite unexpected was an imm seen 20 (**J. Stenger**) and 21 Jan in *Dayton* (**B. Foppe**); likely the same bird was found (**J. Hays**) over the Ohio R (thus in *Kentucky*) 24 Jan. Conceivably, the same bird was involved in an earlier sighting 24 Dec at *GLSM* (**E. Stahl** fide **K. Wolters**).



Nearly ice-bound in Cuyahoga County, this common loon was rescued and later released in Lake Erie. Photo by Gary Meszaros on 11 January 2003.



This first-year northern gannet was found in an Ashland County field on 4 December 2002. It was taken to a rehab center, but died six days later. Photo by Tim Leslie.