

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

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

Please send all reports to:

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The Ohio Cardinal

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On the Cover: This black rail was photographed in a Holmes County flower bed on 14 June 2003 by Morris Miller.

Summer 2003 Overview

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It seemed like a cool summer because we had so few really hot spells, but in the end temperatures were not so far off normal. Here in central Ohio, we started with a first four days of June colder than the first four of April, but it all averaged out. Depending on where you were, you might have called it a wet summer or a dry one. Rain was very unevenly distributed, with few well-defined broad fronts, instead often consisting of very localized downpours in what the forecasters defensively began to call "pop-up storms." During June, rainfall in Columbus and Cincinnati differed by a significant 2.58 inches, and in July, Columbus and Dayton differed by 4.25 inches. During July, Cleveland recorded a lot of rain—4.89 inches—but only 75 miles away in the Youngstown area 10.6 inches fell; Columbus had 1.68 inches less than normal rainfall in July, when parts of Paulding County got a Noachian 11.6 inches.

Four review species were documented, about average for the season: tricolored heron, black rail, ruff, and loggerhead shrike. Twenty years ago, species subject to review before adding them to the published record included the following: American white pelican, greater white-fronted goose, brant, northern goshawk, pomarine jaeger, laughing gull, black-legged kittiwake, Thayer's gull, and Bell's vireo. Why do they no longer require review? Do we see more of them, or have record-keepers become less conservative? Among them probably only the pelican, not the most difficult to identify, is more common now in Ohio. Better field ID techniques have helped; even the popular field guides are now more helpful on jaegers and gulls, for example, than older ones. It helps that more birders are in the field, and better linked by communications media: more birds are seen by multiple observers, and beginners are more likely to know someone more experienced nearby to help with a strange-looking bird. Still, editors and other reviewers are likely to seek more details upon getting a report of a species out of place or season—a brant in Athens County, a June Thayer's gull anywhere—or for those species that remain less familiar to most Ohioans and/or difficult to identify: goshawks, immature eagles, adult dowitchers, or kittiwakes.

On 11 May, a half-dozen or more trumpeter swans were released in Cedar Point NWR, perhaps the most pristine of Ohio's Lake Erie marshes, where their presence on this Federal property may test the wisdom of Ohio officials' introduction program. Common loons stuck around in good numbers, and some intriguing reports emerged—far from substantiated as of the date of this writing—that seemed consistent with successful nesting in the central part of the state. If nothing else, these reports will keep local observers more alert next summer.

Raptors, by all reports, had a great breeding season statewide, and were present in better-than-average numbers. Some attributed this to a rapid filling of available territories after ravages of the West Nile Virus, some to the reduced depredations of

great horned owls, also courtesy of WNV. It is also possible the effects of this virus were overestimated. Shorebird habitat suffered greatly from the flooding of lowlands. Wetlands in Williams County (of all places) in June and in Ashtabula County in July hosted some shorebirds, as did Funk WA and a few carefully-surveyed flooded agricultural fields in Wyandot County. Others appeared at Big Island WA, but only because dike repairs required lowering water levels in one impoundment. Let us note that weather notwithstanding Pointe Mouillee in Michigan had a superb summer for shorebirds, including breeding pairs of black-necked stilts—so wet weather doesn't get our land managers off the hook.

Northbound flycatchers passed through abnormally late, and some stayed to claim out-of-the-way territories during weather that didn't unduly stress them. Migrant thrushes and warblers straggled through well into June, when higher than usual numbers of species like dark-eyed juncos stayed to breed. Going missing in reports were species like northern shovelers, great black-backed gulls, yellow-headed blackbirds, and pine siskins. Increasing appearances of red-breasted nuthatches, however, may promise a better winter finch year than we had most recently.

Finally, we hope readers who enjoy Rob Harlan's "Further Afield" series about how to find rarer birds in Ohio will recognize that he was able to offer this excellent advice largely because Ohio birders over the years reported their sightings to the *Cardinal* and other publications; unless reliable reports are sent in, our knowledge of these phenomena is relegated to the realm of rumors and dim memory.

The Reports follow the taxonomic order of the 44th Supplement (July 2003) to the 7th edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998); readers will immediately notice extensive changes here. Underlined names of species indicate those on the OBRC Review List; acceptable documentation is needed to add reports of such species to official state records. 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*; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; *fide*= "in trust of," said of data conveyed on behalf of another person; GAASSBC=Greater Akron Audubon Summit County Summer Bird Count of 13-22 June, reported herein by **A. Chasar**; GMAS=Greater Mohican Audubon Society Summer Bird Count, *Ashland*, of 7-21 June, reported herein by **T. Leslie**; GRWA=Grand River WA in *Trumbull*; HBSP=Headlands Beach SP in *Lake*; HWSP=Hueston Woods SP in *Preble* and *Butler*; Killbuck=Killbuck WA in *Wayne*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; CPNWR=Cedar Point NWR in *Lucas*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; Metzger=Metzger Marsh WA in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark or Metro Park; m obs=many observers; MWW=Miami-Whitewater Wetlands in *Hamilton*; NWR=National Wildlife Refuge; OBRC=Ohio Bird Records Committee; ONWR=Ottawa NWR in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; ONWRC=monthly Ottawa NWR census, reported herein by **E. Pierce**; RTLS=Ravenna Training & Logistics Site in *Portage*; 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; ~≈approximately.

For the Record

Here are noteworthy reports (from spring 2003 unless otherwise noted) that for one reason or another escaped our notice for publication in the previous issue:

Red-throated Loon: One was found dead in Sagamore Hills 5 Apr (**D. Chasar**).

Willet: Add to spring's total two at HBSP 11 May (**R. Hannikman**), making 27 in all.


Laughing Gull: **E. Bacik** reported an adult at HBSP 29 Mar.

Forster's Tern: One was early at HBSP 29 Mar (**R. Hannikman, E. Bacik**).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Ad birds banded 31 Jul in *Vinton* and 5 Aug 2002 in *Jackson* were early (**A. Vitz**).

Philadelphia Vireo: One 19 Apr at the Bath Reserve in CVNP was quite early (**M. Romito**).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: During 2002 in *Vinton*'s Zaleski SF, **A. Vitz** banded seven 22 Jun, one 25 Jun, one 29 Jun, two 4 Jul, and four (three hatch-year) 24 Jul. In *Gallia*, he banded one 16 Jul and another 25 Jul.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: A hatch-year female was banded 1 Aug 2002 down in *Gallia* (**A. Vitz**). 



This savannah sparrow obligingly posed for a photograph at Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Summit County on 18 June 2003. Photo by Gary Meszaros.