

*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	Bill Whan 223 E. Tulane Rd. Columbus, OH 43202 danielel@iwaynet.net

### Subscriptions

The subscription rate for one year (four issues) is \$20.00. Please send all subscription requests to:

*The Ohio Cardinal*  
c/o Edwin C. Pierce  
2338 Harrington Rd.  
Akron, OH 44319

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### The Ohio Cardinal

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ISSN 1534-1666

**On the Cover:** This American avocet was photographed at Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula County, on 5 October 2003 by Gary Meszaros.

## Autumn 2003 Overview

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This fall October was a bit cooler, and both October and November were slightly drier than average, but overall the season continued a warm, very wet trend. The year 2003 finished as the planet's third warmest in record history, and in the central part of Ohio we finished with 48.95 inches of precipitation, 10.52 inches above normal, for our fifth wettest year on record.

Two hundred years ago, all this precipitation would have made less difference to the birds. In a landscape little altered by humans, the rains of August and September would have fallen too late to widely disrupt nesting, and the avian life of watery areas—ducks, marsh birds, shorebirds—would have fairly easily adapted to altered shorelines, rivers overrunning their banks, flooded prairies, and so on.

Not so humans. We "own" land, we run businesses; we want to have fun. We can't have our nuclear plants knee-deep in muddy Lake Erie water, or Route 2 vanishing beneath the waves, so huge stone dikes keep the Lake under control. Rivers must run in place. Standing water in corn and bean fields is unprofitable. Reservoirs are best kept full until we draw them down for reasons of our own. As for water levels in wildlife areas, natural cycles and the habitat requirements of the full range of native species play a secondary role to the need to foster and attract game for our profit and amusement.

So it isn't too surprising that one very popular destination for birders this fall, despite its remote location, was Conneaut Harbor. Here gulls and terns and swallows and sparrows and buntings and shorebirds most of all, attracted attention for much of the season. Birds and observers resorted to Conneaut because traditional spots in northwest Ohio were flooded, and our water-control measures provided little edge habitat. We hear dredging of Conneaut Harbor has been proposed, as deeper water would better accommodate human recreation. Elsewhere, unexpected numbers of birds showed up in as-yet undrained agricultural fields in Wyandot County, and at an impoundment at Big Island WA that for unrelated reasons had to be briefly emptied of water. Few municipal reservoirs were drawn down this fall.

The season produced reports of a respectable 13 review species, including 12 reports of rufous or rufous/Allen's hummingbirds, equaling last fall's record total. Overall, the fall migrations of passerines, and later of waterfowl, seemed delayed somewhat this year. The Ottawa NWR census team had a great day on 2 November: a second-latest record snowy egret, a very late semipalmated plover, three near-record late semipalmated sandpipers, an all-time high fall count of 5500 dunlins, and a very late blue-gray gnatcatcher and palm warbler.

This issue will be the last to benefit from the considerable skills of Design Manager Joe Hammond, other demands on whose time will no longer allow him to continue in this capacity. All the many improvements in the appearance of the *Cardinal* in recent years have come as a result of his efforts. He will be sorely missed. We wish him the best in new endeavors, and know he reciprocates as we take on the task of maintaining the high standards he's attained for the *Cardinal*.

## Corrigenda

The caption for the golden eagle range map on p. 170 of Volume 26, Number 4 (previous issue) should read: "Shaded areas in Canada show known breeding areas, except for that in NE New Brunswick, where wintering is known to have occurred. Shading in the US indicates wintering areas; hollow rectangles mark irregular nesting sites during years indicated. Map by John Economidy, taken from the new guide *Raptors of Eastern North America*, by Brian K. Wheeler, Princeton University Press 2001."

Contrary to what is related on p. 155 of our previous issue, the Caesar Creek SP Franklin's gull was first reported by **L. Gara** on 29 June.

## For the Record

Here are noteworthy records for previous seasons that for one reason or another were not published here earlier:

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** A bird well seen at Stage's Pond, *Pickaway* 19 Apr 2003 tied the second-earliest state record for the species (**R. Schieltz**, et al.).

**Willet:** Add to spring's birds 16 seen at HBSP 7 May 2003 (**L. Rosche**), for a total of 43.

**Laughing Gull:** One was at the Hardy Rd Landfill in Akron 20 Jun 2003 (**D&J Vogus**).

**Swainson's Thrush:** A male was in song at HBSP 28-29 Jun 2003 (**R. Hannikman**).

The Reports follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the *AOU Check-list of North American Birds* (1998), including the 44<sup>th</sup> Supplement (July 2003). 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*; BSBO=Black Swamp Bird Observatory; CCE=Crane Creek estuary in ONWR; CVNP=Cuyahoga Valley National Park in *Cuyahoga* and *Summit*; Dike 14=the Gordon Park impoundment in Cleveland; EFSP=East Fork SP in *Clermont*; eop=end of the period, in this case 30 Nov 2003; EHSP=East Harbor SP in *Ottawa*; 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*; HBSNP=Headlands Beach SNP in *Lake*; Killbuck=Killbuck Marsh WA in *Wayne* and *Holmes*; KPWA=Killdeer Plains WA in *Wyandot*; LSR=Lakeshore Reservation (MP) in *Lake*; Magee=Magee Marsh WA in *Ottawa* and *Lucas*; MBSP=Maumee Bay SP in *Lucas*; MP=Metropark; 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; PCWA=Pickerel Creek WA in *Sandusky*; ph=photograph, 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. 🦉

## Autumn 2003 Reports

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**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Four reports emerged from the northwest, and may well have involved fewer than 11 individual birds: one in *Williams* 31 Oct (**J. Yochum**), three at Salisbury Quarry 14 Nov and four 19 Nov in Maumee (both **M. Anderson**), and three at MBSP 23 Nov (**D. Sanders**) through the end of the period (m obs).

**Snow Goose:** Beginning quite early with two near Toledo 25 Sept (**G. Links**), 207 were reported through the period, from 14 counties. Among 165 identified as to color morph, 113 were snowy. High count 80 on 16 Nov in *Wyandot* (**R. Counts**).

**Ross's Goose:** Details for one reported in *Hamilton* 30 Nov are with the OBRC. Besides its rarity here, apparently increasing numbers of hybrids with snow geese make careful documentation of sightings thought to be Ross's very valuable.

**Brant:** Two touched down on the beach at Pt Clinton 19 Oct (**J. Pogacnik**), and two were quite unusual inland at Pleasant Hill Lk, *Ashland* 17 Nov (**L. Hochstetler fide J. Herman fide S. Snyder**).

**Mute Swan:** EHSP was a winter resort as usual, with 63 there 19 Oct (**J. Pogacnik**) then 83 by 21 Nov (**V. Fazio**).

**Tundra Swan:** The first wave came 5-7 Nov, with over 1100 reported, including the high count of 500+ at a Findlay res the 6<sup>th</sup> (**B. Hardesty**). Over 500 more were reported along the easterly flyway through the rest of the period. At the CCE 11 Nov, 133 may have included those that traditionally winter at ONWR (**B. Whan**).

**Wood Duck:** The ONWRC of 3 Aug produced 211, but the Nov high count was only 31, on the 11<sup>th</sup> in *Hamilton* (**J. Seymour**). By 29 Nov a single drake in Lima was news (**D. Dister**).

**Gadwall:** Numbers built slowly, but high. At Ottawa NWR, the ONWRC counted eight on 3 Aug, then 37 on 7 Sept, with 2600 on 5 Oct; only 1613 were tallied on 2 Nov. At adjacent properties 852 were at CPNWR 15 Nov (**E. Tramer**) and 340 at Magee Marsh the following day (**H&S Hiris**).

**American Wigeon:** Four hundred on 5 Oct, then 1648 on 2 Nov were good numbers for the ONWRC, but wigeons seemed down overall, with the next-highest count only 134 on 21 Nov at Medusa Marsh, a regular haunt (**V. Fazio**).

**American Black Duck:** Aerial surveys reported large near-normal numbers on Sandusky Bay, but not until December. The inland high was 50+ at BIWA 31 Oct (**C. Bombaci**), and by 2 Nov only 171 were to be seen at Ottawa (ONWRC).

**Mallard:** Seemed down in numbers, with the ONWRC reporting 655 on 3 Aug, 2035 on 7 Sept, and 2100 2 Nov, but aerial surveys revealed no deficits.

**American Black Duck x Mallard:** This fairly common hybrid seems almost regular at Conneaut, where **C. Holt** had one 11 Nov.

**Blue-winged Teal:** Aug reports (27 were at Magee on the 17<sup>th</sup> [**H&S Hiris**]) suggested scattered nesting as usual. The high count was only 398, on 7 Sept for the ONWRC, and the latest double-digit count came 13 Oct, with 13 at EFSP (**D. Morse**).

**Northern Shoveler:** Scattered birds summered, with no breeding reported. The inland high was 37, at BIWA 31 Oct (**C. Bombaci**), and overall the max was 87 at Ottawa 2 Nov (ONWRC).