

## Short Note: A late date for chuck-will's-widow in Ohio

Jeff Hays

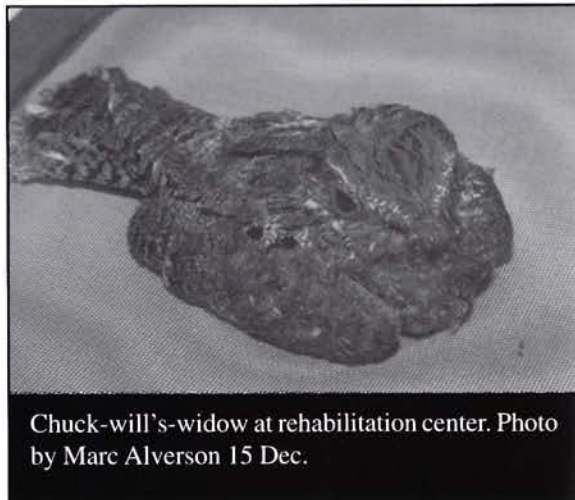
1419 Holman View Dr., Cincinnati 45215

jlhays@fuse.net

On 12 December 2004 Raptor, Inc., a Cincinnati-based raptor rehabilitation organization, received a call about an injured hawk. Richard Connor, of Clermont County's Miami Township, had been alerted by his dogs to the presence of a bird on his property. It was roosting in pine straw on the ground under a small pine stand in his back yard. Volunteer Curt Vonderhide went there after the call. Upon seeing the bird, he knew immediately it was not a hawk, but a goatsucker. There was extensive white in the tail, and upon further examination it was determined that the bird was a male chuck-will's-widow. Although it was in poor health overall, weighing only 130 grams, its feather condition was excellent. Its intact feathers suggested that it had not been held in captivity, as it is very difficult to keep goatsuckers without some feather damage.

The bird was taken to an experienced rehabilitator of challenged birds. With much care and attention, its weight increased to 160 grams and it was ready for release. Jane Van Coney of Cincinnati then drove the bird down to Florida, where it spent another week in rehabilitation before being released on 1 January 2005.

Ohio's first record of chuck-will's-widow was of birds heard on 14 May 1932 in Adams County; one was collected there four days later. Though this species is often reported from other southern counties, the Adams County population is Ohio's best-established breeding one, with birds most often found along Ohio Brush Creek. This small breeding population represents the northern limit for regularly breeding Chuck-will's-widows in this region of the country. They are casual to rare summer residents elsewhere in Ohio, with confirmed nesting recorded in Highland and Pike counties. Only a few reports of this species have emerged from Hamilton, Butler, and Montgomery counties. There are few data available on its fall migration, and recorded late dates for Ohio apparently extend only into September (Peterjohn 2001). There is a late record of chuck-will's-widow for Whitefish Point in Chippewa County, Michigan, on 18 October 2000, almost certainly a reverse migrant (Chartier 2001).



Chuck-will's-widow at rehabilitation center. Photo by Marc Alverson 15 Dec.

Some late fall dates for other states are:

Kentucky	13 September 1987	Hopkins County
Illinois	19 September 1968	Southern Illinois
Georgia	29 September 1949	Grady County
Tennessee	5 October 1984	Knox County

Given the late date, the Clermont County bird was quite possibly a reverse migrant that may not have been present in the area during the fall. [In the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History is a specimen, #35258, of a female chuck-will's-widow picked up as a corpse in a downtown Cincinnati street on the extraordinary date of 28 February 1994; surely not a reverse migrant, this occurrence has yet to be explained. –Ed.] In any event, the Clermont County record is noteworthy both because of the location and the date of the bird's discovery, not to mention its successful rehabilitation and eventual release.

### References

- Beaton, G., P. Sykes, and J. Parrish. 2003. *Annotated Checklist of Georgia Birds*. Georgia Ornith. Soc. Occ. Publ. No. 14.
- Bohlen, H.D. 1989. *The Birds of Illinois*. Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington.
- Palmer-Ball, Jr., B. 2003. *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Kentucky*. Kentucky Ornith. Soc., Louisville.
- Peterjohn, B.G. 2001. *The Birds of Ohio*. The Wooster Book Co, Wooster, Ohio.
- Robinson, J.C. 1990. *An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee*. Univ. Tenn. Press, Knoxville.
- Chartier, A.T. 2001. Michigan Bird Survey: Autumn 2000 (Aug - Nov). *Michigan Birds and Natural History* 8: 81-106.



A view of the tail shows feathers with two tones, brown and white. Photo by Marc Alverson 15 Dec.