

Purple sandpiper: A single individual was found by Ross and Lisa Brohl on Long Point on 13 December. Four individuals were discovered at the same location during the 17 December Christmas Count; at least one was photographed. Purple sandpipers have rarely been reported on the island, and four individuals is easily the record number, as all other sightings have been of single birds. All previous records have occurred in November or December.

California gull: An adult was found and photographed in the north harbor during the Christmas Count of 17 December. This is the third record of California gull on the island during ten years of censusing.

Iceland gull: A second-year bird was observed in the north harbor during the Christmas Bird Count by John Pogacnik and all of the other counters. This is the census record for the island.

Long-eared owl: At least two individuals were observed on the island during December and early January. The most regular spot was Scheele Preserve.

Northern saw-whet owl: A high of seven calling birds was recorded on 28 December. During December, three birds were banded and two additional birds were recaptured. One of the recaptures had been banded on the island 9 November 2006. The other recapture had been banded by Canadian banders but the data has not yet become available.

European starling: A remarkable phenomenon involving this species was noted again this year. During early December, 20,000+ individuals were observed flying to the island from the mainland to feed. On 28 December, the flock grew to 110,000+, and was observed going to roost in the NW section of the island. These birds were feeding mainly on dogwood berries and poison ivy berries. By the middle of January, most of these berries were gone, leaving very little wild food for birds on the island.

“Oregon” junco: Two individuals of this race of the dark-eyed junco were observed during January. At the same time there were numerous observations of intergrade juncos between the “slate-colored” and the “Oregon” races. The “Oregon” race is not a rare occurrence in winter on the island. At least one has been observed in five out of the 10 winters of censusing.

Rusty blackbird: A single individual was observed in a wet area on the north side of the island on 24 January. This is the latest (earliest?) record for this species on the island, and also the first January record.

There is no doubt that more analysis of the data is necessary before any scientific conclusions can be drawn from the avian data presented here. Still, the mild nature of the early part of the winter of 2006-2007 seems to be reflected in the data listed, as is the more typical nature of the winter weather during February.



This 4 March 2007 photo of the spotted towhee discovered by Jan Dixon near Toledo was contributed by Robert Epstein.

In the first edition (1886) of the American Ornithologists' Union *Check-list*, six towhees of the genus *Pipilo* were recognized. The fifth edition of the *Check-list* (1957) covered 16 recognized subspecies of just one of them, *P. erythrophthalmus*, then called the “rufous-sided towhee,” later in 1998 the “eastern towhee”; this is the common species in Ohio. Recognized as a separate species in 1886 was the “Arctic towhee” *P. maculatus*, which was later merged into *P. erythrophthalmus* as a subspecies *arcticus*, but recognized anew in 1996 as *P. maculatus*, the “spotted towhee.” Even though miraculously enough we still have six species after 120 years, it's easy to see the towhees remain in taxonomic flux. The old Arctic towhee, presently the spotted towhee, is distinctively marked, and Ohio now has five records.

On 39 Mar 1946, one was reported by C. Walker, G. Rea, and N. Thomson along the Scioto River in Delaware Co. See p. 11 of Borror, D. 1950. A Check List of the Birds of Ohio. *Ohio Journal of Science* 56:1-32. This author asked Thomson about the record five years ago; he recalled it well, and described the bird in detail. Tom Bartlett captured and photographed one at Springville Marsh in Seneca Co. on 4 May 1996. (H. T. Bartlett. 1996. A Spotted Towhee in Seneca Co. *Ohio Cardinal* 19:75-76). One visited the Klamm's feeder in Lakewood, Cuyahoga Co. 22-29 Oct 1998 (Rosche, 1998. *Cleveland Bird Calendar* 94(4):43). One was reported by the Black Swamp Bird Observatory as captured in Ottawa Co. 2 April 2000; it is recognized by Anderson et al. (2002. *Birds of the Toledo Area*).

Jan Dixon noticed and reported an adult of this species at her feeder in Holland, OH, just west of Toledo, on 28 Feb 2007; this individual was seen by me through at least 20 April.

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