



*Bohemian Waxwings are always a major rarity, but Dan Sanders and Ben Warner came up with two in Lakewood Cemetery, Cuyahoga County, on 13 Dec. Ben Warner managed this excellent shot of one gorging on crabapples.*

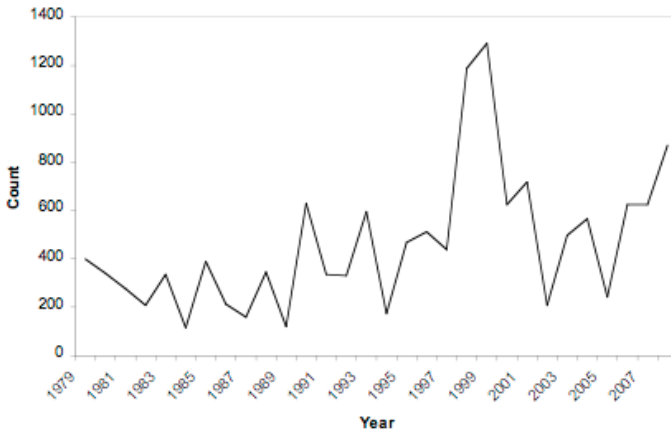
**Brown Thrasher:** Twelve were reported from CBCs, and eight elsewhere. All but a few were in the southern half of the state.

**European Starling:** 188,722 were reported statewide on CBCs, making it the second most abundant species reported, trailing only Common Grackle. For what it's worth, this tally is actually down from the annual average of 205,057 over the last decade.

**American Pipit:** Wintering numbers were far above average, as evidenced by 589 reported

collectively from all CBCs, easily eclipsing the previous high of 363 from winter 1998-99. At least 300 were reported in addition to the CBC reports, including 70 in *Clermont* on 20 Feb (Donald Morse), 45 in *Holmes* on 26 Jan (Ed Schlabach), and at least 25 in *Columbiana* on 05 Jan (Bob & Denise Lane).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** Several reports were received. Ben Warner and Dan Sanders provided indisputable documentation of two birds in Lakewood Cemetery, *Cuyahoga*, on 13 Dec. In the Oak



**Figure 11.** Yellow-rumped Warbler annual totals for Ohio Christmas Bird Counts. Other than an enormous spike in 1998 and 1999, numbers fluctuate annually but overall remain fairly constant. However, numbers have been on an upward trajectory over the past three winters and it will be interesting to see if this pattern continues. A study by scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Duke University demonstrated that increased levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere have caused a demonstrable proliferation of Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) throughout the warbler's range (Mohan et al. 2006). As the long-persistent fruit of this plant is a staple source of winter food for Yellow-rumped Warblers, there should be more resources available to support wintering warblers.

Openings of **Lucas** on 25 Dec, Geoff Cottier reported “several Bohemian Waxwings” among a group of Cedar Waxwings. Finally, John Pogacnik reports “one and possibly three” from his **Lake** residence on 12 Jan.

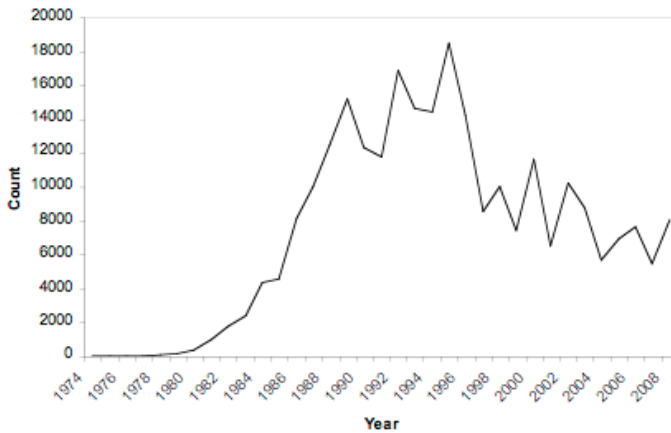
**Cedar Waxwing:** Significant concentrations included 400 “eating non-native honeysuckle” in **Lucas** on 03 Dec (Elliot Tramer), 220 in **Tuscarawas** on 26 Dec (Ed Schlabach), and at least 100 in **Wayne** on 12 Jan (Su Snyder). A respectable 4,015 were reported statewide from CBCs, significantly above the 3,279 annual average that has been reported over the last

decade.

**Cape May Warbler:** One visiting a feeder near Walnut Creek in **Holmes** was present from late November until mid-January (*vide* Bruce Glick). There are at least a dozen other winter records.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** A grand total of 866 were reported from CBCs this year, the highest number recorded in 10 years. Figure 11 presents annual CBC totals for the past 30 years, and some comments on possible future changes in the wintering status of this species.

**Pine Warbler:** Five were found on CBCs, a new all-time high. At



**Figure 14.** House Finch Christmas Bird Count history from the first record (one bird) in winter 1973-74. Although the first Ohio record dates to 1964, House Finches were not widely observed until the early 1970s. This graph shows the dramatic increase, peaking with a high of 18,475 in winter 1994-95. Numbers have slipped downward since. This is a common pattern with introduced species; in the case of House Finches the disease mycoplasmal conjunctivitis may have played a role in reducing populations.

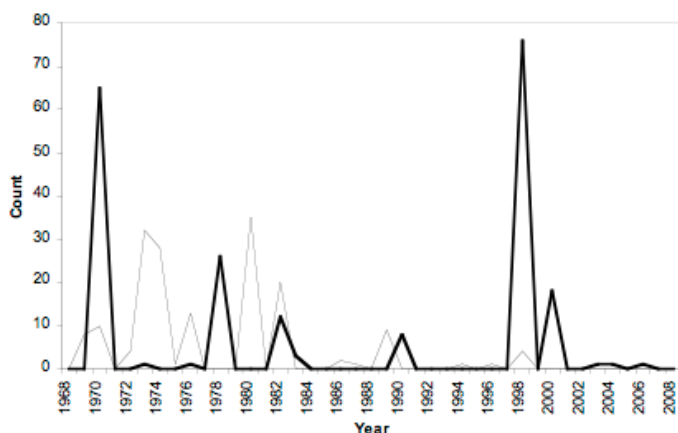
average numbers were reported this winter. One was found on the Wilmot CBC on 14 Dec, two were noted in **Sandusky** on 16 Dec (reported to <http://www.rarebird.org>; observer's name not provided), five turned up on the Kingston CBC on 02 Jan (Doreene Linzell), one was in **Franklin** on 12 Feb (Bill Heck), and one was discovered in **Lucas** on 22 Feb (Phil Chaon). An impressive 50 were reported on the Cadiz CBC on 30 Dec; this tally is unusual, and documentation of this noteworthy record should be provided.

**Common Grackle:** A near-record 263,250 were reported on CBCs, and the bulk was in a massive roost within the Kingston CBC area. An estimated 257,272 were tallied (Bill Whan). The next largest CBC

concentration was 2,018 on the Buckeye Lake CBC on 15 Dec. About 1,000 were in **Pike** on 27 Jan (Doug Overacker).

**Brown-headed Cowbird:** The 12,152 reported statewide on CBCs was the largest total since winter 2001-02 and well above long-term averages. A flock of 2,000 was noted in **Wayne** on 19 Jan (Su Snyder).

**Pine Grosbeak:** The bird in **Lucas** that first appeared on 21 Nov and was discovered by Matt Anderson (and was later joined by another) remained until at least 03 Jan. An amazing five were reported from the Wooster CBC on 22 Dec, and one was reported as being present during count week on the Lake Erie Islands CBC on 17 Dec. Documentation is requested for the latter reports.



**Figure 15.** History of Red and White-winged Crossbills in Ohio from the past 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data. Red Crossbill is the thin line; White-winged Crossbill is the thick line. Cyclical irruptions used to be much more frequent and have largely ceased. An exception was the winter of 1997-98, when 76 White-winged Crossbills were recorded on CBCs. Large-scale alterations to the vast boreal forests of Canada and the northern United States have probably reduced overall crossbill numbers, and, consequently, the periodic cyclical invasions that once occurred. Some “change” factors may include increased fire suppression, spruce budworm control, and greater tracts of forests being logged.

**Purple Finch:** A good winter for this irruptive, as many guessed it would be when they began appearing last September. The CBC total of 382 was the highest since winter 1989-90, when 416 were recorded. Purple finches display an interesting long-term winter pattern that is fairly cyclical, but overall winter numbers seem to be declining (Figure 13).

**House Finch:** Although still a common species, house finches may be exhibiting the boom and bust pattern that characterizes a number of introduced species. This year’s statewide CBC total of 8,072 was the highest since winter 2002-03, but long-term data show a steady decline (Figure 14).



Many an Ohio birder got their life Hoary Redpoll courtesy of this individual, who frequented Levi Yoder’s Holmes County feeders for much of January and February. Bruce Glick took this photograph on 13 Feb. Note the tiny, stubby bill and overall pale frosty plumage. Separating the two redpolls is anything but straightforward, though, and some evidence suggests specific species recognition for the two may not be warranted.



*Common Redpolls were widespread this winter, with records from over half of Ohio's 88 counties. These six were stuffing themselves on thistle seed at John Pogacnik's feeder in Lake County on 26 Dec.*

**Red Crossbill:** Quite scarce, with the only reports being of a flock of 16 in *Hamilton* on 14 Dec (Wayne Wauligman), and five or six in Cuyahoga on 30 Dec (Chris Spagnoli).

**White-winged Crossbill:** Only one was recorded, a bird that frequented John Pogacnik's feeders in *Lake* from 02 Dec until early February. Figure 15 shows the long-term history of both crossbill species.

**Common Redpoll:** A banner winter. A total of 482 was reported on CBCs, and hundreds of others were tallied. Figure 16 shows their distribution by county and Figure 17 shows the 30-year history of this species as recorded on CBCs.

**Hoary Redpoll:** Observers

fervently seek out Hoary Redpolls anytime there is a large winter irruption of Common Redpolls, and a cooperative, long-lingering individual provided the cure. One appeared at Levi Yoder's feeders in *Holmes* in early January and remained through the end of the season, offering excitement for the hundreds of birders that visited.

**Pine Siskin:** A total of 325 was reported from CBCs statewide, and dozens of others were reported throughout the season. Figure 18 shows a long-term picture of this species' winter status.

**American Goldfinch:** This species apparently continues to increase. The statewide total of 14,055 on CBCs is a new record, and CBC





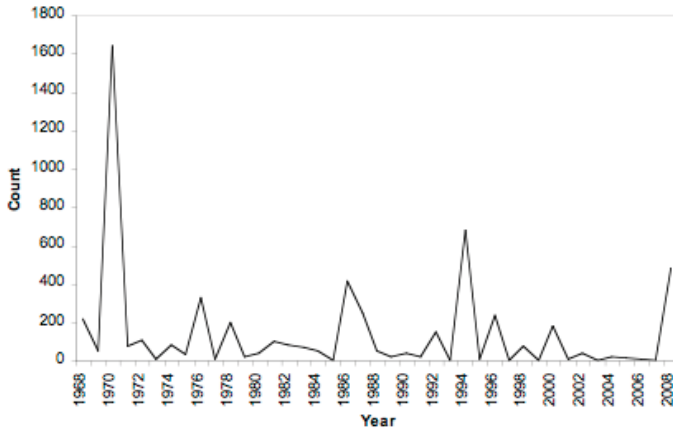
**Figure 16.** County distribution of Common Redpolls in Ohio during the winter season. As with Northern Shrike, this species occurred in more southern counties than usual. Map courtesy of Ethan Kistler.

annual averages show a clear spike over the preceding two decades. The annual average from winters 1978-79 to 1987-88 was 8,794; from winters 1988-89 to 1997-98 it was 8,300; and for the last ten years the annual average has been 10,753.

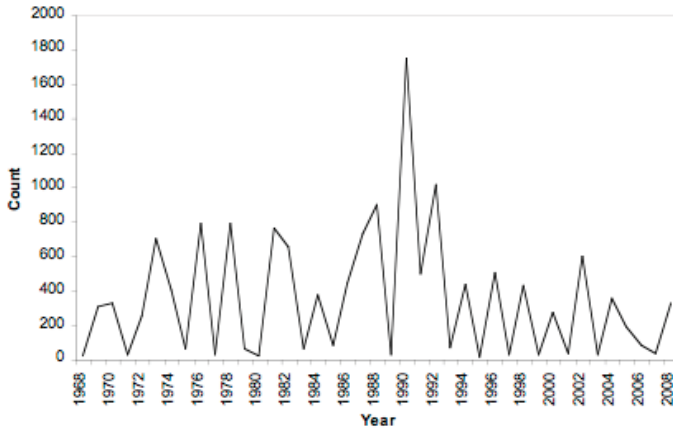
**European Goldfinch:** A free-flying bird was frequenting a *Cuyahoga* feeder in early to mid-December. Not often reported in the wild in Ohio, and this bird probably didn't last long (Wallie Mueller, Carol Takacs). This species has not been accepted on Ohio's list, as all records

are of recent escapes and it is not established. Nonetheless it can be important to take note of such waifs should their future status change.

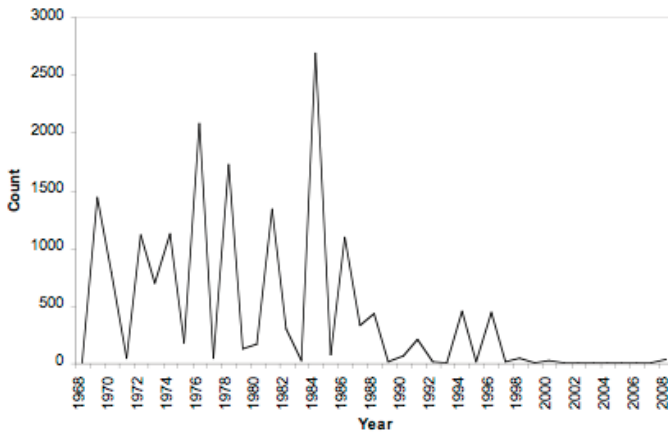
**Evening Grosbeak:** The CBC total of 29 was the best tally in 10 years, but it pales in comparison with totals from the "good old days" (Figure 19). Others reported were two in *Belmont* on 26 Jan (Glenn Crippen, Rob Kaminski), and four in *Richland* on 02 Feb (Norman Lowe) that remained for most of the month.



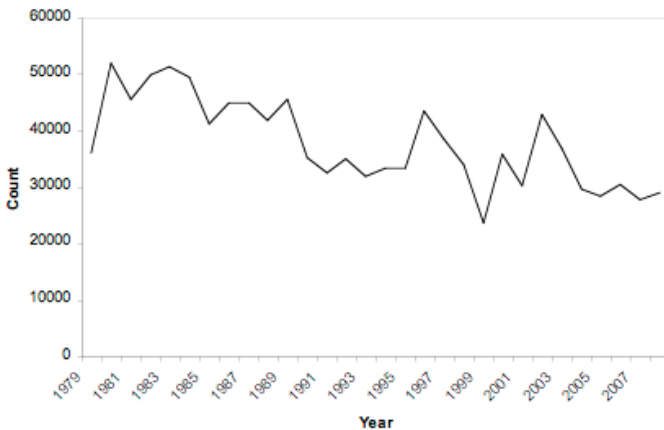
**Figure 17.** The past 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data for Common Redpoll in Ohio. Wintering numbers have fared better than boreal irruptives that are more forest-dependent and narrower in their food requirements, such as both crossbills and Evening Grosbeak.



**Figure 18.** The past 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data for Pine Siskin in Ohio. Total numbers have shown a slight decline over the past decade, but still remain higher and irruptions more stable than in most other boreal species. Pine Siskins tend to have a uniform pattern of irruptions into Ohio, with peaks every other year.



**Figure 19.** The past 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data for Evening Grosbeak in Ohio. Until the late 1980s there were large regular irruptions that, in general, occurred every other year. Not since winter 1985-86 has the total exceeded 1,000 birds. Former high tallies include 2,077 in 1975-76; 1,328 in 1980-81; and 2,686 in 1983-84. Eastward expansion of this species through much of the 1900s is well documented. A common reason cited for occupation of new territory is widespread plantings of Box-elder (*Acer negundo*), a tree that retains fruit throughout winter and provides a stable food source. However, Box-elder is an abundant tree in Ohio in the wild and there seem to be more bird feeders available than ever before, so food sources should not be an issue. The demise of Evening Grosbeaks is a mystery.



**Figure 20.** Thirty-year history of House Sparrow in Ohio, according to statewide Christmas Bird Count data. The overall picture is one of a slow decline. If this pattern holds, not too many bird watchers should be overly upset.



**House Sparrow:** Very few people provide notes or records about House Sparrows. 29,040 were tallied statewide on CBCs, making it the sixth most abundant species found. However, according to CBC data, numbers have declined markedly over the past three decades (Figure 20).

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The editorial staff of *The Ohio Cardinal* offers their sincere thanks to the 350 individuals and organizations who made their field data available through reports submitted directly to us as well as through online resources managed by the Ohio Ornithological Society and other means.

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