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Spring 2008

The OHIO CARDINAL

Devoted to the Study and Appreciation of Ohio's Birdlife

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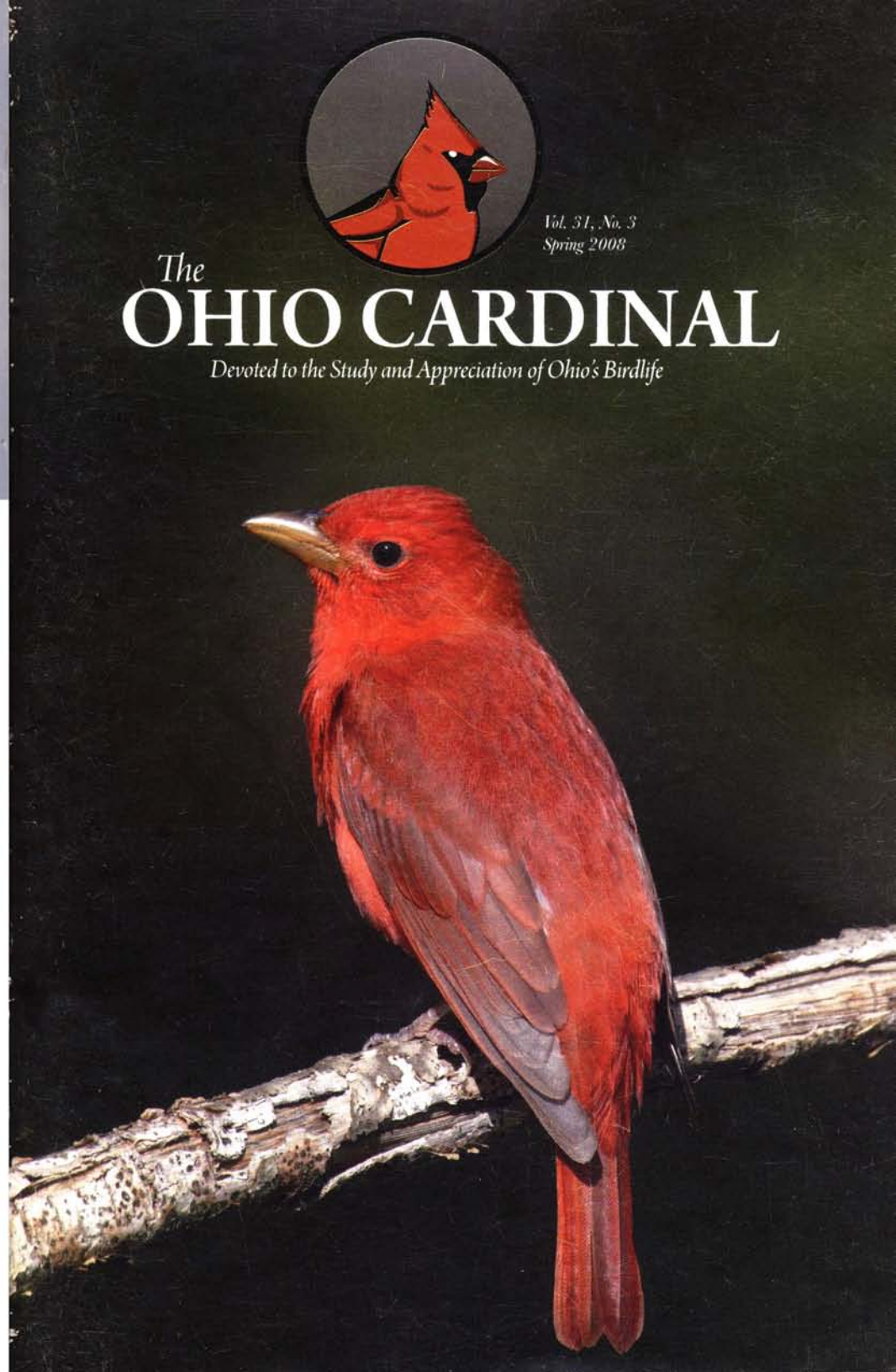
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The Ohio Cardinal is a quarterly publication devoted to the study and appreciation of Ohio's birdlife.

On the cover:

Summer Tanager is a common member of Ohio's bird fauna, and this spring included several overshoots to northern Ohio beyond their normal haunts in the state. This male was photographed by Robert Royse at Zaleski State Forest on 04 May 2008.

Spring 2008 Overview

By Gabe Leidy

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There is no such thing as a *typical* season, and if there were, these season reports would serve little purpose. It is the unpredictability as much as the predictability that makes birding such an entertaining and rewarding hobby. Spring 2008 served up a bit of both, being lackluster in some respects but phenomenal in others. For example, warbler migration was not characterized by impressive waves of arriving migrants, but waterfowl numbers set new records.

This March was a blustery one, with 18 days' highs not registering over 37 degrees in Cleveland. Overall the month was 3.5 degrees colder than usual in that city, with similar trends in the other major cities around the state. This left Lake Erie mostly ice-covered during March and into early April in some parts, bringing together immense numbers of bay ducks and waterfowl wherever open water was to be found. April had near average temperatures around the state, with just four snow days in the northern portion of the state (the last was on 14 April). Warm southerly breezes throughout the night accompanied the largest movements, most notably on 17 and 26 April. Below average precipitation during April was followed by May showers this year,

giving us what may have been the gloomiest May in recent memory. Weather records show rain on 20 days in Cleveland, including a memorable 12-day streak 07 to 18 May, and 16 days in the Toldeo area. The first fully sunny day of the month in Columbus was 23 May, and the sun shone all day a total of five times in the northeast. Showers are eagerly anticipated during spring migration, because they have the ability to ground tremendous numbers of birds and cause fallout conditions. Few nights this year presented ideal migratory conditions, so many warblers and other migrant landbirds ended up trickling through the state. Perhaps the strongest flight this season came 26 May, when skies cleared, southerly winds billowed, and Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO) banders at Navarre Marsh in northwest Ohio banded their highest total of the season.

Twelve review species were reported this season. Many, such as Glossy Ibis, White-faced Ibis, and Mississippi Kite, we have come to expect in recent years. Perhaps the most exciting rarities came from Buck Creek State Park in Clark County, where Brown Pelican and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (photographed), were spotted two days apart, though neither proved to be trackable. Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC) decisions on all review species are forthcoming.

The March waterbird passage was phenomenal compared with recent years, especially for diving duck species. The following high counts tell the story quite nicely: