

Spring 2009 Overview

By **Craig Caldwell**

1270 W. Melrose Drive
Westlake, OH 44145
craig_caldwell@sbcglobal.net

Does any season's weather qualify as "normal"? Early March brought single-digit temperatures to the southeastern part of the state, but there were also many record-high temperatures in both March and April (some, such as Painesville's 87° F on 04 April, were five degrees above the previous record.) Conversely, there were temperatures around the freezing mark throughout the state during the second week of May, setting many record-low temperatures.

The northern quarter of the state had heavy rains between 08 and 11 March; some single-day measurements were double the previous records for their dates. The rest of the state had below-average rainfall that month. April had rainfall at 75% to 200% of average in no particular pattern, and there were even a few slightly increased snowfall records set in the northeast. May was wetter than average in the southeast and much drier elsewhere. (Weather data are from the National Weather Service: <http://water.weather.gov/precip/>, and LongRange Weather: <http://www.extremeweatherrecords.com/Records/default.aspx>.)

The individual species accounts include many notes of earlier-than-usual arrivals, which can probably be attributed to the strong and persistent south winds in late April. Swallows

were particularly noteworthy as early arrivals. There were unusually high numbers reported of the sought-after Eurasian Wigeon, White-winged Scoter, and Long-tailed Duck. The many Willets seen, with a sprinkling of less-common shorebirds, made us long for more habitat for their stopovers. An unusually high number of gulls typically associated with Lake Erie (especially Glaucous Gull) were found at inland reservoirs and lakes.

Black-billed Cuckoos and several owls were reported in unusually high numbers, and the large counts of Rusty Blackbirds were heartening. Winter visitors also lingered: Lapland Longspurs put on a show, stragglers from the winter's White-winged Crossbill invasion remained into May, and there were multiple reports of nesting Pine Siskins.

In the following accounts, review species (those which are not on the state's Core List) are underlined. There were reports of 15 review species, with as many as six sightings of one of them, Kirtland's Warbler. Unfortunately, five of the species and some sightings of the other 10 were not documented to the Ohio Bird Records Committee, so few if any details are available for future use. Reports of sightings whose documentation has been accepted by the OBRC include the names of the observers; those for which no documentation was submitted or whose documentation was not considered sufficient are listed anonymously.

The committee urges birders to report all sightings of Review List species, of Core List species found at unusual times, of nesting by birds previously not known to nest in the state, and, of course, sightings of

birds never before found in Ohio. Information on how to document rarities is available at <http://www.ohiobirds.org/records/documentation.php>.

Taxonomic order and nomenclature are those of the *Check-List of North American Birds*, 7th Edition (1998), as updated through the 50th Supplement (2009). This document is published by the North American Classification Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union and is available at <http://www.aou.org/checklist/north/print.php>.

The following abbreviations are used in these accounts:

Bellevue skyponds = wetland region spanning **Sandusky** and **Seneca**

Bobolink area = an area encompassed by 12 counties: Ashland, Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Knox, Muskingum, Richland, Start, Tuscarawas, and Wayne. This area is named for the quarterly ornithological journal if the same name that serves this region.

BSBO = Black Swamp Bird Observatory, **Ottawa**

CVNP = Cuyahoga Valley National Park; spans multiple counties, primarily in **Cuyahoga** and **Summit**

Deer Creek = Deer Creek WA, spanning **Fayette**, **Madison**, and **Pickaway**

fide = on the authority of (used for second-hand reports)

Funk = Funk Bottoms WA, **Ashland** and **Wayne**

Hoover = Hoover Reservoir, **Delaware** and **Franklin**

Killbuck = Killbuck Marsh WA, **Holmes** and **Wayne**

Killdeer Plains = Killdeer Plains WA, **Wyandot**

Magee = Magee Marsh WA, including the boardwalk (**Lucas**) and the causeway (**Ottawa**)

Metzger = Metzger Marsh WA, **Lucas**

m. obs. = multiple observers

Oak Openings = a region composed of multiple parks, including Oak Openings MP, spanning **Lucas**, **Henry**, and **Fulton**

ONWR = Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, **Lucas** and **Ottawa**

RBA = Rare Bird Alert summaries shared by phone messages and e-mail

SF = state forest

Shawnee SF = spans **Scioto** and **Athens**

SP = state park

SNP = State Nature Preserve

WA = Wildlife Area

Zaleski SF = mostly **Vinton**, partly in **Athens**