

COMMENTS ON THE SEASON

By Craig Caldwell

The major weather event of Fall, 2012, was Superstorm Sandy, which devastated the mid-Atlantic shores at the end of Oct. Its effect on Ohio was secondary: A northern low, which would otherwise have quickly passed over us to the east, stalled here. It produced extremely high winds in the Lake Erie counties and somewhat south of them, but very little rain. Sandy's moisture did penetrate far inland through West Virginia and collided with the stalled system to drop snow in several of our southeastern counties.

Aug rainfall was on the whole less than normal though stations in a band from *Mercer* and *Van Wert* to *Ottawa* and east along the Lake Erie shore had up to triple their average amounts. The southernmost counties had as little as 25% of their historical rainfall norms. All 30 daily record rainfall highs were only small increases. Sep by contrast was the third wettest on record. A wide band through the middle of the state and into the northeast was deluged with up to 15 inches of rain during the month, up to four times some stations' averages. Many of the 57 new daily records more than doubled the previous ones.

Oct was also one of the 10 wettest in the 118 years of data for the month, even before the rather minimal contribution by Sandy. Very little of the state had below-average rainfall and the Sandusky to Cleveland area received three to four times its average. Seventy-nine daily records were set, but most were small increases. Nov, which opened just after the Sandy-related winds, was another contrast: It was the fourth driest on record. Oddly, the whole northeast part of the country, despite Sandy's rain, also experienced a very dry month. Few Ohio stations received more than half of their normal precipitation and most recorded well below that. The two new daily rainfall records were both below one inch (their total amounts, not increases) and there were no snow records.

Aug temperatures were near average and only six daily record highs were set. The greatest increase was at the OSU station, where a new high of 96° on 31 Aug was four degrees above that date's previous high. Sep, Oct, and Nov monthly average temperatures were all below normal, at about the 30th percentile of the 118 months. Twelve record daily highs and 29 record lows were set; most were small changes. Weather data are from the National Weather Service (<http://water.weather.gov/precip/>) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/maps.php> and <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/extremes/records/>).

Waterfowl and passerine migrations mostly followed their historical norms, though of course there are always a few early arrivals and late last departures. Very likely, the Sandy-induced winds pushed many birds from the northern counties but the overall effect on them seems to have been minimal here. Sandy carried many birds far north of their usual haunts but did not bring them inland to us.

Sherrie Duris said that "Maumee Bay State Park is an owl haven!" She saw or heard five species there (Eastern Screech-, Great Horned, Long-eared, Short-eared, and Northern Saw-whet) between 12 and 15 Nov. And that week wasn't unique – she had recorded the same five species there between 04 and 07 Apr 2011.

Conneaut remains a reliable shorebird-sighting location, though many don't stay there long. Thanks to persistent

southwest winds in Aug and Sep, and now-easy access, the Crane Creek estuary ("CCE") contributed many sightings in those two months, as did several other sites along the western basin shore. The Findlay Reservoirs also hosted a variety of shorebirds; Robert Sams' regular visits there provided many notable sightings. The Lorain impoundment had closed in late summer 2011 to raise its dikes. More dredge spoil was added and it had not returned to a shorebird-friendly state by this fall.

Jean Iron and Ron Pittaway of Ontario (Canada) Field Ornithologists provide an annual winter finch forecast. This year they noted that conifers and other favored seed-producing trees had poor crops and so predicted major southward movements of the birds which depend on them. They were so right! This fall opened the biggest finch invasion since 2008-09. See the accounts for crossbills, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, and Evening Grosbeak for details.

Ohio has 296 bird species which are year-round residents, breeders, regular migrants, or regular winter visitors; I call this Ohio's Core List. This *Cardinal* issue contains reports for 291 of them – Greater White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, King Rail, Snowy Owl, and Chuck-wills-widow, if present, went undetected. More than 100 other species are infrequent visitors (some with only a single record). They, with all the species which have never appeared in the state, constitute the Review List, which is maintained by the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC).

This issue includes accounts for 317 species, three hybrids, and seven genera or higher level taxons. The OBRC received or downloaded documentation for 26 review species, the highest number for a season under the current Review List. Their names are underlined in the Species Accounts section. Records for 10 of the 26 were accepted and attributed to the reporter in the accounts. The reports of the other 16, and additional reports of five of the 10 accepted species, are in process. Eight review species (Common Eider, Brown Pelican, White-faced Ibis, California Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Common Raven, Cave Swallow, and Harris's Sparrow) were reported but not documented for the Committee. (Some of them also had documented reports.) Accounts for Trumpeter Swan (an introduced species with no truly wild birds ever documented here) and two escapes from captivity are also provided but they are not included in the numbers of Review List species above.

The Records Committee and this editor urge 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>. Undocumented reports of Review List species are not published in the *Cardinal*.

Data for the following Species Accounts come from reports submitted directly to the *Cardinal*: eBird (<http://ebird.org/content/ebird/>); the Ohio-birds listserv (<http://birding.aba.org/maillist/OH/>); rarebird.org (<http://rarebird.org/forum/default.asp>); reports to the OBRC; and *The Bobolink*. The last source is courtesy of its publisher, Robert Hershberger. Every county except *Jackson*, *Monroe*, *Morgan*, and (curiously) *Scioto* contributed sightings, though a few others apparently had only one or two visits by birders. In contrast, summer birders had generated reports from every county, a fact which I neglected to note last issue.

Taxonomic order and nomenclature follow the *Check-*

List of *North American Birds*, 7th Edition (1998) as updated through the 53rd Supplement (2012). 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>. County names are in bold italics. Locations whose counties are of the same name, for example Ashtabula (city) and Delaware Wildlife Area, usually do not have the counties repeated. County names for sites described in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus are also omitted. Shortened names and a few sets of initials are used for locations and organizations which occur repeatedly; these abbreviations are listed here. The term "fide" is used in some citations; it means "in trust of" and is used where the reporter was not the observer.

Abbreviations:

Armleder Park = a Cincinnati city park on the Little Miami River, **Hamilton**
 Blendon Woods = Blendon Woods Metro Park, **Franklin**
 The Bowl = a limited-access area near the **Harrison** airport.
 BRAS = Black River Audubon Society
 BSBO = Black Swamp Bird Observatory
 Buck Creek = Buck Creek State Park, **Clark**
 Burke Airport = Cleveland Burke Lakefront Airport, **Cuyahoga**
 Caesar Creek = Caesar Creek State Park, **Warren**
 CCE = the Crane Creek Estuary in ONWR, **Lucas**
 CLNP = Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (the former Dike 14), **Cuyahoga**
 Conneaut = the mudflats to the west of Conneaut Harbor, **Ashtabula**
 CP = County Park
 CPNWR = Cedar Point National Wildlife Refuge, **Lucas**
 CVNP = Cuyahoga Valley National Park, **Cuyahoga** and (mostly) **Summit**
 Darby Creek = Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, **Franklin**
 East Fork = East Fork State Park, **Clermont**
 East Harbor = East Harbor State Park, **Ottawa**
 Edgewater = the Edgewater unit of Cleveland Lakefront State Park, **Cuyahoga**
 eTT = eBird Trail Tracker data entry kiosk, usually found at National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks
 Fernald = Fernald Preserve, **Butler** and **Hamilton**
 Findlay Reservoirs = several contiguous water bodies east of town in **Hancock**
 Headlands = Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve, Headlands Beach State Park, and adjoining waters, **Lake**
 Honda Wetlands = a unit of Glacier Ridge MetroPark, **Union**
 Hoover NP = Hoover Nature Preserve, **Delaware**
 Hoover Reservoir = the northern 80% is in **Delaware**, but the dam is in **Franklin**
 Kelleys Island = the island and adjoining waters, **Erie**
 Killdeer = Killdeer Plains State Wildlife Area; a bit is in **Marion** but it's mostly in **Wyandot**
 LaDue = LaDue Reservoir, **Geauga**
 Lorain = the dredge spoil impoundment east of downtown, **Lorain**, unless otherwise noted
 m. obs. = Multiple Observers
 Magee = Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, **Lucas** (north of the causeway) and **Ottawa**
 Maumee Bay = Maumee Bay State Park, **Lucas**
 McClure's Marsh = a private holding near Muddy Creek Bay, **Sandusky**

Metzger = Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area, **Lucas**
 Miami Whitewater = Miami Whitewater Forest County Park, **Hamilton**
 Mohican = Mohican State Forest and State Park. Many trails cross the boundaries so some reports include sightings from both.
 Mohican SF = Mohican State Forest, **Ashland**
 Mohican SP = Mohican State Park, (mostly) **Ashland** and (slightly) **Richland**
 Mosquito Lake = Mosquito Creek Lake, also called Mosquito Creek Reservoir, **Trumbull**
 MP = Metro Park or MetroPark depending on the system
 Navarre = Navarre Marsh Unit of Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, **Ottawa**
 NC = Nature Center
 NP = Nature Preserve, except as part of CVNP
 NWR = National Wildlife Refuge
 OBBA II = Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II
 OOPMP = Oak Openings Preserve MetroPark, **Lucas**
 ONWR = Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, **Lucas** and **Ottawa**
 Pickerington Ponds = Pickerington Ponds Metro Park, **Fairfield** and **Franklin**
 Pipe Creek = Pipe Creek Wildlife Area, outside Sandusky in **Erie**
 Pleasant Hill Lake = Pleasant Hill Lake, **Ashland** and **Richland**; the dam is in **Ashland**
 Rocky River Park = a Lake Erie-side location in that city, **Cuyahoga**
 Sandy Ridge = Sandy Ridge Reservation, **Lorain**
 Shawnee = Shawnee State Forest, **Scioto**, unless otherwise noted
 Shawnee Lookout = Shawnee Lookout County Park, **Hamilton**
 SNP = State Nature Preserve
 South Creek = the mouth of the creek at Muddy Creek Bay, **Sandusky**, unless noted otherwise
 SP = State Park
 Spring Grove = Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, **Hamilton**
 Springville Marsh = Springville Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Seneca**
 SWA = State Wildlife Area
 TWC = The Wilderness Center, **Stark**
 Villa Angela = the Villa Angela unit of Cleveland Lakefront State Park, **Cuyahoga**
 WA = Wildlife Area
 Wake Robin Trail = a boardwalk in Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Lake**
 Wendy Park = a lakeshore Cleveland park, **Cuyahoga**
 Winous Point = Winous Point Shooting Club, **Ottawa**

Errata:

Sharp-eyed John Herman noted in the Summer 2012 issue that the Common Grackles reported in Springfield Marsh were actually in Springville Marsh and that the bottom photo on page 140 was of a Dickcissel, not a Chickcissel. Bill Hall pointed out that Smith Tract CP, **Hamilton** (a Summer 2012 Common Loon location), is better known as the Kilby Road gravel pits, where loons were reported several times.