

COMMENTS ON THE SEASON

By Craig Caldwell

Temperatures in Mar were below average, with the statewide mean, high, and low ranging between the 25th and 35th percentiles. Statewide, precipitation was a bit above average but varied considerably. The southern quarter of the state received 150 to 200% of its usual amount and the middle half between 90 and 200%, but the northwest and lakeshore received from less than half to about 90% of their norms.

In Apr, the average, high, and low temperatures statewide were all in the upper third of the 121 years with data but did not break into the highest 20%. Precipitation was above average everywhere but the northwest corner, which received less than 90% of its norm. Rainfall in the rest of the state was up to double its usual amount except for the Portsmouth area, which was soaked with three to four times its average.

May was among our hottest ever. The average temperature was our 11th highest, part of a heat wave which affected the entire northeast quadrant of the country and set many records in New England. The statewide average minimum and maximum followed suit; they were our 14th and ninth highest, respectively. Cleveland and Akron tied or set several record high temperatures between 07 and 09 May. The lower than average rainfall overall brought no relief. The southern half of the state received from less than 25% of its norm to only about 90%. Paradoxically, most of the northern half received between 90 and 150% of its average rainfall and small areas in the northeast and northwest were drenched with up to triple their usual amount.

Weather data are from the National Weather Service (<http://water.weather.gov/precip/>), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/temp-and-precip/maps.php> and <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/extremes/records/>), and the *Plain Dealer*.

Andy Jones posed an interesting question: Are we seeing more American White Pelicans because they are more common than 20 years ago, or because there are more observers? He suspected the latter, which I agree is likely a part of the answer. However, we found that eBird data show larger numbers are wintering further north along the Atlantic coast than before, which could contribute to more pelicans crossing Ohio on the way to their nesting areas in the middle of the continent. Granted, eBird usage is also growing, so the “more observers” phenomenon may also

contribute to the apparent range expansion.

Andy also pointed out the dearth of good shorebird habitat in the northwest this spring. A field on Corduroy Road across from Meinke Marina in *Lucas* might have been the best for the few days in May it held water; several rarities spent time there. Away from the northwest, Conneaut and Lost Bridge continue to provide shorebird sightings. Their being on a lake and a river, respectively, means they're far less dependent on our increasingly erratic rain events to provide stopover habitat. Indian Lake, too, was hospitable.

The first sightings of several warblers, and of a few other species, were up to a month earlier than their historical norms. Here's an opportunity for an aspiring researcher: Graph the arrival dates of our warblers over the last 30 years. Do Ohio data agree with that of many other areas in showing a trend to earlier arrivals? Anecdotal evidence says yes, but I'd like to see a rigorous analysis.

And speaking of research opportunities... Trumpeter Swans have been breeding in Ohio now since 1997, the year after the Division of Wildlife began releasing them in several wildlife areas. DOW data through 2012 show an almost steady increase in the number of nests and young since then (<http://wildlife.ohiodnr.gov/portals/wildlife/pdfs/research/population%20status%20report/trumpeterswannestingtable.pdf>). By now, some of the birds we see must be at least second-generation, and possibly third. Are they here to stay? They appear to be, but do the data support that assertion? Records committees in California and Florida, states which host many introduced and escaped exotics, have criteria for deciding if a species is established. Do Trumpeter Swans in Ohio meet those standards?

Every county produced reports for the second season in a row. Nine species (Turkey Vulture, Downy Woodpecker, American Robin, European Starling, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and House Sparrow) were found in all 88. Another nine species (Canada Goose, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, and Gray Catbird) came up one short. Thirty-seven species were seen in 80 to 86 counties.

This issue of the *Cardinal* includes accounts of 304 species, a bit lower number than is typical for the season. There are also 12 accounts at the

family or genus level, 12 of hybrids, and four of subspecies and color morphs. The hybrid count was the highest of the last several years and I attribute that number to the continually increasing skills of Ohio's birders. Seven of the hybrids were waterfowl, a family whose propensity for inter-species coupling is well known. The rest of the pairings were two of gulls, two of warblers, and one of sparrows.

Eighteen of the entries are Review Species, birds whose occurrences (generally speaking) are rare and unpredictable. One of them is Kirtland's Warbler, which for many years has been an annual visitor to the Lake Erie shore while returning to its Michigan breeding grounds from the Bahamas. It remains on the Review List because it is a species of special conservation concern though it otherwise meets the criteria for a move to the Core List. Five individuals were reported, but only two were formally documented for the Ohio Bird Records Committee (OBRC). A third was informally documented through postings to various internet venues, but the other two were merely announced and therefore will not enter the official record.

In addition to Kirtland's Warbler, five other Review List species had both documented and undocumented reports. The Editors and the OBRC commend the birders who formally documented their sightings of those five and of the three species all of whose sightings were formally reported. The OBRC received nothing directly about sightings of nine species; internet postings about some of them have enough information for evaluation but a few will remain in "reported but undocumented" limbo.

The headers of Review Species accounts are underlined. No observers' names are mentioned unless the OBRC has voted on the documentation, and only accepted records are attributed. The Records Committee and this editor urge birders to formally 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>.

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/mail-list/OH>), *rarebird.org* (<http://rarebird.org/forum/default.asp>), and the Cincinnati Bird Sightings Log (<http://cincinnatibirds.com/goodbird/sighting.php>). Data from *The Bobolink* were not available at press time and if possible will be in-

cluded as an addendum in a future issue.

Taxonomic order and nomenclature follow the *Check-List of North American Birds*, 7th Edition (1998) as updated through the 55th Supplement (2014). 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, Columbus, and Dayton 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:

Alum Creek = Alum Creek Reservoir, *Delaware*, unless otherwise noted
 Armlerder Park = a Cincinnati city park on the Little Miami River, *Hamilton*
 Bayshore = a fishing-access point by the eponymous power plant, *Lucas*
 BBS = the North American Breeding Bird Survey, a joint project of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the Canadian Wildlife Service
 Berlin Lake = Berlin Lake (or Reservoir), *Ma-honing* and *Portage*
 Big Island = Big Island Wildlife Area, *Marion*
 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, *Ottawa* (<http://www.bsbo.org>)
 Buck Creek = Buck Creek State Park, *Clark*
 Burke Airport = Cleveland Burke Lakefront Airport, *Cuyahoga*
 Caesar Creek = Caesar Creek State Park, *Warren*
 CCE = Crane Creek Estuary, *Lucas* and *Ottawa*, viewable from both ONWR and the CCE Trail which originates at Magee
 Chapel Drive = a road off Ohio 83 south of Cumberland in *Noble* which traverses grasslands
 Clear Fork = Clear Fork Reservoir (or Lake), partly in *Morrow* but most of the birding is done in the larger *Richland* Section.
 CLNP = Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (the former Dike 14), *Cuyahoga*

CNC = Cincinnati Nature Center, a non-governmental entity whose Long Branch Farm and Rowe Woods units are in **Clermont**

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**

Deer Creek = the State Park is in **Pickaway**, the Wildlife Area is in **Fayette**, and Deer Creek Lake is in both but mostly **Pickaway**

East Fork = East Fork State Park, **Clermont**

East Harbor = East Harbor State Park, **Ottawa**

Eastlake Power = the Lake Erie viewpoint east of the First Energy plant in Eastlake, **Lake**

Edgewater = the Edgewater unit of Cleveland Lakefront Metroparks, **Cuyahoga**

Fernald = Fernald Preserve, **Butler** and **Hamilton**

Findlay Reservoirs = several contiguous water bodies east of town in **Hancock**

Funk = Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, **Ashland** and (mostly) **Wayne**

Headlands = Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve, Headlands Beach State Park, and adjoining waters, **Lake**

Holden = Holden Arboretum, **Lake**, except for its Stebbins Gulch unit in **Geauga**

Hoover NP = Hoover Nature Preserve, **Delaware**

Hoover Reservoir = the northern 80% is in **Delaware**, but the dam is in **Franklin**

Indian Lake = Indian Lake State Park, **Logan**

Jones Preserve = Jones Preserve at Long Point, on Kelleys Island, **Erie**

Kelleys Island = the island and adjoining waters, **Erie**

Killbuck = Killbuck State Wildlife Area, **Holmes** and **Wayne**

Killdeer = Killdeer Plains State Wildlife Area; a bit is in **Marion** but it's mostly in **Wyandot**

LaDue = LaDue Reservoir, **Geauga**

Lake Erie Bluffs = a **Lake** Metroparks parcel whose popularity among birders is blooming.

Lake Hope/Zaleski = Lake Hope State Park and surrounding Zaleski State Forest, **Vinton**

Lorain = the dredge spoil impoundment east of downtown in the city and county of the same name, unless otherwise noted

Lost Bridge = a Great Miami River crossing on Lawrenceburg Road near Elizabethtown, **Hamilton**, where a covered bridge was lost to fire in 1903

m. obs. = multiple observers

Magee = the boardwalk and immediate vicinity in Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, **Lucas**, unless otherwise noted. The northern third of the causeway is also in **Lucas**, the rest in **Ottawa**.

Maumee Bay = Maumee Bay State Park, **Lucas**, unless otherwise noted

Medusa = Medusa Marsh, **Erie**, an informally named and privately owned area between Sandusky and Bay View

Metzger = Metzger Marsh Wildlife Area, **Lucas**

Mill Creek = Mill Creek Wildlife Sanctuary, a limited-access area in **Mahoning**

Mohican = Mohican State Forest and State Park. Many trails cross the boundaries so some reports include sightings from both without distinction.

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**. Mosquito (Creek) Wildlife Area adjoins it.

MP = Metro Park, MetroPark, or Metropark depending on the system

NC = Nature Center

NF = National Forest

NP = Nature Preserve, except as part of CVNP

OBRC = Ohio Bird Records Committee

Old Highland Stone = that company's water-filled gravel pits, **Highland**

OOPMP = Oak Openings Preserve MetroPark, **Lucas**

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

ONWR Navarre = A non-public separate unit in **Ottawa** east of the main ONWR

Pickrel Creek = Pickrel Creek Wildlife Area, **Sandusky**

Pickerington Ponds = Pickerington Ponds Metro Park, **Fairfield** and **Franklin**

Pipe Creek = Pipe Creek Wildlife Area, in the city of Sandusky, **Erie**

Rocky Fork = Rocky Fork State Park, **Highland**

Sandy Ridge = Sandy Ridge Reservation, **Lorain**

Scranton Flats = a section of the Towpath Trail in Cleveland on the left bank of the Cuyahoga River

Seneca Lake = most of the lake and the (non-state) Park are in **Noble**, while the dam is in **Guernsey**

SF = State Forest

Shawnee = Shawnee State Forest, **Scioto**, unless otherwise noted

Shawnee Lookout = Shawnee Lookout County Park, **Hamilton**

Sheldon Marsh = Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve, **Erie**
SNP = State Nature Preserve
SP = State Park
SWA = State Wildlife Area
Tar Hollow = Tar Hollow State Park and surrounding State Forest, mostly in **Ross** but with small portions in each of **Hocking** and **Vinton**
TNC = The Nature Conservancy (<http://www.nature.org>)
WA = Wildlife Area
Wendy Park = a lakeshore Cleveland park, **Cuyahoga**
Wilderness Road = a road which traverses Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, **Wayne**, and adjoining farmland
The Wilds = a limited-access big-mammal breeding and research facility in **Muskingum**, also used generically to include the surrounding reclaimed Ohio Power strip mines
Winous Point = Winous Point Shooting Club, **Ottawa**
Zaleski = Zaleski State Forest, **Vinton**