

I would like to begin by thanking the many contributors who greatly facilitated my transition from editor of the former Appalachian region to the new Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley region. I look forward to receiving contributions from even more birders throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia in the coming seasons.

Fall 2002 was a season of interesting contrasts, with numerous rare and exciting birds reported from across the Region, yet many contributors considered the overall migration lackluster or even dull. There was a major fallout of migrating waterfowl in late October, but otherwise many ducks, geese, and swans passed over inland areas essentially unnoticed. There were some exceptional shorebird sightings and counts, but several of the Region's traditional shorebird "hotspots" were uncharacteristically unproductive due to high water levels. A lack of any unusually heavy fallouts of Neotropical migrant passerines early in the season, and the near absence of any irruptive northern finches later in the season, was reflected in the results at three large banding stations in the area: the 3684 birds banded at the Allegheny Front Bird Observatory in northern West Virginia was just 66% of the long-term average; the 6620 birds banded at Black Swamp Bird Observatory in northwestern Ohio was down slightly from the 7172 the fall before; and at Carnegie Museum's Powdermill Nature Reserve, in the mountains of southwestern Pennsylvania, an overall banding total of 5663—although not much more than half the previous fall season's total of 10,637 birds—was within one standard deviation of the long-term (40-year) average. For readers who may be interested, these three banding stations maintain websites containing comprehensive summaries of their fall banding data (A.F.M.O.: <www.brooksbirdclub.org/afmo.html>; B.S.B.O.: <www.bsbbird.org>; P.N.R.: <www.westol.com/~banding>).

Abbreviations: A.F.M.O. (Allegheny Front Migration Observatory, Grant, WV); B.S.B.O. (Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Ottawa, OH); H.B.S.P. (Headlands Beach S.P., Lake, OH); O.N.W.R. (Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Ottawa/Lucas, OH); P.W.T. (Penn Warner Tract, Bucks, PA); P.O.R.C. (Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., Erie, PA); P.N.R. (Powdermill Nature Reserve, Rector, Westmoreland, PA).

LOONS THROUGH SPOONBILLS

The Red-throated Loon flight was heavier than usual across much of the Region: 22 were listed on a P.I.S.P. waterbird count 2-20 Nov (JMc), and, inland, 24 migrants stopped on Beltzville L., Carbon, PA 17 Oct (*vide* DDe) and 17 put down at Nockamixon S.P., Bucks, PA Nov 17 (BE). Although hundreds of Common Loons, victims of botulism, were found washed ashore along Pennsylvania's L. Erie beaches in late fall, some remarkable counts of living birds were made too, including 2000 at

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P.I.S.P. 18 Nov (DW) and 1400 on the 23rd (JMc); inland 768 were listed over Parma Heights, OH 19 Nov (SZ), and 200 passed by Hawk Mt., PA 23 Nov (R. Keller). The high count for Red-necked Grebe was 14 at Beltzville, PA 17 Oct (*vide* DDe). There were five records of Eared Grebe at Presque Isle 22 Oct—30 Nov (BC, JMc); in Ohio, one was at Cleveland 20 Nov+ (SZ, LR) and one at Rocky River, Cuyahoga 14 Nov (DO, D. Sanders).

Always a rare find on L. Erie, single Northern Gannets were sighted at Rocky River 16 Nov (K. Metcalf, E. Schlabach), H.B.S.P. 30 Nov (RHn, E. Bacik), and P.I.S.P. 30 Nov+ (JMc, m. ob., ph.). The only American White Pelican was reported at Pymatuning Res., Jamestown, PA 14 Oct (L. Armstrong). Even more of a rarity was an imm. Brown Pelican at the Toledo lighthouse 22 Aug—early Sep. (R. & B. Duktig, ph.); what was perhaps the same bird frequented Sandusky Bay and nearby L. Erie islands through 23 Sep (*vide* RHa). As many as 25,000 Double-crested Cormorants were estimated at Cedar Point N.W.R., Lukas, OH 28 Sep (G. Links); inland, 338 migrants were at Pymatuning 13 Oct (RFL), 275 passed Stone Mt. hawkwatch, Huntingdon, PA 21 Oct (*vide* GG), and 200 flew over Pipestem S.P., WV 31 Oct (JPh). A Great Cormorant was on the Delaware R., Bucks, PA 4 Oct (AM), and another was an unexpected find at the Conejohela Flats, Lancaster, PA 12 Oct (BS). An

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Anhinga was watched for several minutes from the Second Mt. hawkwatch, Lebanon, PA 18 Sep (DS, JB, JW, JG) for one of the very few state records.

A Great White Heron at Green Lane Res. 11-30 Aug was a first for se. Pennsylvania (DW, m. ob.). Great Egrets were in good numbers, especially in Ohio, where a high count of 395 was made at Medusa Marsh, Erie 12 Sep (B. Whan); 23 was a high count for Peace Valley Park, Bucks, PA 1 Aug (C. Crunkleton), and a late migrant stopped at Sand Creek Marsh, Wood, WV 21 Nov (JE). The 19 Snowy Egrets at O.N.W.R. 4 Aug represented an unusually good count (EP), as did 13 at Medusa Marsh 3 & 30 Aug (JHa, VF). The lone report of Tricolored Heron was of one at Memorial Lake S.P., Lebanon, PA 15-19 Oct (J.

Smith, R. Miller). The waders of the season, however, were the 4 imm. *Roseate Spoonbills* that appeared at Rocky Fork L., *Highland*, OH 20 Jul and remained until 3 Oct, with one lingering to 20 Oct (J. Holbrook, G. Fantetti, R. Channin, K. Phillips, m. ob., ph.).

WATERFOWL THROUGH RAPTORS

A *Pink-footed Goose* found at Core Creek Park, *Bucks*, PA 16 Nov, and located in nearby Lower Makefield Twp. the next day, probably was the same bird seen last winter in Buckingham Twp. (*vide AM*). A flock of 30 Greater White-fronted Geese observed over Newark, *Licking*, OH 25 Nov (D. St. John) provided an exceptionally high count for Ohio; in Pennsylvania, at least 7 different birds were seen in a half-dozen scattered locations. Good Brant counts, among an unusually large number of reports, included 29 at Harrisburg, PA 30 Oct (DHF), 25 over Yellow Creek S.P., PA 29 Oct (M. Higbee), and 22 at Conneaut, OH 17 Oct (GM).

Over 600 Wood Ducks were at Cedar Point N.W.R., OH 10 Oct (J. McCormac), and 484 flew past a check point at Pymatuning Res., PA the evening of 21 Sep (A. Marich). A flock of 350 Gadwall, an unusually high count for an inland locality, was at L. Rockwell, *Portage*, OH 9 Nov (LR), and 950 were listed at Medusa Marsh 15 Nov (VF). Four hundred Northern Pintails and 2578 Green-winged Teal were included in a waterfowl census at O.N.W.R. 8 Nov (VF). Reports of King Eider, a rarity anywhere in the Region, included singles at Nockamixon S.P., PA 30-31 Oct (JH, DF) and at Hershey's Mill, *Chester*, PA 31 Oct—2 Nov (L. Lewis); in Ohio, one was at Conneaut 2-4 Nov (LR, JP) and another at Mentor 27-30 (N. Barber). Even more unusual was a female Common Eider at Fairport Harbor, *Lake*, OH 3 Nov+ (H. Petruschke, LR, m. ob., ph.). An imm. Harlequin Duck was spotted at Nockamixon S.P. 31 Oct (BC, DW); a female was at Gordon Park, OH 2 Nov (SZ), and single imm. males passed Lakeshore M.P. 2 & 17 Nov (JP). Scoters were more common than usual along L. Erie, and during a heavy overland flight 30 Oct a flock of 92 Black Scoters was at W. Fairview, *Cumberland*, PA, and 75 put down at Memorial L., *Lebanon*, PA (DHF); 6 Blacks were at Cheat L., WV on the next day (GF). A record-breaking count of 2285 Buffleheads was reported off Kelley's I., *Erie*, OH 16 Nov (T. Bartlett). An outstanding Hooded Merganser count was of 2582 at Pymatuning 24 Nov (RFL).

It was generally agreed among the reporting stations that the raptor migration was good along Pennsylvania's ridges. An excellent Osprey flight included a total of 715 logged at Hawk Mt., 630 at Little Gap, *Northampton*, (MSc), and 499 at Waggoner's Gap (DG). Single Mississippi Kites were rare strays to Erwinna, *Bucks*, PA 15 Aug (J. Majdan), and Hawk Mt. 8 Oct (*vide DDe*). Among numerous good counts, 241 Bald Eagles passed by Hawk Mt. and 180 by Waggoner's Gap. Broad-winged Hawk counts, often considered the

"litmus test" of a hawk flight, included excellent seasonal totals of 12,228 at Hawk Mt. and 11,891 at Little Gap. These seasonal totals were bested by an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 birds passing over Perrysburg, *Wood*, OH in just two hours the afternoon of 18 Sep (S. Stockford). Swainson's Hawks were spotted at Second Mt. hawkwatch, *Lebanon*, PA 3 Oct (JG, DSw) and at Little Gap 10 Oct (*vide MSc*). Waggoner's Gap led the Golden Eagle count, as usual, with 180 birds, followed by Hawk Mt. with 126; an exceptional one-day count was of 28 Golden Eagles at Bald Eagle Mt., *Centre*, PA 25 Nov (D Brandes). The high Peregrine Falcon count was 62 at Hawk Mt.

RAILS THROUGH TERNS

An imm. *Yellow Rail* was captured in a *Tuscarawas*, OH alfalfa field 7 Oct (RS, ph.); in Pennsylvania, one was at P.W.T. 2-4 Oct (DF), and another was flushed from a sedge meadow near Eldred, *McKean* 6 Oct (BC, DW). A *Clapper Rail* near Bristol, PA 4 Oct (DW, BC) represented the first *Bucks* record since the early 20th century. A late Sora was banded at P.N.R. 22 Nov (RCL). Peak Common Moorhen counts included 15 at Geneva Marsh, *Crawford*, PA 1 Sep (RFL), and 9 on an O.N.W.R. census 1 Sep (EP).

The Region's shorebird flight was good, with 37 species reported. Black-bellied Plovers peaked at 65 at O.N.W.R. 3 Nov (EP), and 35 at Youngstown, OH 8 Sep was an excellent inland count (B. Jones). Seventy American Golden-Plovers were listed in *Paulding*, OH 16 Sep (*vide RHa*), and the species was widespread, in smaller numbers, elsewhere in the Region; a late bird was at P.I.S.P. 23 Nov (R. States). The shorebird of the season, however, was the *Snowy Plover* that stopped at a grassy pond at Imperial, *Allegheny*, PA 6 Aug, providing a 3rd state record (J. Yuhaniak, G. Malosh, M. Fialkovich, ph. MMc). A Piping Plover was a rarity at Buck Cr. S.P., *Clark*, OH 16-17 Aug (DO, ph. T. Shiveley), as was one at Killdeer Plains W.A. 26 Aug (C. Gooding).

At least 25 American Avocets were scattered among eight Ohio sites, including 6 late birds at Conneaut 15 Nov and one at Alm Cr., *Delaware* 18-19 Nov (*vide RHa*); four Pennsylvania sightings ranged from an early bird at Conejohela Flats 4 Aug (JB) to one at Peace Valley S.P. 27 Nov (*vide AM*). Good Willet counts included 5 birds at Conneaut, OH 16 Aug (JHa) and 3 at P.I.S.P. 15 Aug (DW, BC). A total of 32 Hudsonian Godwits was listed from Ohio, including a remarkable 14 at Conneaut 2 Sep (GM); in nw. Pennsylvania, 2 were at P.I.S.P. 15 Aug (BC, DW) and one at Allegheny Res., *McKean* 3 Sep (JF). A total of 10 Purple Sandpipers was seen at four lakeshore sites in Ohio 16-30 Nov (*vide RHa*), including 4 at Conneaut 17 Nov (S. Butcher); five sightings came from P.I.S.P. 16-30 Nov (*vide JMc*), while a bird at Peace Valley 16 Nov (CR) represented the 2nd e. Pennsylvania record ever. Numerous Ohio sightings of Wilson's Phalarope

included a group of 10 at O.N.W.R. 1 Sep (RHa); one was at Conejohela Flats 12 Aug (JB); and in *Bucks*, PA, singles were at P.W.T. 6 Aug and Bristol 22-24 Aug (DF). Four Red Phalaropes were observed along the Pennsylvania/Ohio lakefront where the species is regular in fall; inland, one was a rarity at Miami-Whitewater Park, *Hamilton*, OH 9-10 Nov (FR ph., m. ob.), as was one at Bristol, PA 29 Aug (DF), 2 at Memorial Lake S.P. 30 Oct (DHF), and 2 at Conneaut Marsh, PA 17 Nov (RFL).

In Ohio, an imm. Pomarine Jaeger was a good find off H.B.S.P. 30 Oct (LR), as were 2 at Lakeshore M.P. 17 Nov (JP). Two Parasitic Jaegers were also at Lakeshore 17 Nov (JP) and 2 others at Rocky River City Park 14 Nov (*vide RHa*). A Franklin's Gull in Middletown Twp. 16 Oct (DF) provided the 2nd *Bucks*, PA record. High counts of Bonaparte's Gulls included 5000 at Eastlake, OH 29 Nov (LR), and 2000+ at Pymatuning Res., PA 2 Nov (RFL). A California Gull was a rarity at Eastlake, OH 3 & 8 Nov (LR); in Pennsylvania, one at P.I.S.P. 27 Oct—24 Nov (BC, DW) and a possible bird at Core Cr. Park, *Bucks* 27 Oct (*vide AM*) were firsts for the state. Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers continued to increase, especially along the lower Delaware R., with 125 listed at Peace Valley Park 15 Oct (AM). The only Sabine's Gull sighting was made along the Susquehanna R. at Conejohela Flats 22 Sep (B. Carl, T. Garner, E. Witmer). Single imm. Black-legged Kittiwakes were at Lakeshore M.P., 17 Nov (JP), and Cleveland's E. 72nd Street lakefront 28 Nov+ (RHn, m. ob.). A high count of 895 Common Terns was tallied 1 Sep during an O.N.W.R. census (EP), and a heavy inland flight over West Virginia 14 Sep included 35 at Brooks Falls and 200 at the mouth of the Blue-stone R. (JPh). A very late Black Tern was at Gordon Park, OH 10 Nov (SZ).

OWLS THROUGH WARBLERS

The only mention of Barn Owl was of a bird that died at Shanksville, *Somerset*, PA in late Sep after being blown through a feed mixer—oddly enough, the same fate of another owl there earlier in the year (SB). A very early Short-eared Owl appeared at Magee Marsh W.A., OH 14 Sep (RHa); one at L. Towhee 2 Nov was record early for *Bucks*, PA (JH, DF), and 4 had returned to their traditional wintering site, a reclaimed strip-mine, at Volant, *Lawrence*, PA by 3 Nov (LW). In what appeared to have been an off-flight year, just 67 Northern Saw-whet Owls were banded at Shaver's Cr. Environmental Center, *Huntingdon*, PA by mid-Nov (*vide GG*), compared to 172 last fall.

Calliope Hummingbird was an exciting addition to both the Ohio and Pennsylvania state bird lists: The first, an imm. male, appeared at a feeder at Chillicothe, OH 28 Oct—1 Nov (Jean Foor, m. ob., *, ph. A. Chartier); the other was at Lower Marion, *Montgomery*, PA from early Nov through the 27th (JH, NP, vt. DF, m. ob.). "Absolutely mind-boggling" was the phrase used by Rob

Harlan to describe the fall Rufous/*Selasphorus* Hummingbird invasion in Ohio, where at least 12 birds were distributed over nine counties. In Pennsylvania, an early Rufous was at a feeder near Ligonier, *Westmoreland* 24-27 Aug (E. Wilshons, RM, RCL), and at least another 7 birds were scattered over six, mostly se. counties. The fall flight of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds was good: 255 were netted at P.N.R. this fall (RM, RCL), and 608 were logged passing by A.F.M.O. during the season (*vide* GH). Over a dozen amazed birders recorded a Lewis's Woodpecker as it passed by the Allegheny Front hawkwatch, Central City, PA 20 Oct (C. Tague)—a first for the state if accepted by P.O.R.C.! Good finds at Killdeer Plains W.A., OH, included Western Kingbird 26 Oct (ph. C. Bombaci, L. Powlick) and a Loggerhead Shrike 26 Oct+ (R. Sempier).

Late vireos included both a White-eyed and a Warbling Vireo that were banded at B.S.B.O. 31 Oct (*vide* RHa), and a Warbling Vireo was still at Nockamixon S.P., PA on the same day (DF, BE). Fish Crows continued to increase in Pennsylvania, where a flock of 200

was seen migrating over Shippensburg, *Franklin* 1 Sep (B. Keener). Some 2500 Tree Swallows made a good count for an inland area like Gap Mills, *Monroe*, WV 21 Sep (JPh), and up to 30 late Northern Rough-winged Swallows were a surprise at John Heinz N.W.R., PA 17-18 Nov (MS). Pennsylvania shared in the fall's Cave Swallow invasion, when one was found at Huntsdale Fish Hatchery, *Cumberland* 19 Nov (D. Snell) and 2 were at Nockamixon S.P. 22 Nov (*vide* AM). With just 23 banded at P.N.R., the Black-capped Chickadee flight, if there even was one, tied for the poorest showing in 41 years (RM, RCL); following last year's moderately heavy invasion, only a single bird was listed in Bucks, PA this season (AM). The Red-breasted Nuthatch invasion was the poorest in many years throughout the Region (m. ob.). Both Carolina Wren, with 26 banded, and Winter Wren at 66, were netted in record numbers at P.N.R. (RM, RCL). The fresh remains of a predator-killed Bohemian Waxwing were found at P.I.S.P. 26 Nov (RSt, ph. JMc), but no living birds were reported.

With 550 banded, Tennessee Warbler was the most numerous bird processed at A.F.M.O., followed closely by 528 Black-throated Blue Warblers and 422 Blackpoll Warblers (GH); at P.N.R., Magnolia Warbler, with 271 netted, was the most common parulid, followed by 197 Common Yellowthroats and 124 Hooded Warblers. The 30 Connecticut Warblers banded at P.N.R. 6 Sep—9 Oct was double the 41-year average (RM, RCL); a record 20 were banded at

B.S.B.O., which is almost three times the average for that station. The Yellow-rumped Warbler migration seemed much lighter than usual along the Pennsylvania ridges; at P.N.R., just 79 were banded compared to the 41-year average of 310 (RM, RCL). At B.S.B.O., however, a record 949 Yellow-rumped were banded during the season. Late records included a Golden-winged Warbler at Natrona Heights, *Allegheny*, PA 21 Sep (PH), a North-



This King Eider at Hershey's Mill, Chester County, Pennsylvania 3 November 2002 was the first to be found in that state away from Lake Erie, where rare. Photograph by Alan Brady.

ern Parula at B.S.B.O. 26 Oct (*vide* RHa), a Yellow Warbler at John Heinz N.W.R. 18 Nov (MS), an American Redstart at Toledo, OH 7 Nov (R. Nirschl), and a Hooded Warbler near Mercer, PA 5 Nov (NT).

TANAGERS THROUGH FINCHES

A Summer Tanager at Clarksville, *Greene*, PA 8 Sep was at the n. limit of the Pennsylvania range (RB), and one was a rare find at Kelley's Is., OH 15 Aug (VF, T. Bartlett). A Green-tailed Towhee at a feeder near Centre, *Juniata*, PA 10 Nov+ (3rd confirmed state record) attracted much birder attention (T. Petersheim, m. ob., ph.). In *Cuyahoga*, OH, single Clay-colored Sparrows were at Gordon Park 14 Sep and West Cr. Pres. 9 Oct (GL, SZ); in Pennsylvania, one was at Bellefonte 1 Nov (M. Lanzone), one at Codorus S.P. 3 Nov (DHe), and another at Erie 13 Nov (DBo). The only Le Conte's Sparrows reported were singles at two Parma, OH sites 8 & 21 Oct (GL). Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows, due to increased awareness and interest by Regional birders, were vigorously pursued, resulting in records from at least 12 sites across the Region from w. L. Erie to the lower Delaware R.—including up to 10 birds at Bainbridge, *Lancaster*, PA 25 Sep (*vide* DHf) and as many as 8 at P.W.T. 9-10 (DF). A Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow report (DF) from P.W.T. 9 Oct is under review by P.O.R.C. and would establish the 2nd state record if accepted.

An ad. Harris's Sparrow frequented a Lithopolis, *Fairfield*, OH feeder 20-26 Oct (D. Bradley, JHa ph., m. ob.) for the Region's only report. An astonishing count of 1709 White-

crowned Sparrows was made at Gordon Park, *Cuyahoga*, OH 22 Oct (SZ). The first Lapland Longspurs were at P.I.S.P. 13 Nov (BC) and P.W.T. on the 16th (NP); a high count of 30 was made at Fairport Harbor, OH 27 Nov (LR). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was a rarity at P.I.S.P. 25 Aug (*vide* JMc), 2 ads. were at Pickerel Cr. W.A., OH 29 Aug, and another was at Rocky Fork. L. 31 Aug (*vide* RHa). A flock of 900 Rusty Blackbirds was exceptionally high for the New Castle, PA area 11 Nov (LW). A high count of 30 Baltimore Orioles was banded at B.S.B.O. 22 Aug, where a record high total of 83 (almost twice the previous high) was banded by season's end, and a late bird was at an Ashtabula, OH feeder 23 Nov (S. Wright).

There were very few northern finches in the Region. Nine Pine Grosbeaks were at Black Moshannon L., *Centre*, PA 16 Nov (NB). Single Red Crossbills were at Stone Mt., *Huntingdon*, PA 20 Nov (SMc) and Bear Meadows, *Centre* 21 Nov (NB); a White-winged Crossbill passed the Stone Mt. hawkwatch 24 Nov (SMc). At Meadville, PA, the first 2 Pine Siskins appeared 15

Oct (K. Marsh); there were only scattered fall reports from Ohio (RHa). Evening Grosbeaks did not appear until mid-Nov, when 28 were in w. *Cuyahoga*, OH (C. Rieker) on the 13th, and 6 were at Hoover Res. the 14th (M. England); in Pennsylvania, 15 grosbeaks were at Rose Valley L., *Lycoming* 17 Nov (*vide* DFe). Finally, it might be fascinating to know the origin of the European Goldfinch that frequented a Warren, OH feeder 12-30 Oct (ph. CB).

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