

Eastern Highlands & Upper Ohio River Valley



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A cool wet spring gave way abruptly to extreme dryness across the Region, and the drought was to become among the most severe to affect the Region. Nonetheless, negative comments were few, and there was good news aplenty, as Sandhill Cranes, Bald Eagles, and Ospreys continue to do very well. State atlas projects continue to flesh out our understanding of the mid-summer avifauna, revealing that some species linger more often than previously thought (e.g., White-throated Sparrow) and that a few species are expanding ranges (e.g., Common Merganser, Herring Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Common Raven). Among the prized low-density breeders detected this season were Merlins in Pennsylvania, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in West Virginia, and the Region's first Mississippi Kite in Ohio.

Abbreviations: B.C.S.P. (Buck Creek S.P., Clark, OH); Conneaut (Conneaut Harbor, Ashtabula, OH); Hoover (Hoover Res., Delaware/Franklin, OH); Longbrakes (Longbrake Wetlands, Hardin, OH); J.H.N.W.R. (John Heinz N.W.R., Philadelphia, PA); Magee (Magee Marsh W.M.A., Lucas/Ottawa, OH); Metzger (Metzger Marsh W.A., Lucas, OH); M.W.W. (Miami Whitewater Wetlands, Hamilton, OH); O.D.W. (Ohio Division of Wildlife); Ottawa (Ottawa N.W.R., Lucas/Ottawa, OH); P.I.S.P. (Presque Isle S.P., Erie, PA); P.W.T. (Penn Warner Tract, Bucks, PA); R.C.B. (Robert C. Byrd Lock & Dam, Mason, WV); S.R.C.F. (Susquehanna R./Conejohela Flats, Lancaster, PA); Spring Valley (Spring Valley W.M.A., Warren/Greene, OH).

WATERFOWL THROUGH HERONS

Two Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks were well described from S.R.C.F. 24 Jun (C. Chalfant). Single Gadwall and American Wigeon were at Metzger 3 Jun (KK). Two American Wigeons in Erie, OH 24 Jun (MSh) were possible breeders. Blue-winged Teal successfully bred in Union, OH, a county first (K. & J. Davis). Summering Green-winged Teal were in Erie,

OH 6 Jun (MSh) and Pickaway, OH 3 Jul (RR). In Pennsylvania, Green-winged Teal were at Yellow Creek S.P., Indiana 3-17 Jul (MH) and Doylestown, Bucks 14 Jun (J. Trantomano). Redhead fledged young in Erie, OH 24 Jun (MSh), a rare breeding record. A late Canvasback was at P.I.S.P. 9 Jun (MV). Lesser Scaup remained in Hardin 2 Jun (RC) and Franklin 6 Jun (RTh), and one summered on the S.R.C.F. (BS). A Greater Scaup at Minsi L., Northampton, PA 10-19 Jun (ph. S. Angus) was not entirely unexpected in the wake of a strong spring migration. A Bufflehead was on the Susquehanna R., Dauphin, PA 1 Jul (A. Schiavo). Courting Ruddy Ducks were noted 1 Jun at Longbrakes, where they persisted into mid-Jul (RC). A Ruddy Duck in Bucks, PA 28 Jun-8 Jul (G. Johnson, R. French) was unusual, and 6 were at Pymatuning L., Crawford, PA 21 Jul (MV). A Red-breasted Merganser in York, PA 13 Jul was unexpected (L. Carpenter). Common Mergansers continue as local breeders in the Little Beaver Cr. Watershed, Columbiana, OH, where there have been sev-

Sankovich, BS) and on the Allegheny R., Warren 3 Jun (D. Watts, *vide* JF). Uncommon mid-summer Common Loons in Ohio included one on the Ohio R. near Cincinnati 7 Jul (NK) and one at A.W. Marion S.P., Pickaway 18 Jun (K. Brooks). In Pennsylvania, 2 were at the P.W.T. 1 Jul (DF) and singles at Curwensville L., Clearfield 1 Jul (C. Holt, *vide* MV) and Ambridge Res., Beaver 14 Jul (MV).

Rare away from L. Erie in Ohio, an American Bittern summered at Hoover through 20 Jul (CBo), a breeding hopeful was at Killbuck 1 Jun (S. Weaver), and a wanderer appeared in Washington, OH 6 Jul (B. Bond). Another was unexpected in Franklin, WV 5 Jul (C. Rucker). Least Bitterns at L. Logan, Hocking, OH 14 Jun (J. Alexander) and in Wetzell, WV 29 May (S. Olcott) were of local interest, as was one at Julian, Centre, PA 19 Jun (GG). Great Egret was confirmed nesting in Franklin OH 15 Jun (MBr) for the 2nd consecutive summer, while nesters found in Logan, OH 10 Jun (TS) represented a county first. Typical of the species' colonization of the Scioto R. cor-



Very rare in western Pennsylvania away from Lake Erie, this American Avocet at Etna, Allegheny County on 29 July 2007 furnished was just the second county record. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

eral new records (J. Hendrickson, J. Dolan) since the first reported nesting here in 2001.

Scarce in sw. Ohio, single Pied-billed Grebes were in Clinton 6 Jun (B. Powell) and Hamilton 4 Jul (*vide* NK). Rare nesters away from L. Erie, Ohio had two inland nesting confirmations of Double-crested Cormorant. A successful nest in an urban heron rookery was a possible first county nesting record for Franklin, OH 10 Jul (MBr), and a colony of eight nests was found in Summit 8 Jun (D. Kramer). The 74 Double-crested Cormorants on the Delaware R. at Morrisville, Bucks, PA 25 Jun was a mid-summer high count (BK). American White Pelicans in Pennsylvania were at Peach Bottom, Lancaster 1 Jun (M.

ridor in cen. Ohio, a flock of 13 Great Egrets was found in Columbus 13 Jun (PN). Four Snowy Egrets were at Middle Creek W.M.A., Lancaster/Lebanon, PA 7 Jun (B. Carl). Following the normal pattern of post-breeding dispersal, a Little Blue Heron appeared at M.W.W. 31 Jul (C. Goulart). Little Blue Herons in Pennsylvania included 2 at Washington Crossing, Bucks 31 Jul (BK) and one at Shartelsville, Berks 29 Jul (M. Spence). A single Tricolored Heron was found at Pipe Creek W.A., Erie OH 8 Jul (CC). A 14 Jun Cattle Egret at Indian L., Logan, OH was well away from known breeding sites on L. Erie (TS). A Black-crowned Night-Heron colony (about eight occupied nests) was documented in



This first-summer Franklin's Gull was photographed 10 June 2007 at productive Conejohela Flates, Washington Boro, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Photograph by Eric Witmer.

Hamilton, OH 4 Jul (ER). A flyby in Columbus 1 Jun along the Scioto R. just s. of the Ohio State University winter roost (TS) was near the confluence of the Scioto and Olen-tangy Rivers. After the Norway Spruces in which it was located were cut down, a colony of 10-15 nests of Black-crowned Night-Herons in Reading, Berks, PA relocated to another site (B. Uhrich). Columbus again hosted nesting Yellow-crowned Night-Herons, with two nests producing a total of 10 nestlings (B. Whan, m.ob.). Two pairs were also observed during an atlas survey in Gallia, OH 10 Jun (fide BSs). Seven Glossy Ibis were seen in Chester, PA 7 Jun (TA).

VULTURES THROUGH DOVES

Long established as year-round residents n. to Holmes, OH, Black Vultures were confirmed breeding there, with two nests successfully fledging young this season (Adam Yoder). First reported at a private golf club in Hocking 7 Jun (A. Elberfeld, fide B. Whan), a single Mississippi Kite in residence eventually became 2. Careful observation over the course of the season culminated in Ohio's first nesting record for Mississippi Kite (ph. TS, ph. AB, m.ob.). In Pennsylvania, Mississippi Kites included 2 in Fulton 2-3 Jun (ph. TJ, D. Snell) and singles at Marsh Creek S.P., Chester 7 Jun (L. Lewis) and Henningsville, Berks 17 Jun (P. Saenger). It was another record season in Ohio for Osprey, as an estimated 43 nests in 23 counties produced about 75 young (O.D.W.); Harrison led the nest count with six, and a pair at Salt Fork Res. raised a remarkable 4 young (JL). A rare nesting confirmation of Northern Harrier came from Ashtabula, OH 3 Jun (JHe). In Ohio, of a record 164 Bald Eagle nests, 115 successfully produced 186 eaglets in 45 counties (O.D.W.). Two interesting Lucas, OH reports of Sharp-shinned Hawk included one 5 Jul at

Toledo (GLi) and one 9 Jul at Kitty Todd Preserve (TS). Along the Ohio R., one was found at Green Bottom W.A., Mason, WV 15 Jul (D. Patick). A rare summer record for Merlin came from Voice of America Park, Butler, OH 20 Jul (L. Brumbaugh). A pair of Merlins successfully fledged 4 young at Promised Land S.P., Pike, PA, making it the southernmost breeding station in the e. United States (ph., vt. RW). Merlins also nested at Eagles Mere, Sullivan, PA (fide DG). Two new nesting sites of Peregrine Falcons were discovered in sw. Pennsylvania, both on bridges, in

Allegheny and Beaver (fide PH). A King Rail was observed in Summit, OH over a 12-day span in Jun (ph. S. Brown). Recently fledged Sandhill Cranes were observed 21 Jul at Magee (MSh) for a rare confirmation from the Western Basin of L. Erie, while success was finally realized in Geauga as well (K. Moran). In all, 16 nests fledged 22 young in Ohio, for another record year (O.D.W.).

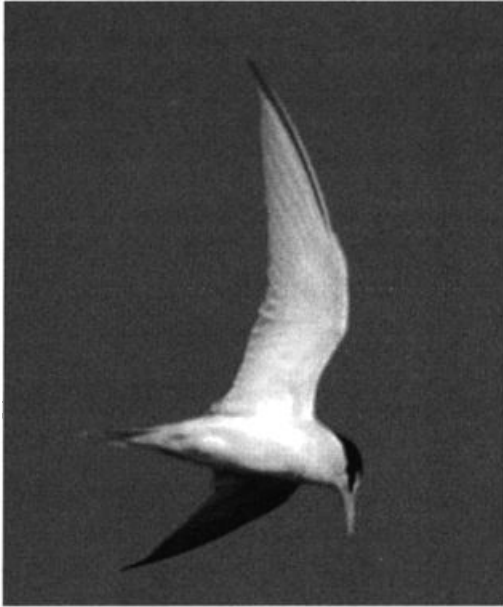
An early Piping Plover appeared at Conneaut 14 Jul (BCo). Three Black-bellied Plovers lingered at Metzger 13 Jun (KK). Conneaut hosted American Avocets, with one 14 Jul, 2 the following day (BCo), and 3 on the 17th (CH). Erie, OH had one record of a single avocet 22 Jul (SW). American Avocets in Pennsylvania included singles at S.R.C.F. 12 Jul (TJ, AMc), in Allegheny 29 Jul (D. Yagusic, ph. GM), and at S.R.C.F. 31 Jul (DH, AMc). Upland Sandpiper reports from Hardin (RC), Harrison, Ashtabula (CH), Richland (JH), and a rare record from Ross 21 Jun (fide DH) highlight the significance of airports, which appear to be among the last refuges for the species. A pair with young was seen at Barkeyville, Venango, PA in late Jun (RW). An excellent count of 60 Spotted Sandpipers came from Roderick, Erie, PA 12 Jul (T. Wasilewski). Two Willets were at Conneaut 17 Jul (CH), and one was at P.I.S.P. (L. McWilliams). One identified as a Western Willet was at S.R.C.F. 9 Jul (BS). Reports of single Whimbrel and Marbled Godwit came from Conneaut 14 Jul (BCo), with 2 more Whimbrels over Conneaut 24 Jul (CH); that evening, another was at West Branch S.P., Portage, OH (CH). A Marbled Godwit appeared at Metzger 24 Jun (A. Lindsay). A spring migrant Red Knot at Metzger 3 Jun (KK), and 2 at S.R.C.F. 6 Jun (DH), were followed by single southbound birds at Conneaut 14 Jul (BCo), at Hoover 23 Jul (CBo), and in Richland (ph. GC, JH). A Western Sandpiper in alternate plumage at Metzger 13

Jun (KK) was remarkably late. A southbound bird was at B.C.S.P. 15 Jul (DO). But were 2 Western Sandpipers at S.R.C.F. 23 Jun (BS) coming or going? The annual drawdown at J.H.N.W.R. attracted 1000 Least Sandpipers 26 Jul (FW). A fall migrant Baird's Sandpiper appeared 23 Jul at Conneaut (L. Dornan et al.), but one in Lawrence, PA 2 Jun represented an extraordinary spring migrant (MV). The 19 White-rumped Sandpipers at S.R.C.F. 13 Jun made an excellent count (DH), and one at L. Oneida, Butler, PA 20 Jun was a very late spring migrant (D. Darney). An early Buff-breasted Sandpiper was located 28 Jul on the expansive mudflats of Hoover Res., Delaware (PG). An early Long-billed Dowitcher arrived at J.H.N.W.R. 25 Jul (FW). In Ohio, fledged young of Wilson's Snipe were observed 11 Jun in Lucas (G. Cottier). Wilson's Phalaropes were observed late Jun-mid-Jul in Hardin, where nesting took place in 2006 (RC). Two fall migrants were in Muskingum by 8 Jul (V. Smith, fide B. Whan). A Red-necked Phalarope was at Little Blue L., Beaver, PA 3 Jun (MV).

Annual mid-summer Laughing Gulls appeared on Kellys I., Erie, OH 15 Jun (TB), at Hoover 28 Jul (PG), and at P.I.S.P. 1 Jun (JM). A Franklin's Gull was at Washington Boro,

SA Herring Gulls appear to be moving inland away from major bodies of water. In 2005, we reported the colonization of the uppermost reaches of the Ohio R. drainage in Pennsylvania and subsequently learned of nesting farther downstream in Gallia, OH, which continues. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service reported nests of both Herring and Ring-billed Gulls on a factory roof in Shelby, Richland, OH, well away from L. Erie. Nest counts for 2004, 2005, and 2006 were 30, 73, and 72, and egg counts 12, 205, and 340, respectively (fide JH). It is not known how many of these represent Herring Gulls. In 2007, a pair of Herring Gulls 26 Jun appeared at a gravel quarry in Fairfield in cen. Ohio (SA). Such birds have been assumed to be wandering non-breeders through the summer season, but observers are asked to examine these gulls for age and breeding condition, as they may be the forerunners of a further range expansion.

Lancaster, PA 10 Jun (ph. E. Witmer), and a Bonaparte's Gull was at Bald Eagle S.P., Centre, PA 22 Jun for a rare mid-summer record (GG). A first-summer Iceland Gull at Tulleytown, Bucks, PA 4-17 Jul was unexpected (TJ, A. Brady), as were 100 Great Black-backed Gulls on the Delaware R., Bucks, PA that day. A large number of Forster's Terns remained into the season at Metzger, with 20 there 3 Jun (KK) dwindling to 10 by 16 Jun (D. Snuffer). The usual few summered within the Western Basin, before daily appearances at fall staging sites in



Up to four Least Terns were present 23 and (here) 24 June 2007 at Conejohela Flats, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Least Tern is rare but regular on the lower Susquehanna River, a potential breeding species there but one that has never been confirmed nesting. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

Erie and Sandusky began 21-22 Jul (SW). Less frequent still, 2 were inland at Grand L., Auglaize, OH 9 Jun in the company of 2 Bonaparte's Gulls (TS), while 3 fall migrants were at Alum Creek Res., Delaware, OH 1 Jul (RTh) and widely noted across the s. 14-15 Jul (DO, CH, D. Morse, Jr.). Four Least Terns were a nice find at S.R.C.F. 23 Jun (BS, TA, ph. GM).

After several years of tantalizing reports with few confirmed, Eurasian Collared-Dove thoroughly introduced itself to the Ohio birding community this season. A pair was first detected 19 Jun in Fort Jefferson, Darke (C. Ploch, R. Schieltz, ph. TS), followed by 3 in West Manchester, Preble 26 Jun (TB), where copulation was observed 29 Jun (T. Spenseller). A pair in Celine, Mercer 11 Jul (B. Barchus), and 3 birds in nearby St. Mary's, Auglaize (TS) Jul-Aug, further outlined the incursion. Eurasian Collared-Doves in Pennsylvania included singles at Peach Bottom, Lancaster 9 Jul (BS) and Lebanon 4 Jul (JF). A Barn Owl was observed at East Fork L., Clermont, OH 9 Jun (William Hull). A vocalizing Long-eared Owl in Monroe, OH 16 Jun (P. Chad) represented an exceptional summer record for the unglaciated Allegheny Plateau. Targeted surveys during the season for Short-eared Owl turned up observations at Ohio wildlife areas in Belmont, Coshocton, Marion, and Muskingum (fide N. Stricker). Northern Saw-whet Owls continued on Kellys I., Erie, OH 15 Jun, with possibly 2 birds calling at the same location where first detected in May (TB). A pair of

Chuck-will's-widows summered in Fulton, PA (ph. TJ). A drumming Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at a demonstration forest in s. Ashland 22 Jun was well s. of known breeding sites in Ohio (PR), and a female with fledged young 10 Jul in Alpena, WV represents a rare breeding record for the state (B. Sargent).

FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Four pairs of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers fledged young in Wyoming, PA (DG). Two male Least Flycatchers 2-3 Jun may have been on territory in Meigs (S. Schaffer, J. Duerr), well s. of known s. Ohio sites. Ohio supplied 2 Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, one at Oak Openings, Lucas 15 Jul (RN) and one at Lawrence Woods State Natural Preserve, Hardin 22 Jun (C. Hoagstrom). A Western Kingbird in Plumstead Twp., Bucks, PA 2 Jun fell within the spring pattern for the species in the Region (B. Webster). It was a good season for Bell's Vireo, as multiple records and nesting confirmations came from Pickaway, within Deer Creek W.A. (RR), and Franklin. Especially notable was the 2nd year of nesting on the Ohio State University campus (ABO). Common Raven may soon be confirmed as nesting once again in e. Ohio, where 3 were observed cavorting together in a Jefferson strip-mine reclamation area 12 Jun (SA). A Red-breasted Nuthatch visited a Fairfield feeder up through 9 Jun (ER), and a pair remained in Findlay, Hancock through 11 Jun (O. Line). Winter Wren is exceptional away from hemlock gorges of ne. Ohio, but 2 were apparently on territory in the Hocking Hills region, Hocking, OH 9 (SA) & 15 Jun (C. Morrow). A pair fledged 4 young in a hemlock area at Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, Northampton, PA, at an elevation of only 240 m (vt. RW); they are virtually unknown as nesters in se. Pennsylvania s. of the Kittatinny Ridge. Territorial Sedge Wrens were noted in Highland 21 Jul and Ross 13 Jun (DH), and one was e. to McKean, PA in Jun (JF). Swainson's Thrushes in Pennsylvania included one in Forest 25 Jun (RKO, CB) and reports of nesting in Luzerne and Sullivan (DG). Up to four pairs of Golden-crowned Kinglet were reported from Cuyahoga Valley N.P., Cuyahoga, OH through Jun (Dwight & Ann Chasar, CC), while other pairs were observed

at spruce groves in Lake (JP) and Lucas OH (2 Jun; GLi). One of the highlights of the season was a singing Ruby-crowned Kinglet on territory at Parker Dam S.P., Clearfield in Jun (B. Williams); pending acceptance, it would mark the first summer record for Pennsylvania. A Brown Creeper at John Bryan S.P. Greene, OH 14 Jun (TSp) and another in Conkle's Hollow, Hocking, OH 21 Jun (K. Muetzel, A. Stetz) were of local interest.

Lawrence's Warblers in Pennsylvania included singles in Venango 13 Jun (TJ) and Delaware Water Gap, Monroe in Jun (D. Speicher). A 15 Jul Nashville Warbler in Trumbull, OH was a possible breeder (JHe). Northern Parulas continue with greater frequency in w. cen. Ohio riparian corridors, including several recorded along Deer Cr., Pickaway (RR). A spring migrant Magnolia Warbler lingered through 4 Jun at Shaker Lakes, Cuyahoga, OH (L. Gooch). A singing individual 30 Jun in Tuscarawas was unusual there (ES). Potential breeding habitat attracted one to Clear Creek Valley, Hocking, OH 17 Jun (M. Smith). A hemlock ravine in s. Ashland produced a territorial male 22 Jun (PR), the same ravine where a wayward Black-throated Blue Warbler had been found 21 Jun (LY). Rare in nw. Ohio, Black-throated Green Warblers have appeared in three atlas blocks so far, the most recent a 2 Jun record from Lucas (GLi). Increasing in ne



One of Pennsylvania's rarest summer residents, this Clay-colored Sparrow was photographed at Piney Tract, Clarion County on 23 June 2007. Photograph by Geoff Malosh.

Ohio, as many as 10 territorial Yellow-throated Warblers were in floodplain forest habitat throughout Lake (JP), whereas none was detected during Ohio's first breeding bird atlas of the mid-1980s. A Yellow-throated Warbler in Lehigh Gorge, Carbon, PA 22 Jul was unusual for that locale (A. Smith). A pair of Prairie Warblers in Erie, PA 11 Jun likely represented the first nesting ever for that county (D. Snyder). A late Blackpoll Warbler was recorded on Kellys I. 16 Jun (TB), and an apparent second-year female Bay-breasted Warbler at Tar Hollow S.P., Ross furnished a first mid-summer

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record for s. Ohio (K. Sieg). The 10-12 Mourning Warblers in Susquehannock S.F., Potter, PA 25 Jun made an excellent count (RKO, CB). A Connecticut Warbler in Wetzell, WV 1 Jun was late (A. Sabatine). A singing Northern Waterthrush at Heilwood, Indiana, PA 19 Jun was rare for sw. Pennsylvania (MH); one at J.H.N.W.R. 28 Jun was totally out of place (FW). The Swainson's Warbler reported in spring in Allegheny, PA was present through 17 Jun (*vide* PH).

Ohio atlas efforts continue to find Clay-colored Sparrows, with the most recent a territorial male in Williams 29 Jun (L. Murray). One in Philipsburg, Clearfield 16-17 Jun was at the e. edge of its breeding range in Pennsylvania (A. Wilson). Apart from the isolated population in Lucas, OH, nesting Lark Sparrows turned up in Greene (TSp) and in Franklin (pair; PN), and there was an extraordinary nesting, with fledged young, near Dundee in Tuscarawas (ES, m.ob.). Rare in sw. Ohio, breeding confirmation was obtained near New Baltimore, Hamilton, OH (J. Stenger), with 6 seen as late as 22 Jul (E. Baumgardner, J. Lippert, ER). Two Henslow's Sparrows in Juniata, PA 4 Jun+ were unusual for that locale (L. Grove). Late migrant White-throated Sparrows along the Erie lakeshore at Magee 4 Jun (KK) and at Valley Forge, Montgomery, PA 2 Jun (D. Sullivan, *vide* KC) were within expectations. Inexplicably, the species continues to be found in far s. Ohio mid-season. In the se., lone birds appeared in Gallia 9 Jun (BSs), while in the sw., singles were in Hamilton 7-22 Jul (B. Zimmerman) and Butler 20 Jun (J. Hull). A late-season wanderer was found at Magee 27 Jul (S. Wheeler). A late White-crowned Sparrow was in Northampton, PA 6 Jun (A. Koch). A Dark-eyed Junco in Ashland, OH 13 Jun (L. Hochstetler) may have been exploring new territory.

Blue Grosbeaks stretched their breeding limits in Ohio, with a pair in Tuscarawas (ES, m.ob.), territorial males in Jefferson (SA) and Richland, OH 9-29 Jun (G. Cowell), and a successful nest in Franklin (ABO, PR). A Blue Grosbeak in a reclaimed strip mine near Freeland, Luzerne, PA was well n. of its normal range in e. Pennsylvania (B. Hintze, S. Lichvar). Nearly 100 Dickcissels in a field at Deer Creek W.A., Pickaway, OH was a good count 18 Jun (RR). In Ohio, a Western Meadowlark continued in sw. Wood 10 Jun (C. Anderson, T. Kemp), and another was found 1 Jul in Williams (RN). Nesting Purple Finches fledged young in Stark (B. Morrison) and Tuscarawas (H. Mason, ES), while another in cen. Jefferson 11 Jun (SA) was at the s. limit of the breeding distribution in e. Ohio. One was unexpected in Wetzell, WV 15 Jun (W. Jarrell).

Pine Siskins appeared in the highlands once again, with one in Wayne, WV 2 Jul (G. Rankin) and one in Dry Fork, WV 25 Jun-20 Jul (C. Rucker) and pairs in Lycoming, PA 7 Jun (N. Bolgiano) and at Cook Forest S.P., Clarion/Jefferson, PA 12 Jul (M. Weible). An ad. male Red Crossbill visited a feeder in ne. Morrow, OH 13-14 Jul (A. Troyer, JH), for a rare summer record. Such records may well originate within the West Virginia highlands, where the species persists.

Corrigenda: It was previously reported in this space that a nineteenth-century specimen of Anhinga for Ohio was no longer extant. However, through the efforts of Donald Morse, Jr., in a multi-year quest to account for all of Ohio's bird specimens, the skin has been found, making the 2006 summer observation Ohio's 2nd (*vide* B. Whan).

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