



# THE PLAIN DEALER

## Good news to report on status of some birds - Aerial View

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**Plain Dealer Reporter**

The wildlife conservation news is typically so depressing, it's enough to make a birder find a new hobby.

So when there's encouraging news to report, we'll embrace it here as we would the discovery of a new species.

Jamey Graham of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife has compiled a status report that tracks how the state's animals fared in 2007. Some of the birds fared surprisingly well.

Sixteen pairs of sandhill cranes nested in the state last year and fledged 22 young - the most ever.

There were 68 barn owl nests, down from 83 the previous year. Most were in Wayne and Holmes counties.

Peregrine falcons maintained their successful urbanization with 24 nests and 56 young.

Wild turkeys, extirpated from Ohio 100 years ago, have been successfully reintroduced in all 88 counties, with an estimated 186,000 birds.

Common terns are often seen during migration but now are nesting on four artificial colony platforms in western Lake Erie. Last year, 185 pairs fledged 281 young - nearly double the previous year.

Populations of forest-nesting scarlet tanagers have actually increased slightly, on the average, every year since 1966.

The bald eagle success story took wing in 2007, with 194 eaglets fledged from 164 breeding territories. More on the eagles later.

A decade after an osprey restoration program began, 44 nesting pairs fledged 78 young last year.

Another reintroduction program, this one with trumpeter swans, resulted in 53 cygnets fledged from 23 nesting pairs.

On a more depressing note, the ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail and cerulean warbler continued to decline in Ohio. The likely culprit for the warbler is loss of habitat at their wintering grounds in South America; loss of grasslands for the quail; unknown for the grouse.

Man, of course, was responsible for causing most of these birds' problems in the first place, having polluted the environment with pesticides, drained wetlands, felled forests and developed farmlands. But to his credit, man has wised up and become environmentally "greener" over the years. The birds helped, too, by adapting to urban and suburban habitats.

That brings me back to bald eagles. I apologize to all of the readers who report eagle sightings on an

almost weekly basis yet seldom see their reports in Aerial View or on my bird blog, <http://blog.cleveland.com/neobirding>.

The fact is, as thrilling as an eagle sighting may be, eagles aren't that unusual around Northeast Ohio anymore and were recently removed from the state and federal Endangered Species Lists.

After all, isn't that a great accomplishment?

#### Sightings

At Headlands Beach State Nature Preserve in Mentor, lakefront sightings included Northern pintail, greater and lesser scaup, bufflehead, ruddy, ring-necked, Northern shoveler, American wigeon, common goldeneye, and wood ducks, blue-winged and green-winged teal, all three mergansers, common loons, Caspian terns and an osprey. Also there: dozens of Northern flickers, American pipits, tree swallows, brown thrasher, Eastern phoebes, yellow-rumped warbler and fox sparrows.

At Mentor Lagoons, a cackling goose was a nice surprise in a flock of Canada geese at the marina. The woods held Eastern towhees and golden-crowned kinglets.

On Monday, Ray Hannikman and Jerry Talkington found four long-eared owls and a short-eared owl at Headlands.

Greg Cudworth found a Louisiana waterthrush in a stand of woods in Portage County. Marty Lesher had a yellow-rumped warbler in Olmsted Township.

One of my birding buddies' favorite pastimes at Cleveland Indians games is to bird-watch when the action slows down. Welcome The Plain Dealer's Michael Heaton to the club: He spotted an American woodcock on Opening Day at Progressive Field.

Across East Ninth Street from the ball field, Paula Lozano and Bob Finkelstein found five woodcocks in the Erie Street Cemetery. She also had several fox sparrows in her Lakewood back yard.

At the Coliseum grasslands in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Patrick Coy reported Wilson's snipe, rough-legged hawk and Eastern meadowlark.

In the lake off his Perry Township home, John Pogacnik spotted white-winged scoter, Iceland, glaucous and lesser black-backed gulls. In his yard, he tallied Eurasian collared dove, yellow-rumped warbler, chipping and fox sparrows, red-breasted nuthatch, towhee and common redpoll.

Redpolls, fox and tree sparrows, and red-breasted nuthatches continue to visit Sally Isacco's feeders in Chardon. Redpolls are also being seen at Jerry Fitch and Lynda Bibler's feeders in Avon, Janet Wertz's in Stow, Scott Wright's in North Olmsted, Linda Gilbert's in South Russell, and Carolyn Holt's in East Cleveland.

It only took a pair of Eastern bluebirds two days to find and move into a nesting box Shawn Knieriem erected recently in Pittsfield Township, Lorain County.

Sparrows at Jennifer Lenhart's home in Lakewood included chipping, fox, tree, white-throated and song. John and Ann Edwards also have chipping sparrows at their feeders in Rocky River. We had tree, chipping, field, white-throated and song sparrows, plus towhees and juncoes in our Lakewood back yard.

Jim Heflich and Patty Kellner report the woodcocks are back along the rapid rail tracks at Shaker and Belvoir boulevards in Shaker Heights.

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