



THE PLAIN DEALER

AERIAL VIEW

The annual southern migration of birds begins

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Multitudes of songbirds had been flocking on the north side of Lake Erie, anxiously awaiting friendly breezes to carry them on their migratory journey southward.

Last weekend, those winds arrived, releasing a gusher of birds that poured into Ohio as if someone had pulled the stopper from a giant bathtub.

The first wave touched down at Headlands Beach State Nature Preserve in Mentor on Saturday morning. A party of more than 50 eager members of the Kirtland Bird Club was there to welcome them to terra firma.

Field trip leader Larry Rosche pointed out that the fall migrants' dull plumages and quiet demeanors aren't the only differences from the spring migrants.

These birds, Rosche noted, were more interested in eating to bulk up for the trek to Central and South America than the spring birds, which were desperate to reach their northern nesting grounds and less interested in food.

So we had plenty of opportunities to enjoy these warblers gorging on insects in the cottonwoods beside the Headlands dunes.

There were no rarities on this day, just beautiful, tiny warblers such as Nashville and Blackburnian. Black-and-white and black-throated blues and greens. Chestnut-sided and magnolia. Bay-breasted and blackpoll. Wilson's and American redstart.

A merlin and a black-crowned night heron soared past us, and a rose-breasted grosbeak flew overhead but didn't stop. An Eastern screech owl winned but didn't show itself. A sanderling and a young least sandpiper scuttled by on the beach.

Several red-breasted nuthatches in the cottonwoods foreshadowed the fallout that was to follow throughout Ohio over the three-day weekend.

The nuthatches also were at Mentor Lagoons, as were a Swainson's thrush, Eastern wood-pewee and red-eyed vireos.

The migrants have arrived, so let the birding begin.

Sightings

Red-breasted nuthatches were being reported in amazingly large numbers throughout Northeast Ohio and the rest of the state. Paula Lozano had one at her back-yard feeder in Lakewood, and Bret McCarty saw one at Lakewood Park. Greg Cudworth found nuthatches in every stand of conifers he checked at West Branch State Park in Portage County. John Pogacnik had several birds at his home at the Lakeshore

Reservation in Lake County.

Elmwood Park in Rocky River hosted a Swainson's thrush and multiple warblers, including parula, magnolia, Wilson's and American redstart, Lozano reported.

Nancy Anderson found a Connecticut warbler at Wildwood Park in Cleveland.

A Philadelphia vireo visited Marilyn Williams' yard in Auburn Township, Geauga County.

A mourning warbler was at the traditional migrant trap at the National City Bank building in downtown Cleveland, Scott Wright reported.

A pine siskin came to Pogacnik's feeders. Also there: ruby-throated hummingbirds, yellow-bellied flycatcher, magnolia, Canada and Wilson's warblers.

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