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THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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SUMMARY OF WEATHER CONDITIONS

From U.S. Weather Bureau Reports (Cleveland Hopkins Airport)

March - Total precipitation of 0.78 inches, which is some two inches below normal, made this the second driest March on record. Winds were unusually light and temperatures were about normal.

April - Temperatures averaged well above normal, and there was an abundance of sunshine. Precipitation of 3.31 inches was about one-half inch above normal, but snowfall was almost nil.

May - Mild and pleasant, with temperatures about average, rainfall somewhat below average, and sunshine amounting to 73% of the total hours possible.

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COMMENT ON THE SEASON

With the exception of the Scaup Ducks, so few ducks were reported from the Cleveland lakefront this spring their numbers were meaningless in revealing either a changing winter population or a migratory movement. The population of Scaup was quite variable during March and April, with a high of about 2,000 reported on April 12. During the next seven days the prevailing direction of the wind was south or south southwest with a concomitant rise in temperatures. These influences apparently stimulated the ducks to depart because by April 19 only a few dozen Scaup were counted along the lakefront between White City on the east and Clifton Park on the west. Yet, in contrast, the largest numbers of Ruddy Ducks (175) and of Red-breasted Mergansers (475) were reported on April 20, though these numbers were small indeed compared to last spring when on April 13 some 1,500 Ruddies were observed and more than 1,300 Mergansers.

As in the case of the Scaup Ducks, April 12 was the date for the maximum number of Bonaparte's Gulls, which suddenly increased to approximately 2,100 birds from a mere 80 or so recorded along the Cleveland lakefront on April 5. These gulls apparently moved on within a short time, for on April 19 scarcely three dozen were present along the same expanse of lakefront. The only large flock of Ring-billed Gulls reported was an estimated 5,000 in the harbor at Lorain on March 8 (Davies). The Herring Gull was uncommon, which is typical of the spring season.

Migration of hawks through the Cleveland region has been noted only infrequently, but throughout the day on April 20 over the western suburbs a definite movement of Broad-winged Hawks soared and drifted south or southeast, which was the prevailing direction of the wind. At Clague Park a band of 20 was seen (Klamm). A second flight occurred early on the morning of May 18 in the Rocky River Reservation where 15 Red-tailed Hawks and five Red-shouldered Hawks together with one Peregrine Falcon were observed as they headed southwest (Davies).

Compared to last spring, Cuckoos were notably scarce. For the Black-billed there were seven records totaling eight birds, whereas in the previous spring there were 16 records of 18 birds. The Yellow-billed Cuckoo was even scarcer, there being just two records totaling five birds.

Tabulation and analysis of the first date of occurrence and the subsequent peak period for 60 species of passerine birds (Kingbird to Swamp Sparrow) which commonly occur in the region either as transients or as breeding birds suggest the following conclusions: (1) the first arrivals appeared early, for 41 species were recorded prior to the average first date of arrival. Notably early (by from one to two weeks) were the Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Purple Martin, Red-eyed Vireo, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, and the Savannah, White-crowned and White-throated Sparrows. Notably tardy were the Kingbird, Wood Thrush, Hermit Thrush (which was not recorded until April 13, whereas it usually appears in the last week of March), and the Fox Sparrow. (2) The bulk of the migrants - the House Wren being an outstanding exception - arrived about on time, but in the case of the wholly transient, or non-breeding, species the numbers of birds seemed to be considerably reduced. The Cape May and the Black-throated Blue Warblers were uncommonly scarce, and the Magnolia Warbler, which is usually an abundant migrant, was extremely scarce.

Perhaps the generally mild weather which prevailed over the eastern half of the nation during April and May encouraged a slow and gradual northward movement of the passerine birds and discouraged any retardation followed by a sudden surge en masse. Between May 3 and 11, however, there was a considerable migration of songbirds, particularly on the rainy mornings of May 3 and 4, when a warm air

mass moved up from the south. It was then that the following species were first recorded in some numbers: House Wren, Catbird, Wood Thrush, Myrtle, Black-throated Green, Cerulean, Chestnut-sided, and Palm Warblers, Ovenbird, Yellowthroat, Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Swainson's Thrush was abundant from May 15 to 20, and there was an unusual number of records for this species to the end of that month.

The Field Notes section of this issue of the CALENDAR contains a graphic account by Allen E. Valentine of a massive movement of Mourning Doves, Flickers, Robins, and *Icteridae* along the lakefront on the morning of April 5. Also on that morning there was a large movement of Common Grackles, Redwinged Blackbirds, and particularly Brown-headed Cowbirds in the vicinity of the Shaker Lakes (Tramer), but there were no other similar reports from elsewhere in the region.

Early on the morning of April 6 a wave of Slate-colored Juncos appeared in Pepper Pike Village, and these birds remained for several days (Raynes). Juncos were exceptionally numerous throughout April; and in the first ten days of May there was a total of 27 records ranging from one to six birds. In the spring of 1957 there were just four records between April 25 and 30, and none at all in May.

A rapidly moving warm air mass advanced into the Cleveland region from the south on April 24 and brought with it a host of migrant sparrows. In a small portion of Forest Hill Park, Cleveland Heights, which was censused daily each morning from April 13 to May 20, these migrants were so abundant on the 24th that even an estimate of their numbers was difficult. The flock consisted of these species, which were feeding everywhere in the coarse grass and weedy borders: Juncos (most abundant of all), and Savannah, Vesper, Chipping, Field, White-throated, and Swamp Sparrows. By comparison, in the same area on the preceding morning just two Juncos were recorded and none of these species of sparrows (Newman). Similarly, in Lorain on the morning of April 24, there was an abundance of Savannah, Vesper, and White-throated Sparrows, as well as numbers of Hermit Thrushes and Brown Thrashers (Lebold).

The Mockingbird was seemingly not as numerous as in the spring of 1957 when we had an all-time high of eight records totaling ten individuals. This spring produced records of only five birds, four of them from the western portion of the region. The bird which appeared at a feeding station in Bedford during the last week of December 1957 remained in the area until about the second week of May, but as spring advanced it failed to sing and its plumage remained quite drab (Luedy). A second feeding station bird was the individual which occurred in Carlisle Township, a few miles south of Elyria, from November 12, 1957 to April 24, when it was last seen as it fought with a Brown Thrasher (Johnson). Another Mocker was observed in Elyria on March 28 (Johnson). Early on the morning of May 15, a bird appeared briefly in Lakeview Park, Lorain (Lebold). The fifth record comes from the backyard of a home in Rocky River where a singing bird visited on April 29, which is the exact date a Mockingbird stopped there last spring (Dexter).

The most spectacular feature of the spring season - though one that escaped most observers because they live inland - was the tremendous eastward movement of Blue Jays along Lake Erie during the month of May. This migration was observed from Magee Marsh near Toledo to at least as far east as Presque Isle, Pennsylvania (Davies). Within the Cleveland region the Jays were first seen on May 3, when at Perkins Beach groups of 10 to 35 appeared at regular intervals flying slightly above the treetops. More than 350 birds passed within an hour's time. The day was cloudy and rainy, and many of the birds stopped to perch whenever the showers intensified. Later in the day the ceiling lifted somewhat with the result that the migration was at a higher elevation (Klamm).

Perhaps the largest movement of Jays occurred on May 10 and 11; for on the 10th, which was a clear, mild day with a slight southerly wind, more than 4,000 birds passed over Lakewood Park in a period of three hours. They were traveling in loose groups of from 35 to 75 birds per group and kept at treetop level (Klamm). Also on the 10th in the vicinity of Huron and Magee Marsh, to the west of our region, several large flocks totaling at least 1,000 birds were observed (Davies). This eastward flight of Jays was still in progress on May 17, when again at Lakewood Park better than 400 passed by in two hours. The separate groups were smaller than those on the 10th, averaging about 35 birds (Klamm). On the 18th "hundreds in flocks" were reported from the Sunday Morning Bird Walk at Huntington Beach. At that same place on May 27, at about 9:00 a.m., a band of 16 was flying east at a height of about 500 feet and just a few hundred feet south of the shoreline (Newman). The only inland record is of a group of approximately 30 Jays which suddenly appeared on the afternoon of May 3 at the edge of the woods at the Upper Shaker Lakes and then immediately flew off to the east (Newman). They were utterly silent, and this voicelessness seemed to be characteristic of the entire migratory movement.

A search of our records covering the past ten years reveals certain information which at least suggests the possibility that the Blue Jay may be subject to cyclic influences which cause an irruption of the species at three-year intervals. Thus on May 13, 14, and 15, 1949, at Marblehead "flock after flock (containing anywhere from ten to forty birds in loose formation) flew in from Lake Erie in a southerly direction", as reported by John E. Lief tinck. In April and May 1952 many flights of Jays were noted along the lakefront from Bay Village to Black Brook. Again, three years later, on May 15, 1955, scattered groups were observed moving eastward at Huntington Beach. The extent of the 1958 flight and the number of birds involved make it by far the largest of which we have record, however.

Conspicuously absent from the spring records were reports of shorebirds other than the Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers and the Yellowlegs. Much, though not all, of the filled land north of the Lakefront Airport which was so attractive to plovers and sandpipers in previous spring and fall seasons has been further filled and graded, making it less suitable as a feeding area. In addition, our observers spent much less time at the airport this spring; thus whatever flights of birds there may have been passed unnoticed. Also missing from the season's records were these species: Least Bittern, Ruffed Grouse, Long-billed Marsh Wren, Parula Warbler.

NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-necked Grebe - The bird which was discovered on Summit Lake, Akron, on February 20 remained there and was last seen on March 15 (Wiley).

European Widgeon - A male in excellent plumage occupied the waters off the Lakefront Airport on April 12, along with a few American Widgeon (Klamm'). This is the first report of this duck since April 22, 1956, when one was observed at Holden Arboretum.

Whip-poor-will - To be added to the scanty nesting data on this species in the Cleveland region is a report of a female which was flushed from her nest containing two eggs on May 24. The nest, which was in the leaves under a huge red oak tree, was located in a beech-maple-oak woods in Solon (Martin).

Cliff Swallow - On April 20, seven birds appeared on the farm in Medina County where a small colony has nested in each of the last three years (Koppelberger).

Prairie Warbler - In Chestnut Hills Cemetery, Cuyahoga Falls, on May 3 this rare migrant sang off and on for 20 minutes though no other warblers of any kind were nearby (Wiley).

Orchard Oriole - A singing male was observed briefly at Perkins Beach on May 3 (Klamm). Another, though silent, male - seemingly a part of a general migratory movement - appeared in Lakeview Park, Lorain, on the morning of May 18 (Lebold). An immature male, which sang continually, remained in the vicinity of a home in Aurora from May 10 through the 13th, but was neither seen nor heard thereafter (Hamann). These three records are the largest number since the spring of 1953 when there were reports from four localities.

Summer Tanager - Early on the morning of May 2, a male appeared at the feeding station of a residence on Boston Mills Road, Summit County, which adjoins the oak woods where a pair of tanagers nested the prior two years. This male bird, whose arrival was a few days later than in previous years, came to the feeder four to five times daily until May 14, but he was seen and heard only occasionally thereafter to the end of May. At no time was a female observed (Ramp). A second record of this species is of a pair in a wooded portion of Perkins Park, Akron. The male, in immature plumage, was first seen on May 27, the female on the next day; and they were present to the end of the month (DeSante and Wiley).

Dickcissel - From March 24, which is an exceptionally early date for this species to appear in any of the northern states, to April 12, a male was present daily at a feeding station located at a home in Lakewood. The bird spent much of the day in the yard and, in the company of House Sparrows, fed on seeds at the feeder and on the ground below (Davies).

Tree Sparrow - A solitary bird, which was always seen in the same short stretch of open border, lingered at Tinker Creek Farm, Geauga County, until May 30, which is the latest date this species has ever been recorded in the Cleveland region (Ramisch).

POSSIBLE SIGHTING OF A ROSEATE TERN

[The Roseate Tern is a strictly maritime species, and no valid specimen exists for the Cleveland region or for the state of Ohio. There is one published record of a bird reported to have been seen in Lake County (probably at Fairport) on July 19, 1919 by E. A. Doolittle. Elsewhere in Ohio in the last ten years there have been several unpublished observations of the presumptive occurrence of this species, but of course these observations cannot serve as a basis for establishing the actual occurrence of the species in the state.

Since the Roseate Tern may be confused with the Common Tern which it closely resembles, and since no valid specimen is known to exist, we believe it should be placed on the hypothetical list with respect to its occurrence within the Cleveland region. Despite this conclusion we feel that the following account of the supposed sighting of a Roseate Tern in our region should be published. For this carefully written account is based upon close and extended observation and it strongly suggests the very real possibility that this species can and does occur here. Thus while it is not proof of occurrence, it is surely highly convincing evidence; for that reason it deserves to be made a part of the published history of the Roseate Tern in Ohio. - The Editors]

At about 1:00 p.m., on April 28, 1958, I drove past the Lower Shaker Lake and noticed a tern quartering over the water. I had only moments available to

me then and assumed it to be a Common Tern. During that afternoon I kept reflecting upon the flight and general appearance of the bird and discussed it by phone with my wife Margaret as well as with Neil Henderson. I returned, with binoculars, at 5:15 p.m. and found the bird perched on a floating branch about 25 yards from the canoe house. I was able to observe it at this distance for from 10 to 15 minutes in bright sunlight.

Observations made of the perching bird are as follows: about 16 inches long, with a black cap, forked tail, and very red feet. Bill black for about two-thirds of the length from the tip, the remaining portion reddish to the base. Otherwise the bird was nearly white; no other colors were noted. At first, I was about to conclude that my subconscious had let me down, when I saw that the bird's tail feathers extended past the wings and were quite literally dragging in the water. I estimated that the tail feathers were 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches longer than the wings. The bird did not call while perched or at any time under my observation.

In flight the bird was strikingly white both above and below. The tail was very deeply forked. The wingbeats seemed slower and more powerful than those of the Common Tern. In fact, during the hour or so I studied this tern it was a pleasure to watch the graceful, masterful flight. Later, after the bird had taken to the air, it was observed by my wife and by Robert and William Hyde, both of whom have seen the Roseate Tern in the East, as well as by Vera Carrothers, Leo Deininger, Adela Gaede, Neil Henderson, and Robert Maly. None of these observers saw the bird perched, but they all agreed it was not a typical Common Tern and that its tail feathers were exceptionally long and deeply forked.

The tern was not found at the lake at 7:00 a.m. on the following day nor at any time thereafter. On May 11, again at the Lower Shaker Lake, I closely studied two Common Terns in flight and, recollecting the tern seen on April 28, I noticed clearly the difference in flight and the distinctly greyish mantle of these Common Terns. On the basis of these observations I have concluded that the bird seen on April 28 was a Roseate Tern. - BERTRAM C. RAYNES

THE CLAGUE PARK BLACKBIRD ROOST by Owen Davies

Although the blackbird roost in Clague Park, Westlake, did not build up to such large numbers this spring as it did in the spring of 1957, it still was a sight worth seeing. It extended for a longer time this spring, beginning on March 1 with Common Grackles and Redwinged Blackbirds and lasting until about May 3.

The first arrivals consisted largely of Grackles, and no great buildup of Redwings occurred during the cold spells in March. Brown-headed Cowbirds and Rusty Blackbirds were present in small numbers from March 8 on. The gathering points for the early arrivals each evening in the first part of March were the trees in the southern portion of the park. Just before dark all the birds would get up into the air, circle back and forth, and finally, after several false starts, rapidly drop into the pine trees on the west side of the pond. This performance reminded me of Chimney Swifts entering a chimney. By March 19 the roost had built up to the point where not all of the birds could get up into the air and circle over the pine trees at one time. Blackbirds started roosting in the pines east of the pond for the first time on March 22. The peak in numbers (of about 60,000 to 65,000) came around March 28 to 30, which was approximately the peak period in 1957.

Later in the spring, from April 7 on, the blackbirds gathered in all large trees around the pond, especially in the northern section of the park. Then for the first time large numbers of blackbirds, especially Cowbirds and Starlings, fed everywhere on the ground in the park before going into the pine trees. A great many flocks of Grackles and Redwings moved east through Lakewood for several hours in the morning of April 12, according to Mike Stasko. On April 13 the size of the roost in Clague Park was much diminished, and by April 23 it was reduced to but a few scattered flocks. Yet fairly large numbers of birds apparently arrived with the warm air mass which reached Cleveland from the south on April 24, and which was almost immediately followed by a cold front coming down from Canada; for the numbers were up again on April 26. From then on the birds dwindled down to nothing by approximately May 10.

As is characteristic of such roosts, the birds streamed out of the roost area just at the first sign of light in the morning. For instance, the birds were all gone from Clague Park by 5:45 a.m. during the week of April 7 to 13, according to Walter Schuele. These birds ranged over a wide area for feeding during the day. In March, Elizabeth Yoder noted Grackles and Starlings leaving Elyria at about 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. and flying in a northeasterly direction, which is the direction they would take if the park was their destination.

It is interesting to note that there were no large flocks of Robins at Clague Park this spring during middle and late March. In fact, Robins were definitely scarce throughout March. Flocks did appear in early April, however. In connection with this scarcity, it is of interest to note that Walter Schuele found as many as 40 dead Robins at one time in the ravine behind his home in Rocky River following the extremely cold weather in mid-February.

I have learned that the blackbird roost has been in existence at Clague Park during the spring for about 12 years. It seems doubtful, however, that the tremendous numbers of blackbirds have roosted there each spring over that length of time. Birds first started roosting there when the pine trees near the pond had reached a height of about six feet.

The following tabulation, which is of course simply based on order of magnitude estimates, shows the variable character of the blackbird roost population and also shows the rise and fall in the total number of birds present.

<u>March</u>							
Date-	1	6	8	12	15	19	22
Starling	800	6,000	6,000	6,000	7,000	8,000	8,000
Redwing	75	4,000	6,000	6,000	7,000	5,000	2,000
Rusty Blackbird			100	100	100	300	100
Grackle	600	10,000	12,000	14,000	16,000	25,000	15,000
Cowbird			500	100	2,000	1,000	500
April							
Date.	7	13	19	26	29	3	10
Robin	600	200	75	250	70	20	10
Starling	25,000	25,000	6,000	12,000	3,000	3,000	200
Redwing	18,000	1,000	100	1,000	250	300	25
Rusty Blackbird	500	500		100	25		
Grackle	2,500	200	200	3,000	1,500	3,000	60
Cowbird	4,000	3,000	400	5,000	1,000	500	50

FIELD NOTES

Migratory Host Follows Lake Erie Shore. On the morning of April 5, I observed a massive migratory movement of Common Grackles, Robins, Flickers, Mourning Doves, Meadowlarks, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and Redwinged Blackbirds moving west to east along the Lake Erie shoreline from Clifton Park to Perkins Beach. The temperature at 8:00 a.m. was 42°, with the wind 20 to 25 miles per hour from the southeast. It was mostly clear and bright then though becoming cloudy later in the morning.

I first noted flocks moving along the shoreline at Clifton Park about 7:20 a.m. At that time they seemed to be mostly Grackles. At 8:00 from Webb Road observed an increasing number of birds, particularly Flickers and Meadowlarks. I arrived at the high bluff at Perkins Beach at about 8:15, and from this position during the next two hours I was able to grasp the magnitude of the movement that was underway. The movement covered an area extending perhaps 300 feet over the lake to 400 feet inland - a narrowly moving, continual, and unbroken stream of migrants. Some passed by me lower than shoulder level and no more than six feet away. Part of the wave occasionally flew over the lake and below the level of the bluff; others were several hundred feet in the air above me. Many Meadowlarks stopped on the bluff or in the trees on the bluff for a minute or two before resuming flight. Robins also stopped although none of the other migrants did.

Unfortunately, I was alone on the bluff during the entire time I watched the movement, and for that reason it was impossible to absorb and record all that was passing by me. Consequently, the following figures, which are definitely conservative, are merely rough estimates, but they may at least suggest the sizable number of birds involved: 300 Mourning Doves; 2,500 Robins; 250 Meadowlarks; 5,000 Redwinged Blackbirds; 4,000 Common Grackles; 550 Brown-headed Cowbirds.

At noon I returned to Perkins Beach to check on the status of the migration, but not a bird was to be seen although the movement was in full swing when I left the bluff shortly after ten o'clock. - ALLEN E. VALENTINE

Long-eared Owl in Cleveland Heights. As I walked through the grounds of Beaumont School, Cleveland Heights, on the morning of April 4, in search of a Barred Owl which had occurred there earlier, I discovered a Long-eared Owl perched about 30 feet up in a pine tree. So well concealed was it, however, that only when it flew off was I able to identify it as that species. The following day I returned to the school grounds and after several hours of searching I again saw the owl, this time as it flew through a grove of tall pine trees.

One week later, on April 12, what must surely have been this same Long-eared Owl appeared in the top of a stately spruce tree which stands on the front lawn of a home just off Fairmount Boulevard in Cleveland Heights, perhaps one-half to three-quarter miles distant from the spot where I had first seen it. The bird was discovered there by a friend of mine, its presence having been betrayed by the outraged cries of a band of Blue Jays. It remained throughout the day, and later, enjoying an unobstructed view, I studied it for 20 minutes. Early that evening, according to the occupant of the house where the owl had spent the day, the bird flew off headed east, which is in the direction of the Beaumont School; and it has not been seen again. - ROBERT HYDE

Warbler and Vireo Join in Dismantling Nest. While working in my yard on May 14, I observed a female Yellow Warbler going to and from a newly-made nest located some 6 1/2 feet up in a yellow viburnum bush. However, instead of bringing material to the nest she was flying away with it to a second nest about 50 feet distant in a yellow-leaved elder. Examination of the original nest disclosed it contained

one Cowbird egg. Presumably for that reason the warbler had abandoned this structure and was building a new one. During the time I watched her she made about a dozen trips at irregular intervals to and from the two nests. The Blue-grey Gnatcatcher is known to follow this practice, but I have never heard of it being done by a Yellow Warbler.

To climax the story, I also observed a Warbling Vireo come to this nest and fly away with material. The vireo made six visits while I watched, and on two occasions was chased away by the female Yellow Warbler. This vireo was found to be building a nest across the street from my house, the nest 60 feet up and at the end of a small branch on the south side of an elm tree. By the following day the old nest of the warbler was about two-thirds gone, and by the 18th nothing remained of it. Never again, however, did I chance to see either the warbler or the vireo in the process of dismantling it. - CARL F. HAMANN

Bald Eagle in Rocky River Valley. Driving upriver from Morley Ford in the Rocky River Reservation at about 8:20 on the cloudy, wet morning of March 2, I noticed a flock of Crows flying over the woods on the far side of the river 200 yards below the Lorain Avenue Bridge. I suspected a hawk or owl from the noise they were making, but this time they were after the king of them all, for a large, dark bird rose out of the woods below them and flew up to a tree on top the high rim of the valley. Following the bird through my glasses I saw that it was a fine adult Bald Eagle. After the eagle settled on its treetop perch, I had time to set up my telescope and observe it for several minutes before it launched back into the sky and flapped off downriver with the Crow flock following disjointedly and at a discreet distance to the rear.

- ALLEN E. VALENTINE

Keen Eye of a Blue Jay. The extraordinary visual acuity of birds is well known, but still another example of this sharpness of vision is shown by an incident involving a Blue Jay I observed in a second-growth woodland on May 28. The jay had been flitting about in the understory, particularly in a tangle of fallen branches at the base of a tall dead tulip tree. This spot seemed to afford good feeding, for the jay had caught several moths as well as a caterpillar or two. It paused then for a moment or so on top the brush pile when suddenly, without even appearing to cock its head in the direction of its flight, the bird mounted straight up in the air to a height of at least 50 feet, snatched something off the trunk of the tulip tree, and immediately returned to the pile of brush. There it quickly swallowed its catch, which may have been a fairly large beetle. It was difficult to realize - yet it was obviously so - that with a mere glance this jay had detected the insect against the blackish bark of the tree and at such a distance in the dim half light of the green-canopied woods. - DONALD L. NEWMAN