



CLEVELAND REGION

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and  
The Kirtland Bird Club

# THE CLEVELAND REGION

The Circle Has A Radius of 30 Miles Based on Cleveland Public Square

- |                              |                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Beaver Creek               | 30 Lake Rockwell             |
| 2 North Amherst              | 31 White City                |
| 3 Lorain                     | 32 Euclid Creek Reservation  |
| 4 Black River                | 33 Chagrin River             |
| 5 Elyria                     | 34 Willoughby                |
| 6 LaGrange                   | Waite Hill                   |
| 7 Avon-on-the-Lake           | 35 Sherwin Pond              |
| 8 Clague Park                | 36 Gildersleeve              |
| 9 Clifton Park               | 37 North Chagrin Reservation |
| 10 Rocky River               | 38 Gates Mills               |
| 11 Cleveland Hopkins Airport | 39 South Chagrin Reservation |
| 12 Medina                    | 40 Aurora Lake               |
| 13 Hinckley Reservation      | 41 Aurora Sanctuary          |
| 14 Edgewater Park            | 42 Mantua                    |
| Perkins Beach                | 43 Mentor Headlands          |
| 15 Terminal Tower            | 44 Mentor Marsh              |
| 16 Cleveland Public Square   | 45 Black Brook               |
| Cuyahoga River               | Headlands State Park         |
| 17 Brecksville Reservation   | 46 Fairport Harbor           |
| 18 Akron                     | 47 Painesville               |
| Cuyahoga Falls               | 48 Grand River               |
| 19 Akron Lakes               | 49 Little Mountain           |
| 20 Gordon. Park              | Holden Arboretum             |
| Illuminating Co. plant       | 50 Corning Lake              |
| 21 Doan Brook                |                              |
| 22 Natural Science Museum    |                              |
| Wade Park                    |                              |
| 23 Baldwin Reservoir         | 51 Stebbin's Gulch           |
| 24 Shaker Lakes              | 52 Chardon                   |
| 25 Lake View Cemetery        | 53 Burton                    |
| 26 Forest Hill Park          | 54 Punderson Lake            |
| 27 Bedford Reservation       | 55 Fern Lake                 |
| 28 Hudson                    | 56 LaDue Reservoir           |
| 29 Kent                      | 57 Spencer Wildlife Area     |



CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN  
PARK SYSTEM



PORTAGE ESCARPMENT  
(800-foot Contour Line)

THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR

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THE WEATHER  
Fall, 1979

September - Sunshine prevailed 60% of the time possible. Temperatures averaged out to 65.0 degrees, 1.1 degrees warmer than normal. Measurable precipitation totaled 3.66 inches, 0.86 inches over normal. Oddly, rain came on only 5 days and 2.38 inches of the total came on the 13th and 14th.

October - Temperatures averaged cooler than normal on 19 days and for the month 1.4 degrees below normal with a daily average of 52.4 degrees. Sunshine prevailed only 23% of the time possible. Precipitation was measurable on 15 days, eleven of which occurred before midmonth, but totaled only 1.79 inches, 0.78 inches below normal.

November - Precipitation was well distributed on 16 days to total 3.16 inches, 0.40 inches above normal. Snow came on 3 of these days, the 15th, 29th, and 30th. Sunshine prevailed 30% of the time possible. Temperatures averaged out to 42.3 degrees, 0.70 degrees warmer than normal.

## COMMENT ON THE SEASON

1979 fall birding in the Cleveland region was the warblers of September, the European Wigeon of October, and the Common Loons, Whistling Swans, and Little Gulls of November. And in an era when birders are off at a moment's notice when a rare and unusual species has been found it is still those age-old migration patterns, annually repeated every autumn, of returning waterfowl and warblers, of western stragglers and Arctic vagrants, of impossible-to-identify Empidonax flycatchers and ever-present sparrows, that are the framework of the season. Below is one story of the fall migration for 1979. Sit back, relax, and become reacquainted with another fascinating autumn migration.

Common Loon Peak numbers of Common Loons occurred during the first half of November. Daily coverage along Cleveland's lakefront turned up a maximum 69 loons on November 10 (Klamm). The next day, November 11, was the only major flightday of loons over Kuhlman Woods with 213 birds noted singly or in loose flocks of up to 30 individuals (Hannikman). Flight direction for a majority of these migrants was east to west whereas Common Loons noted over Kuhlman Woods in 1977 and 1978 generally moved north to south. The strong east-northeast winds of November 11 also pushed Whistling Swans along the Cleveland lakefront (see below) and eight Snow Geese over Kuhlman Woods. After this mid-November influx loons were uncommon along the Cleveland lakefront for the rest of the month. Elsewhere, inland at Lake Rockwell, Common Loons were regular in small numbers from mid-October through the end of the period.

For the second fall in succession Horned Grebes appeared in impressive numbers in November. Peak period of abundance was from November 11 to 19 with a maximum one day count of 958 on November 18 (Klamm).

Whistling Swan "Here today, gone tomorrow" is an apt description of the fall 1979 migration of Whistling Swans. The swans were in the Cleveland area in tremendous numbers on November 11. Before and after that date, however, only a few flocks were noted. That swans were everywhere on that November 11 is attested to by the following reports:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Observer</u>
Mentor Headlands	500-600	Corbin
Lake Rockwell	1,100	Rosche
Edgewater	1,276	LePage
Lakewood/Perkins	623	Klamm

Direction of movement for the majority of swans at Edgewater was from the north and east to the west. Consequently, many of the birds observed at Edgewater were probably counted at Lakewood Park/Perkins Beach. Mentor Headlands' swans, however were described as moving eastward. At Lake Rockwell the swans were both flyovers and stopovers as hundreds could be counted on the lake at one time. Whistling Swans were reported at Corning Lake, Lake Rockwell, and Waite Hills[Hill], and various Cleveland lake front localities before and after November 11 but only in small numbers. If you were not out on November 11, you could just have possibly missed swans entirely for the fall.

Waterfowl During the last few years nearly daily coverage of Lake Rockwell has yielded some excellent counts of several species of waterfowl. Most notable counts have been of American Wigeon and Ring-necked Duck. Beginning in late September and lasting through early November both these species can be recorded in considerable numbers. Fall 1979's best numbers were 250 American Wigeon on September 30 and an amazing 900 Ring-necked Ducks on October 29 (Rosche). Hooded Mergansers are also a regular migrant at Lake Rockwell. This species usually appears in small flocks numbering from a single to several pairs and can be observed all around Lake Rockwell. On November 23 an excellent tally of 80 Hooded Mergansers was reported (Rosche).

All three species of scoter were noted at various points along the Cleveland lakefront during the fall. Interesting, however, were occurrences of White-winged Scoter and Surf Scoter on inland lakes. Lone White-winged Scoters appeared at Corning Lake on November 4 (Faber) and Shaker Lakes on November 18 (Peskin et al.). Corning Lake also had a Surf Scoter on October 21 (Faber) and Lake Rockwell one on October 25 (Rosche). All inland scoters were described as being in female or immature plumage.

Red-breasted Mergansers peaked at both Lorain and Cleveland in the last week of November. Highest counts were 40,000 on November 24 at Lorain (Pogacnik) and 10,000 at Cleveland on November 27 (Klamm).

Shorebirds Fall shorebirds in the Cleveland area were very poor. To be sure Black-bellied Plovers and Golden Plovers appeared at Burke Airport but the numbers were down for both species. Twenty Golden Plovers on September 22 and 7 Black-bellied Plovers on October 11 were the meager maximum counts for the entire period. The two plovers also departed the region quickly. With the exception of three Black-bellied

Plovers at Mentor Headland on October 28, October 13 was the last date these two species were recorded at Burke Airport. In the past it was not uncommon for small numbers of these plovers to remain at Burke Airport through the end of October. Whether good flying conditions prompted the plovers to bypass the Cleveland area on their southward migration or whether increased use of Burke Airport by larger commercial jet aircraft discouraged prolonged appearances in our area remains to be seen in ensuing falls.

Whimbrels were the exception to the fall's scarcity of shorebirds. Up to eight could be found at Burke Airport between September 7 and 22. The only Baird's Sandpiper of the entire year 1979 fortuitously landed on the breakwall of the Northeast Yacht Club on October 12 and very quickly departed towards White City (Elder, Rosche, Hannikman). To have White City back again...!!!

Gulls and Terns Franklin's Gulls were scarce. Two at Lorain Harbor for most of November and two at East 55th on November 12 were the most observed at one time. Lake Rockwell's first Franklin's Gull appeared on October 23 (Rosche). Little Gulls were one of the delights of fall birding in 1979 and could be encountered all along the lakefront from Lorain Harbor to Wildwood Park. A visit to the East 55th Street Marina in late November virtually assured the birder of excellent studies of these birds. Very curious was the behavior of Little Gulls at East 55th. The adult gulls displayed, in an almost courtship-like act, to each other, they continuously chased each other around the marina basin area, and they were very vocal, emitting their high-pitched squeaks which were easily distinguished from the harsh calls of the ever-present Bonaparte's Gulls.

With the exception of 300 Common Terns at Mentor Headlands on September 23 (Hoffman), reports of these birds were concentrated from late October through early November. Normally the majority of Common Tern sightings for a fall come from early September with only occasional stragglers reported in late October and early November. This pattern of late October and early November abundance was most unusual. At this time the terns generally moved west in compact little flocks and oftentimes had to struggle against the strong west winds of the period. These movements ceased about November 11. At the close of the period a single Common Tern was noted at Lorain Harbor (Pogacnik).

Nighthawk, Chimney Swift Only significant concentration of Common Nighthawks occurred over Cleveland Heights on September 3 when 100 birds were tallied (Hoffman). Chimney Swifts, however, were very numerous until the middle of October. Lake Rockwell hosted hundreds of swifts daily and two observers continuously surveyed a Chimney Swift roosting sight in Lakewood until October 22 when 300 swifts were seen going to roost (Klamm). This latter observation was the last massive gathering of swifts for the fall.

Wrens No Carolina Wrens were reported during the fall. quite in contrast to this dismal showing by Carolina Wrens were consistently fair numbers of House Wrens and Winter Wrens in September and October. It is anyone's guess when the Carolina Wren will return to its early and mid 1970's period of abundance, but this cherry woodland citizen has been missed by most area birders.

Warblers Two observers who commented on warblers singled out September 9 as "the day" of peak abundance. On that day 19 species of warblers were observed in Kuhlman Woods (Hannikman) and numbers were termed "especially good" in a survey of several localities throughout the Greater Cleveland area (Klamm). Concern had been voiced about the Ovenbird. Spring migrants were considered scarce and only one successful local nesting was reported for the summer. In absolute numbers there certainly were more Ovenbirds in the fall than in the spring but this may have been caused by such factors as observations of young of the year, more time spent in local birding rather than chasing spring migrants all over Ohio, or even better coverage of the Ovenbird's preferred woodland habitat. Until more data are received about this species' abundance in our area concern about the Ovenbird's welfare will remain valid.

Winter Finches A bleak picture of winter finches emerged from fall reports. No Common Redpolls were observed, and the only Pine Siskin appeared at Lorain from September 20 to 30. Eleven Evening Grosbeaks flying over the Sohio Research Station on Warrensville Center Road on November 4 constituted the fall's largest flock (Knight). Other reports of Evening Grosbeaks were single birds in Hunting Valley on November 11 (Bacik). North Chagrin on November 12 (Corbin), and 3 to 5 birds on November 24 and 25 in Chagrin Falls (Sheldon).

Yearly Summary In the BIRD CALENDAR year now ended (December 1, 1978 to November 30, 1979), a total of 260 species were recorded. This is 18 less than the record-breaking year of 1977/1978. No Least Bitterns were seen, the Peregrine Falcon

was absent, and several species of shorebirds, which were possible at White City and rare elsewhere, such as Red Knot, Piping Plover, White-rumped Sandpiper, went unreported. Also, no birds new to the Cleveland region were found. Among the highlights were European Wigeon, Eared Grebe, Yellow Rail, and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

#### NOTEWORTHY RECORDS

Red-necked Grebe - Single birds were observed at Lakewood Park on October 30 and Perkins Beach on November 19 (Klamm).

Yellow-crowned Night Heron - An adult was recorded at Rocky River Metropark on September 1, 4, 5, 7 and was joined by an immature bird on September 2 (Klamm).

European Wigeon - A male in changing plumage remained at Lake Rockwell from September 15 to October 26 (Rosche et al.). Never before recorded in September or October in the Cleveland area and last noted in the fall in 1942, this particular bird was easy to locate and afforded many birders fine studies of its changing plumage patterns.

Harlequin Duck - An immature male or female remained at Edgewater Beach from October 11 to 20 (LePage).

Merlin - (1) A lone bird was hunting over the field at Glen Oaks School on September 22 (Rickard). (2) One flew over Lakeshore Boulevard near the Northeast Yacht Club on October 6. This bird quickly disappeared southward (Hannikman).

Yellow Rail - One of the most difficult of species to locate, an individual was glimpsed at LaDue Reservoir on November 11 (Rosche, Elder, Stover). This bird quickly was lost to view as it swam into some marshy growth and did not reappear. Yellow Rail was last noted in the Cleveland area in April 1968 and it is interesting to note that three of the last five records of this elusive species have been of either dead birds or individuals caught alive. The November 11 date is also most unusual as Yellow Rail had not previously been recorded in November in the Cleveland area. It must be remembered, however, that major movements of Common Loons and Whistling Swans were observed on November 11, so this sighting may not be that extraordinary when one pieces together the birding of that November day.

Purple Sandpiper - A single bird was observed on the moss-covered rocks of the breakwall at Mentor Headlands on November 4 (Corbin).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper - Two birds appeared at Burke Airport on September 23 for the year's only sighting (LePage).

Red Phalarope - What may have been the same individual Red Phalarope was found at East 156th Street on November 3 (Kellerman), at Mentor Headlands on November 5 (Rosche), and at Edgewater Park from November 8 to 16 (LePage et al.).

Pomarine Jaeger - An immature Pomarine Jaeger was observed from a fishing boat two miles off Avon Lake on October 2 (Pogacnik). During the approximate one hour the jaeger was under observation the bird was seen to chase a Ring-billed Gull and to land on the water near the boat to fish.

Black-legged Kittiwake - Immature birds were found at East 9th Street on November 28 (LePage) and at Wildwood Yacht Club on November 3 (Pogacnik).

Caspian Tern - A very late straggler appeared at Lorain on November 3 (Pogacnik).

Snowy Owl - A female or immature was observed on the moorings of the Wildwood Yacht Club on November 24 (Kellerman). The owl appeared oblivious to the comings and goings of the many Bonaparte's Gulls present at Wildwood at the same time.

Short-eared Owl - The only fall sighting of this species was of a lone bird flying west past the East 55th Street Marina on October 31 (LePage).

Saw-whet Owl - This tiny owl was located at Elmwood Park on October 28 (Stasko).

Chimney Swift - An unspecified number of Chimney Swifts were reported for October 26, a new late fall date of occurrence (LePage).

Eastern Wood Pewee - A tardy migrant was noted at Sims Park on October 20 (Corbin).

Short-billed Marsh Wren - (1) A "very tame" individual was scrutinized at Donald Gray Gardens on September 26 (Besser) and another was there on September 29 (LePage). (2) At the old Brooklyn Airport on October 28 a single bird was noted (LePage).

Solitary Vireo - A new latest fall date of occurrence was established for this species when one was observed at Pippin Lake on November 11 (Dexter, Rosche). Previous late fall date had been November 5, 1951.

Worm-eating Warbler - A drably colored, possibly immature, Worm-eating Warbler appeared in some bushes at the west end of Donald Gray Gardens on that fantastic warbler day, September 9 (Hoffman). This record constitutes the first reported fall observation of this increasingly abundant spring migrant in the history of CBC files.

Tennessee Warbler - Very late individuals occurred at Wildwood Park on October 28 (Corbin) and two birds in Kuhlman Woods, also on October 28 (Hannikman).

Nashville Warbler - On November 10 and 11 another dawdler was found in Kuhlman Woods (Hannikman).

Black-throated Blue Warbler - A brilliant male was located in Kuhlman Woods on the very late date of October 21 (Hannikman).

Yellow-headed Blackbird - A male remained at F.A. Seiberling Nature Center in Akron for several hours on the afternoon of September 23 (Stover, Szabo). This species was last recorded in the Cleveland region in 1973.

Indigo Bunting - A very late migrant appeared at Wildwood Park on October 27 (Corbin). The late fall date for this species is a mere two days later, October 29.

Sharp-tailed Sparrow - Two birds were sighted: at Edgewater Park from October 2 to 8 and at East 55th Street on October 2 and 6 (LePage).

#### FIELD NOTES

Birding in the 1970's - Reminiscences As editor of the Cleveland Bird Calendar, I feel close to the many rare and exciting species that have graced the pages of this publication. It is apropos, I feel, with this, the last issue of the 1970's, to enumerate what I consider the most noteworthy records of the decade. So, not in any particular order of importance (after all, isn't the bird itself, not where it appears on a list, most important to the real birder), and with apologies to the good birds I have omitted, here are my candidates for the birds of the 1970's -----

Louisiana Heron - Cleveland's first record in May 1976 at Mentor Marsh.

White-fronted Goose - The decade's only documented occurrence at Columbia Station in March 1971.

Yellow Rail - Elusive and seldom seen, at LaDue Reservoir in November 1979.

Pomarine Jaeger - Those who were there remember the dozen or so people with several spotting scopes scanning Burke Airport to see what the jaeger's next move would be (or when the next plane would move the jaeger) November 1973.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - The importance of these initial sightings in January and February 1977 was that they got more people interested in the winter gulls of Lake Erie and the results since have been fantastic.

Ivory Gull - What can be said? The high Arctic came to Cleveland on December 17, 1975 and remained until December 19, 1975, and those who were lucky enough to see this bird, like your first (or second) love, can not ever forget it.

Sabine's Gull - Another Arctic gem seen by many Clevelanders for the first time at Wildwood Park in October 1978.

Western Kingbird - A rare visit of this western tyrant kingbird to our area in Lorain, October 1978.

Violet-green Swallow - A first Cleveland record, Mentor Marsh, May 1970.

Varied Thrush - Another first Cleveland sighting at a feeder in Mentor for three weeks in December 1977 and January 1978.

Kirtland's Warbler - So endangered a species, but special to all Kirtland Bird Club members, North Chagrin, May 1977.

Painted Redstart - A lost waif, in Middleburg Heights, November 1970.

Western Tanager - December 1971 to January 1972, at a Christmas tree farm, at Christmas time, no less!!

Black-headed Grosbeak - A first Cleveland record, from Akron, January to April 1975.

What birds the 1980's hold in store for the Cleveland area is anyone's guess, but I am hopeful that I will be able to write a similar birding synopsis for the Cleveland Bird Calendar in 1989. -- RAY HANNIKMAN ---

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AN INVITATION: The Kirtland Bird Club meets at 7:45 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month except July and August at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Wade Oval, University Circle. Visitors are always welcome.

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Inquiries and correspondence regarding subscriptions to THE CLEVELAND BIRD CALENDAR should be addressed to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Attention: Helen Yenkevich, ~Wade Oval, University Circle, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

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The Kirtland Bird Club sponsors a weekly RARE BIRD ALERT at (216) 696-8186. Sightings of species rare in the Cleveland region as well as other interesting~ observations should be called into the tape on Mondays as the tape is replaced with current sightings each Tuesday. In the case of extreme rarities, e.g., Sabine's Gull, Varied Thrush, the tape should be called the day of the observation.