



Passenger Pigeon

Newsletter of the Cincinnati Bird Club

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West Nile Virus

West Nile Virus is certainly here. What we don't know yet is just what that is going to mean, for either avian or human communities. Our information about what has happened, and what is likely to happen in the future, is changing rapidly, so what is being written here is very likely to be out of date by the time you read this.

To date (August 27), one human in Hamilton County is believed to have died from the virus, and another has been diagnosed with West Nile but is expected to recover. The numbers for birds are much more alarming. RAPTOR, Inc. has had two Great Horned Owls and one Red-tailed Hawk die from what has been confirmed, by blood tests, to have been West Nile Virus. An additional thirty Great Horned Owls, five Red-tailed Hawks, three Cooper's Hawks, a Red-shouldered Hawk and a Barred Owl have been admitted in the past month with symptoms very similar to the confirmed cases. Most of these birds have died quickly, while only a few have recovered. Other raptor centers from around the state are reporting similar trends, with some centers losing captive program birds as well as wild birds

As bad as those numbers are, what is even more disturbing is that the virus's effect on raptors appears to be a new phenomenon. Earlier outbreaks of West Nile in the east did not seem to have anything like this effect on raptors. Has the virus mutated? And if so, will it also become more deadly to other avian and mammalian species, including humans? At this point, we

simply do not know. Nor do we know whether other bird species are already being affected. Some rehabbers believe that many other songbirds are also dying; but because so few songbirds are presented for rehabilitation, and because definitive blood tests have not been done yet, actual answers do not yet exist.

More information about the progress of the West Nile Virus outbreak can be found at the Ohio Department of Health's website, at <http://www.odh.state.oh.us/odhprograms/zoodis/wnv/wnvupdate.htm>. Also look at the Center for Disease Control's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm> for lots more general information about West Nile Virus.

In This Issue

West Nile Virus	1
Rare Bird Hotline	2
Checklist of the Birds of Ohio	2
Denver Holt to Speak At September Meeting ...	4
September Field Trip: Gilmore Ponds	4
September Best Bird Contest	4
Passenger Pigeon by eMail	5
Bird Club Membership	5
Contributors Wanted	5

Rare Bird Hotline

It's time once again to sign up for the Bird Club's rare bird hotline. For anyone who isn't familiar with the hotline, the idea is that anyone who finds a rare bird in our area calls the top of the list, and that person then passes the word along to the next person. When the system works well, everyone has heard about the bird within a few minutes. For better or worse, with the increased usage of the internet, we are seeing fewer calls sent out on the hotline. You can expect that it will be used only for birds seen less than annually in our area, and which have been seen within the past few hours. More common birds, or birds which aren't reported to the hotline for a couple of days, probably won't be sent out.

To sign up for the hotline, call Jay Stenger at 522-4245 (home) or 522-8147 (work), or eMail him at Jste100727@aol.com. **YOU MUST CONTACT JAY TO SIGN UP FOR THIS YEAR, EVEN IF YOU WERE ON THE LIST LAST YEAR.** By signing up, you are promising that when you get a call, you will pass it on to the next person, and that if you can't reach that person, you will call down the list until you reach another birder. Answering machines and non-birding family members do not count. Please do not give us a work number unless you can receive, and make, calls at work.



Checklist of the Birds of Ohio

A new checklist of the birds of Ohio has been published by the Ohio Bird Records Committee, in cooperation with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. The Checklist was compiled by David Dister, Joseph Hammond, Robert Harlan, Bernard Master, and Bill Whan. More than just a list, the new checklist shows the dates of occurrence and general level of abundance of each species, in a bar graph format that will be familiar to most birders. Samples of the checklist are on the facing page.

The Checklist is not designed as a field checklist, in the sense of something to be used to check off birds as they are seen. But it is definitely meant to be carried in the field. It is surprising how many otherwise good birders don't know when various species are to be expected and when they are rare. Taking the Checklist with you when you go birding will help to remedy that situation. It does have one significant limitation, though, since it shows abundance at the birds' optimal locations in Ohio. So Dark-eyed Junco, for example, is shown as a summer resident, because it regularly breeds the northeastern part of the state. Still, as an alternative to carrying Peterjohn around with you, the Checklist will be a valuable field tool.

There is really no reason for any Ohio birder not to have the Checklist, because it is free. You can ask for your copy by writing to the OBRC Secretary, Jim McCormac, at Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, 1889 Fountain Square Court, Columbus, OH 43224-1388, or at jim.mccormac@dnr.state.oh.us.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Western Sandpiper 1 Rare migrant, most likely along Lake Erie. Generally very rare in spring.					•		••••••••••••••••••••					
RED-NECKED STINT 2 One record: 21 Jul 1962, Ashtabula Co.												
Least Sandpiper 1 Widespread migrant. Most numerous along Lake Erie.				••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••
White-rumped Sandpiper 1 Uncommon migrant, irregularly common in late May. Most likely along Lake Erie.				••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••~
Baird's Sandpiper 1 Uncommon fall migrant, most likely along Lake Erie.							••••••••••••••••••••	••••••••••~	••••••••••~	••••••••••~	••••••••••~	••••••••••~
Pectoral Sandpiper 1 Widespread migrant.			••••••••••~	••••••••••~	••••••••••~		••••••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER 2 Two records: 6-23 Oct 1984, 1-2 Dec 1990.										1 1 1		1
Purple Sandpiper 1 Rare late fall migrant along Lake Erie breakwalls. Very few inland records.	••										••••••••••~	••••••••••~
Dunlin 1 Widespread migrant. Most numerous along Lake Erie.				••••••••••~	••••••~				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
CURLEW SANDPIPER 2 Five records, all since 1984. Most recent: 4-7 May 1995.					2 1 2		1 1 1					
Stilt Sandpiper 1 Generally uncommon fall migrant, most likely along Lake Erie. Rare in spring.				••			••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Buff-breasted Sandpiper 1 Rare fall migrant, most likely along Lake Erie.								••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
RUFF 1 Numerous records, 29 since 1980. Most recent: 1-9 May 2001.				3 4 1	3 3 7 1	1 1		1 1 2 1 1		1 1		

Graphs indicate abundances for each species at their optimal locations within the state.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Orange-crowned Warbler 1 Widespread uncommon migrant, most likely along Lake Erie.				••••••~	••••••~				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Nashville Warbler *1 Widespread migrant. Three nesting records from NE.				••••••~	••••••~				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Northern Parula *1 Widespread migrant. Locally fairly common nester in Hocking Co., uncommon at best elsewhere.				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Yellow Warbler *1 Widespread migrant and nester.				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Chestnut-sided Warbler *1 Widespread migrant. Locally uncommon nester, most likely in NE.				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Magnolia Warbler *1 Widespread migrant. Rare localized nester in hemlock gorges and spruce plantings.				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Cape May Warbler 1 Widespread migrant.				••••••~	••••••~				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Black-throated Blue Warbler *1 Widespread migrant. Two nesting records from NE.				••••••~	••••••~				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
Yellow-rumped Warbler 1 Widespread migrant. Generally uncommon to rare winter resident, most numerous in S.	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER 1 At least eight records, five since 1980. Most recent: 17 Nov-4 Dec 1994.	1 1 1 1 1 1 1				1 1 1							1 2 2 2 2 2
Black-throated Green Warbler *1 Widespread migrant. Locally common nester in hemlock gorges and pine/spruce plantings.				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~
TOWNSEND'S WARBLER 3 Two records: 7 Apr 1973, 30 Apr 1983.					1							
Blackburnian Warbler *1 Widespread migrant. Very rare localized nester in hemlock habitats in NE, Ashland and Hocking Cos.				••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~	••••••~

Graphs indicate abundances for each species at their optimal locations within the state.

Denver Holt to Speak At September Meeting

Denver Holt of the Owl Research Institute in Montana, will be the guest speaker at the joint Bird Club and RAPTOR Inc. meeting at 7:00 pm, September 26, 2002 at Sharon Woods. Please note that this is the last Thursday in September, instead of the usual third Thursday.

Denver Holt is a wildlife researcher with many interests. In particular, his research focuses on owls and their ecology. He has been researching owls since 1978, and has published numerous papers in both scientific and natural history journals. He is founder and president of the Owl Research Institute in Missoula, Montana, and has conducted owl related research in the U.S., Mexico, and Costa Rica. Within the U.S., he has worked in Alaska, Massachusetts, and Montana. Among other research, Denver has worked on gulls, terns, raptors, and small mammals. He is an avid and inquisitive outdoors person with other interests that include insects, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, plant identification, and geology.

This fall, on a date not yet announced, the National Geographic Explorer television program will feature a program, "Owls: Silent Hunters", on the Owl Research Institute's project on Snowy Owls in Barrow Alaska. National Geographic magazine will also have a documentary on this. (visit www.owlinstitute.org).

Last October, Denver gave a talk on Adaptations of Owls at the Cape May Birding Festival in Cape May, New Jersey and last November, he gave an informative talk on Snowy Owls at the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival in Harlingen, Texas.

In addition, he is a Victor Emanuel Tour Leader. You can see the trips he leads at <http://www.ventbird.com/db/index.ihtml>, then click on Denver Holt under Leader search.

September Field Trip: Gilmore Ponds

Mike Busam will lead off this year's schedule of Bird Club field trips with an outing to Gilmore Ponds. We'll meet at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 15 at the Gilmore Road parking lot. Fall migration of both shorebirds and warblers should be in full swing.

To reach this area, take the Winton Road exit north from Interstate 275. The name of the road will change to Gilmore Road, but keep going. Just past Route 4, you will need to turn left to stay with Gilmore Road. Watch for the park on your right, after you pass Symmes Road.

For more information, call Mike at 755-0057 or eMail him at mjb@schafter.cc.



September Best Bird Contest

Paul Wharton will continue what has become a Bird Club tradition, the awarding of a bird house for the best bird seen since the last meeting. This month's category is the best breeding record of the summer (unless Paul changes his mind). As always, the bird must be seen within the Birdathon area, and you must be present at the meeting in order to be eligible.

Passenger Pigeon by eMail

You can choose to receive your copy of the Passenger Pigeon by eMail instead of getting a paper copy through the regular mail. Getting the newsletter by eMail will save the Bird Club the expense of printing and mailing your copy, and you will receive it several days sooner than the paper copy would arrive. You will need to have the free Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. If you do not already have it, a free copy can be downloaded from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

To sign up for this service, send an eMail to the editors at keller@one.net. You can switch back to a paper copy at any time.

Contributors Wanted

The Passenger Pigeon needs your help! Don't worry, we're not hitting you up for money. Instead, we need your contributions in the form of articles or artwork for our newsletter. Or should we say, *your* newsletter. Please send your submissions to Ned or Kathy by the 20th of the month. If possible, we would prefer them by eMail to keller@one.net. But if that's not possible, you can also send them to 7899 Bridgetown Road, Cleves OH 45002.



Bird Club Membership

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

eMail _____

____ Individual \$12.00

____ Family \$15.00

____ Student \$6.00

Make your check payable to Cincinnati Bird Club, and mail to:
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<http://w3.one.net/~keller/cincybirds/goodbird/sighting.htm>