

APPENDIX A

Probable Nonbreeders Recorded During the Atlas Project

The following species were reported from Ohio during the Atlas Project but were not confirmed as breeders. Some species were represented by unmated males that established territories during the summer months, while others were presumably nonbreeding individuals summering in the state. Most of these species nested in Ohio during historic times, usually as isolated and very irregular breeding attempts, but none ever established breeding populations. Several species had no documented nesting records from Ohio, but either bred in the state after the Atlas Project was completed or were considered to be potential breeding species in the future.

This list does not pretend to be a complete compilation of all nonbreeding species reported from Ohio during the Atlas Project. Species whose normal breeding range is far removed from Ohio and are very unlikely to nest in the state were excluded from consideration. These species primarily consist of several shorebirds, gulls, and terns whose immatures regularly appear along Lake Erie and occasionally at inland lakes as wandering nonbreeding individuals.

Tricolored Heron

Egretta tricolor

Since the 1970s, Tricolored Herons have been casual to rare but fairly regular summer visitors to the marshes bordering western Lake Erie in Ottawa and Lucas counties (Peterjohn 1989a). These herons were presumably nonbreeding visitors. During 1979, a Tricolored Heron was observed making regular flights to the large mixed heronry on West Sister Island (Lucas County) (Kleen 1979). These flights suggested a possible nesting attempt on the island, but the presence of a mate or nest was never confirmed.

While Tricolored Herons were annual summer visitors to the western Lake Erie marshes during the 1980s, they were not observed in the vicinity of West Sister Island until 1986. A single heron briefly visited the colony that summer, apparently prospecting for a mate or nest site but did not breed. This species has not been observed in the vicinity of this heronry during subsequent years. Tricolored Herons are not known to nest anywhere in the Great Lakes region, but the West Sister Island colony with its diversity of small herons would be a suitable potential breeding location for this species.

Lesser Scaup

Aythya affinis

Summering Lesser Scaup were regularly encountered in portions of Ohio during the first decades of the 20th century, but most individuals were believed to be nonbreeders and crippled birds from spring hunting seasons. There were a few confirmed breeding records, although no location consistently hosted nesting pairs. The few published breeding records were from Lorain, Summit, Stark, Franklin, Erie, and Lucas counties (Peterjohn 1989a). By the mid-1930s, summering scaup were primarily restricted to the marshes bordering western Lake Erie and Sandusky Bay. The status of these individuals was the subject of

contradictory claims. Hicks (1935) reported Lesser Scaup were “rather definitely established in Lucas, Ottawa, and Sandusky counties”, while Campbell (1968) thought they were primarily nonbreeding summer visitors and cited only one nesting record.

Few summering scaup have been observed along western Lake Erie since the 1940s and there are no recent nesting records from these counties. Away from these marshes, a scaup nest was constructed at Lake St. Mary’s but no eggs were laid (Clark and Sipe 1970). The most recent confirmed breeding record in Ohio was from Carroll County during 1954 (Brooks 1954).

During the Atlas Project, a pair of Lesser Scaup summered in Summit County in 1985 while single scaup remained into July in Medina County during 1985 and in Ottawa County during 1987. These individuals were presumably nonbreeders as no nesting behavior was ever observed.

Within Ohio, breeding Lesser Scaup occupied extensive wetlands and the marshy borders of lakes and ponds. Their breeding biology and chronology were similar to that described for other waterfowl along western Lake Erie.

Osprey

Pandion haliaetus

During the 19th century, Ohio may have hosted a small breeding population of Ospreys. Kirtland (1838) observed a nesting pair in Mahoning County and a few Ospreys regularly summered along Lake Erie where a breeding record was claimed from Erie County (Hicks 1935). They may have also nested at Buckeye Lake and Lake St. Mary’s (Trautman 1940, Clark and Sipe 1970). There were only a few sporadic nesting attempts during the 20th century. Ospreys nested at Lake St. Mary’s through 1913 and a pair reportedly summered along the Scioto River in Pike County during 1928–1930 where breeding was suspected but a nest was not discovered (Hicks 1935). The most recent nesting records consisted of an unsuccessful attempt at Buckeye Lake in 1941 and a possible attempt at Burr Oak State Park (Athens County) several years later (Peterjohn 1989a).

Osprey populations declined throughout North America between 1950 and the mid-1970s (Palmer 1988), and few summering individuals were reported from Ohio during these years. Their numbers noticeably improved after 1975 and Ospreys have annually summered in Ohio since 1980 (Peterjohn 1989a). These summering Ospreys are presumably nonbreeding immatures spending the summer months south of their normal breeding range (Palmer 1988).

While nonbreeding Ospreys were encountered during each year of the Atlas Project, one individual exhibited nesting behavior. A single Osprey attempted to construct a nest in a reclaimed strip mine in Belmont County during 1985 and 1986. This individual was unmated and never successfully completed its nest.

While there have been no confirmed breeding records from Ohio in 40+ years, nesting Ospreys could be expected to appear in the future. An expanding population in North America and hacking programs in Kentucky are producing increased numbers

of summering Ospreys throughout the Great Lakes region. Should this trend continue, some of these individuals may eventually attempt to nest along Lake Erie or large inland reservoirs within Ohio.

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

Ohio has never hosted any naturally-occurring breeding pairs of Peregrine Falcons. Within recent years, introduced Peregrines have bred in the state, a result of birds produced by hacking programs in Ohio and many other states outside of the historical breeding range of this species.

A pair of introduced Peregrine Falcons initially summered at Toledo during 1987 but did not nest. They successfully nested in this city during 1988 but were unsuccessful in 1989. During 1990, a pair in Toledo raised young while another pair summered in Cleveland but did not nest. These introduced Peregrines inhabited the downtown areas of large cities. They nested on ledges on tall buildings, frequently in structures provided for them, and generally hunt in nearby urban areas.

Whether or not a breeding population of introduced Peregrines will become established in Ohio remains to be determined. As long as Ohio and neighboring states are releasing numbers of young Peregrines each summer, breeding pairs may be expected to appear within any large city in the state. Whether or not these breeding pairs will be able to successfully maintain their numbers once these release programs are terminated is uncertain.

Gray Partridge

Perdix perdix

This Eurasian gamebird was introduced into Ohio to replace native species whose numbers were severely reduced by habitat destruction and overhunting. The first introductions occurred between 1909 and 1916 when 2000 partridges were released across the state. They rapidly disappeared from the eastern and southern counties but thrived in northwestern and west-central Ohio (Westerkov 1956). Another 7000 partridges were released between 1924 and 1930, supplementing breeding pairs in the western counties but failing to establish populations in southern and eastern Ohio. Their populations peaked during the early 1930s at densities of 25+ per square mile in portions of Fulton, Lucas, Defiance, Henry, Wood, Paulding, Putnam, Hancock, Van Wert, and Allen counties (Hicks 1935). Nesting pairs were established in most counties east to Erie, Crawford, and Delaware, and south to Preble, Montgomery, Clinton, and Highland.

Despite additional releases of Gray Partridges in western Ohio, their numbers noticeably declined by 1940. This trend accelerated during the 1940s. They had virtually disappeared from northwestern Ohio by 1948 when most remaining partridges were distributed within Madison, Fayette, Champaign, Clark, Miami, and Darke counties (Westerkov 1956). These remnant populations quietly disappeared during the 1950s and 1960s, although their disappearance was somewhat obscured by local reintroduction efforts during the 1960s. The last Gray Partridge were reported from Madison County during 1968, but landowners indicated a few pairs may have persisted into the early 1970s (Peterjohn 1989a).

During the Atlas Project, a Gray Partridge was reported from Darke County during 1986. Contacts with local landowners indicated this individual had been recently released and was not part of a remnant breeding population.

Within Ohio, Gray Partridges preferred flat or slightly rolling farmlands with sandy soils, numerous shrubby fencerows, and grasslands interspersed among cultivated fields. Their breeding biology and chronology were summarized by Westerkov (1949, 1956). Intensive agricultural land use practices, particularly the elimination of grasslands and fencerows, were the most prominent factors causing their disappearance from Ohio (Peterjohn 1989a).

Wilson's Phalarope

Phalaropus tricolor

Wilson's Phalaropes are widely distributed occupants of marshes and wet meadows of central and western North America. In recent years, their breeding range has expanded eastward through the Great Lakes region and small numbers have nested east to New England and the Atlantic provinces of Canada (AOU 1983).

Ohio's first nesting Wilson's Phalaropes were discovered at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area (Ottawa County) during June 1980. Two pairs produced clutches during June, but only one nest was successful (Shieldcastle 1980). One pair returned to this location during 1981 but a nest was never discovered. The only other nesting attempt was reported from Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (Ottawa County) during June 1988, although this report was later disputed by others.

During the Atlas Project, there were two reports of Wilson's Phalaropes during early June from northern Ohio. Three females were reported from one location in Seneca County while a Sandusky County marsh hosted one female. No males were observed at either site and no definite evidence of nesting was noted. These females were probably late spring migrants or early fall migrants rather than local breeders.

Given their expanding populations, Wilson's Phalaropes could potentially nest in Ohio in the future. The extensive marshes along western Lake Erie and Sandusky Bay, particularly shallow flooded areas dominated by grasses, provide suitable breeding habitats for this species. They could also appear in suitable wetlands elsewhere in the state.

Nashville Warbler

Vermivora ruficapilla

During the Atlas Project, the only report of a Nashville Warbler was from Lorain County in 1982. An apparently unmated male established a territory within the county and remained in the area throughout the summer. No mate or evidence of nesting was observed.

There are few other records of summering Nashville Warblers in northern Ohio. Hicks (1933a) reported single males in Ashtabula County during 1928 and 1929, but the only nest he discovered in the county was at the former Pymatuning Bog during 1931. Summering Nashvilles have not been found in this county during subsequent years. Another Nashville Warbler summered in Stark County during 1936, but this male was also unmated. Ohio's only other reported nesting attempt was from Stebbins Gulch (Geauga County) during 1969 (Peterjohn 1989a). These records indicate Nashville Warblers are very sporadic summer residents, and probably never had an established population in the state.

Within Ohio, most summering Nashville Warblers have been found in hemlock woods and bogs. A few unmated males

occupied deciduous woods. They prefer open forests with relatively dense ground cover and are frequently found along woodland edges and openings. Damp or dry habitats are equally preferred. Their nests are placed on the ground, usually cleverly concealed within mossy hummocks and clumps of grasses. Their breeding chronology in Ohio is expected to be similar to that reported from Ontario (Peck and James 1987).

Black-throated Blue Warbler

Dendroica caerulescens

Another sporadic summer resident in Ohio, the status of Black-throated Blue Warblers is similar to the preceding species. Ohio's first summer records were reported by Hicks (1933a) from Ashtabula County where breeding pairs were found in Wayne Township during 1928 and the former Pymatuning Bog in 1931. There have been no nesting records from the county during subsequent years. Territorial males have rarely appeared in the hemlock forests within the Chagrin River watershed in Lake, Geauga, and eastern Cuyahoga counties beginning in the 1960s, but no nests have ever been located.

A few additional summering Black-throated Blue Warblers were detected during the Atlas Project. The only territorial male resided in Mohican State Forest during 1982 (not 1981 as in Peterjohn 1989a). This male shifted the location of his territory during the summer, an indication that he was probably unmated. Additional singing males were briefly observed in Lucas, Mahoning, Auglaize, Hocking, and Belmont counties, but apparently did not establish territories at any of these locations. These males were probably wandering nonbreeders, although a few may have been exceptionally late spring migrants.

While nonbreeding Black-throated Blues have been found in deciduous woods, all territorial males and breeding pairs have occupied hemlock forests. They prefer edges and openings in these woods where the woody cover is fairly dense, and inhabit the deciduous understories of these coniferous woodlands. Their nests are normally placed at heights of 1–5 feet in small saplings. Based on their breeding chronology in Ontario (Peck and James 1987), their clutches would probably be laid during the last days of May and first half of June. The young warblers would fledge during the first half of July.

Swainson's Warbler

Limnothlypis swainsonii

In the Appalachian region, breeding Swainson's Warblers are occupants of dense rhododendron hollows and similar impenetrable thickets in damp woods. Their breeding range normally extends north to eastern Kentucky and central West Virginia (AOU 1983). A few pairs have been noted north to the vicinity of Huntington, West Virginia, just across the Ohio River from Ohio. While the AOU (1983) claims this species breeds in southern Ohio, there are no published records of confirmed nesting pairs from the state (Peterjohn 1989a).

Despite the absence of documented breeding records, a few Swainson's Warblers have been encountered in Ohio during the summer months. Ohio's first record of this species was provided by a singing male discovered in Lawrence County during May 1947 (Green 1947). This male remained on his territory through June 21 when he was collected, but no mate was ever observed. This male did not occupy typical nesting habitats for this species, as he inhabited a cutover hillside covered with dense under-

growth and few trees. Summering Swainson's Warblers have also been reported from Jefferson County during 1964, 1966, 1970, and 1971, and from Columbiana County during 1976 (Peterjohn 1989a); but these sightings were not adequately documented and their validity cannot be proven.

Another territorial male was discovered during the Atlas Project. This male was discovered in Jackson County during May 1987. He inhabited a recently cutover hillside dominated by dense shrubs and saplings but no large trees. He was believed to be unmated, but his breeding status could never be proven in this impenetrable habitat.

Since Swainson's Warblers nest close to the Ohio River in West Virginia, it is conceivable that a small breeding population in southern Ohio has been overlooked during recent decades. This species should be searched for in the southern Ohio counties closest to its West Virginia range, especially Lawrence and adjacent counties. While the greatest efforts should concentrate within mature woodlands with dense shrub layers, this species may also be found in sapling-stage vegetation on cutover hillsides. Confirming nests in these dense habitats will pose a considerable challenge.

White-throated Sparrow

Zonotrichia albicollis

White-throated Sparrows have always been sporadic summer residents in northern Ohio. The first breeding record was from the Marblehead Peninsula of Ottawa County during 1913 (Campbell 1940). All other confirmed nesting pairs have been found in the northeastern counties. A pair of White-throats nested near Cleveland during 1929 (Williams 1950). The other breeding records were reported by Hicks (1933a) from Ashtabula County where dependent young were observed in Wayne Township each year between 1928 and 1930 and a nest with young was discovered in the former Pymatuning Bog in 1932.

There have been no confirmed nesting attempts within Ohio since 1932 (Peterjohn 1989a). During recent decades, White-throated Sparrows have been very sporadic summer visitors, primarily in the northern counties. Most records have been during early June and were probably exceptionally late spring migrants. A few wandering nonbreeders appeared later in the summer, but none established territories.

This pattern of sporadic summer records continued during the Atlas Project. The only singing male occupying suitable nesting habitats was found in Ashtabula County during June 1986. The breeding status of this individual was not determined. An early June sighting from Montgomery County was probably a late spring migrant. A White-throated Sparrow on Kelley's Island (Erie County) during mid-June was believed to be unmated. After the Atlas Project was completed, another unmated male summered along Lake Erie in Lake County.

Breeding White-throated Sparrows have been found in a variety of coniferous, mixed, and deciduous woodland communities (Peck and James 1987). They prefer open second growth woods with dense shrub layers, and their territories are usually located along woodland edges and clearings. Dry and damp woods are equally suitable. Their nests are usually placed on or very close to the ground in dense brush and ground cover. The few nests discovered in Ohio have a similar chronology as those reported from Ontario by Peck and James (1987).

