

FEBRUARY 05, 2022 - CUYAHOGA VALLEY MONTHLY TOWPATH TRAIL CENSUS.

ROUTE: Red Lock Trailhead south to Deep Lock Quarry Metro Park to Riverview Rd. to south to Bolanz Rd. to the Towpath Trail

again, south to Ira Beaver Marsh Trailhead. Finish early due to terrible trail conditions.

TIME: 7:35am - 2:20pm TEMP.: 9F ~ 24F COND.: Cold and frozen; turning sunny with blue skies; then mostly sunny from

10:30am until end of census; all ponds and small creeks frozen.

TRAIL COND.: Terrible and tiring; snow cover from 9-inches to 17-inches at start; "post-holed" from Red Lock Trailhead to

Lock 33, paralleling the fresh cross-country ski tracks; skier turned around at Lock 33 at Stanford Swamp, so I followed one

set of older rutted tracks south to Boston; more "post-holing" from Boston to just before Stumpy Basin, as the ski tracks turned

around there; created my own trail from just before Stumpy Basin to about the first third of the Stumpy Basin boardwalk, then

followed one set of deer tracks for the rest of the boardwalk to Lock 31 (a.k.a. "Lonesome Lock"), then a single lane rut from

Lock 31 to Deep Lock Quarry Metro Park, where I made the executive decision to walk Riverview Rd., paralleling the Towpath

Trail, to Bolanz Rd. and re-join the Towpath Trail from Bolanz Rd. to the Ira Beaver Marsh Trailhead.

Snow cover decreased as

I continued south to about 8-inches to 10-inches. Called it quits there as the Towpath Trail didn't even have a single lane rut

from Ira Rd. to Merriman Valley and choosing to avoid the cramped plow-line on the side of the road and the vehicle traffic for

the rest of the route. RIVER COND.: Normal, free-flowing, and "healthy" looking.

FT. MI.: 9.50 OBS.: Douglas W. Vogus.

I. MAMMALS: 4 SPECIES.

1. Eastern Gray Squirrel - 2
2. Eastern Fox Squirrel - 1
3. Red Squirrel - 3
4. White-tailed Deer - 8 (does)

II. BIRDS: 42 SPECIES, 1,371 TOTAL BIRDS.

(NOTE: m = male; f = female; ? = bird was seen but not sexed; * = bird was heard calling but not sexed)

1. Canada Goose - 246
2. Trumpeter Swan - 1 (at Szalay's corn stubble field feeding on the waste corn with the geese and crows. Third Record on Census & First February Record on Census)
3. Gadwall - 2 (1m,1f) (in Cuyahoga River north of Ira Beaver Marsh - First February Record on Census)
4. American Black Duck - 2 (1m,1f)
5. Mallard - 39 (23m,16f)
6. Common Goldeneye - 23 (3m,20f) (Fourth February Record on Census)
7. Hooded Merganser - 3 (f) (in Cuyahoga River at Red Lock - First February Record on Census)

8. Common Merganser - 46 (10m,9f,27?)
9. Rock Pigeon - 8
10. Mourning Dove - 2
11. Ring-billed Gull - 268 (gulls following their usual morning commute from Lake Erie to Tuscarawas County landfill?)
12. Herring Gull - 16
13. Great Blue Heron - 1 (a running doe scared it up out of Brandywine Creek)
14. Bald Eagle - 5 (2 adult,1 "almost there" adult with half-white head and tail,2 immature)
15. Red-tailed Hawk - 6 (1 immature)
16. Eastern Screech-Owl - 2 (1 gray morph in a sycamore cavity & 1 red morph in a sugar maple cavity)
17. Belted Kingfisher - 1 (m)
18. Red-bellied Woodpecker - 18 (5m,3?,10*)
19. Downy Woodpecker - 17 (4m,5f,8*)
20. Hairy Woodpecker - 4 (1m,1f,2*)
21. Northern Flicker - 2 (m)
22. Pileated Woodpecker - 3 (2?,1*)
23. Blue Jay - 35
24. American Crow - 317
25. Black-capped Chickadee - 12
26. Tufted Titmouse - 18
27. White-breasted Nuthatch - 12 (2m,1f,9*)
28. Carolina Wren - 11
29. Golden-crowned Kinglet - 1 (m)
30. Eastern Bluebird - 29 (9m,8f,12?)
31. American Robin - 81
32. European Starling - 9
33. House Sparrow - 22
34. House Finch - 3 (1f,1?,1*)
35. American Goldfinch - 9
36. Fox Sparrow - 1 (First February Record on Census)
37. American Tree Sparrow - 5
38. Dark-eyed Junco - 3 (2m,1f)
39. White-throated Sparrow - 24
40. Song Sparrow - 5
41. Eastern Towhee - 7 (5m,2* - one bird short of the high of 8 on 05/2019 - but this is February!?)
42. Northern Cardinal - 47 (29m,12f,6*)

Unidentified Sparrow Species - 2 (backlit and flying across the river)

Unidentified Passerines - 3

III. FISHES: 1 SPECIES (DEAD).

1. Channel Catfish - 1 (about a 12-pounder, bloody and dragged up on the riverbank at Red Lock - otter?)

FIELD NOTE: Neither of the resident Peregrine Falcons were found under or around the Ohio Turnpike bridge, which probably had less

to do with the time of the season and more to do with someone flying an extremely fast, small black drone under the bridge and around the bridge abutments. I could not see who was piloting this annoyance, whether on the ground below (due to the trail conditions I was one of the few out there) or up on Riverview Rd. high above the trail. I called the C.V.N.P. ranger headquarters to inform them of this, as drones are not permitted in the park. They said they would send an officer out. Those of us in and around the Cuyahoga Valley that have enjoyed these resident falcons know how fleeting this could be, as there is no actual nesting platform under the bridge, they have done this all on their own, and it could end at any time. Having a speeding black nemesis buzzing around their aerie is the last thing we need.

Since the inception of this monthly census in 2010 there have been two males and three females that have bred, or attempted to breed here. "Rocky" and "Lara" were here from before 2010 to sometime around 2016, when Lara moved north up into the Cleveland area. A new immature female named "Gatewood" showed up in 2017, but young have been few and far between due to inexperience, I assume. In 2018 a new male showed up and looked to take over the territory. This younger, fit and fierce-looking male named "Trailblazer" was no match for the aging Rocky. Rocky was found and rescued under the bridge, badly injured from the melee. Rocky was taken to a raptor rehab center for an injured eye that had to be removed. He eventually succumbed to infection and, sadly, had to be euthanized. The inexperienced Gatewood then left in 2019 and was replaced by a new female. Unfortunately, with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources ending their falcon banding program due to the continued success of the species, "naming" falcons is over with and future resident Ohio falcon identification is cloudy, at best. Check out C & C's Ohio Peregrine Page for more info. Not exactly looking at different "whale tails" to find different falcons, but their phenomenal photography shows differences for identification. Chad & Chris Saladin's commitment, attention to detail, awesome photography and exceptional fieldwork really is unparalleled.

If anyone witnesses the drone pilot, the C.V.N.P. rangers can be reached at (440) 546-5945. Thank you!

Compiler: Douglas W. Vogus - Akron, Ohio