

THE 2022 GREATER AKRON AUDUBON SOCIETY SUMMER BREEDING BIRD CENSUS IN REVIEW

THE WEATHER

All in all - no complaints here. The first five days of the census were very favorable, with temperatures ranging from the mid 50's to low 60's in the morning and topping out anywhere from the mid 70's to low 80's, with little to no precipitation. By the 15th. and 16th. of June, temperatures climbed into the low 90's with plenty of heat and humidity, before dropping back to the high 60's to low 70's in the morning to low to mid 80's by the afternoon to finish out the count period. No major thunderstorms or prolonged, stalled storm fronts made for great birding weather.

VOLUNTEERS

After topping over 100 volunteers the previous two years, we were just under the century mark with 95 in 2022. Many of you had comments in your emails when sending in your results for your areas stating, "Where were all the birds?" Michelle and I both agreed, as we went through many stretches where it was just dead quiet with little to no activity. We expected better with the nice weather, but, as you can see from the final totals, that everything ended up being as normal as in recent years. But it did seem less "birdy" at times.

We had coverage in 29 out of the 30 Areas that make up Summit County in 2022, with only Area #8 lacking any substantial results. Two areas in 2023 are "OPEN" and up for grabs - the aforementioned Area #8 and Area #10. With so many established volunteers in their "home" territories it would be great to find some seasoned birders or those just starting out, looking to hone their birding skills, to take over these two easily accessible areas. Wolfgang Pelz has all the maps on the Greater Akron Audubon Society website. So, if you know of anyone looking to get in on the summer fun, have them contact me. Although the maps are on the website, I'll give a quick rundown of some of the prime habitat in each.

AREA #8 - A small and manageable area that would only take a few days of coverage if one is not available to spend all ten days in the area. Highlights include Summit Metro Parks' Hampton Hills Mountain Bike Area off of Theiss Rd. Although set up for mountain biking and no hiking access, it is occasionally closed during inclement weather, to prevent the rutting and erosion of the trails, I assume. I'm sure contacting Summit Metro Parks and obtaining a permit would allow one to census the area on days of no biking. Besides the mountain biking trails that allows one into some seriously mature hardwoods in the ravines along Woodard Creek, there are also a few ponds along the cell-tower access road as well as the grassy cap on the former Hardy Road Landfill that should hold Savannah Sparrows, Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlarks, and who knows what other hidden gems. It also has Kool Lake on Hardy Rd., the Mud Brook drainage before it gets to the Cuyahoga River in the Timber Top apartments area, and enough sidestreets in the old "Northampton" section of Cuyahoga Falls to pad numbers of everything from House Wrens to American Robins to Chipping Sparrows to Common Grackles. 2020's coverage yielded 68 species and with proper access and coverage could easily hit 75 species. It's a low risk - high reward opportunity, folks!

AREA #10 - Yet another smaller area that would merit only a few days of coverage. Highlights include Wyoga Lake (find the water - find the birds), some swampy areas along Wyoga Lake Rd., Summit Metro Parks' Bike & Hike Trail from Hudson Dr. north to Seasons Rd., Northlawn Cemetery off of Akron-Cleveland Rd. (State Rd.) and its surrounding woods butting up to the C.V.N.P. in Area #9, and plenty of "birdy nooks and crannies" throughout the area as well as neighborhoods for the more common birds. Although under seige from "progress" and chronic development, Michelle, John Henry, and myself managed 53 species in only five and a half hours in one day of coverage this breeding season. A good four days of coverage could yield 60-plus species with time left over to hit all the weddings, graduations, and cook-outs on your calendar! The price, you ask? Free! Any takers?

Two new volunteers hopping on board this season were Pat Pickard in Area #23 and Dennis Mersky in Area #25, both in areas that deserved good coverage and got it! Pat's area has the Towpath Trail from Barberton to I-277/Rt. 224, Nesmith Lake and Long Lake, as well as the currently not open to the public, Summit Metro Parks' Confluence Metro Park, where Pat found the only Northern Bobwhites on this seasons census. Dennis's area is mostly Mogadore including the Gilchrist Rd. area, and the origins of the Little Cuyahoga River as it leaves Portage County. Dennis gave it some much-needed, more than one day coverage. It was a good year for Yellow-breasted Chats (compared to recent years), and Dennis found two in this area and the gulls are still nesting on the rooftop businesses along Gilchrist Rd. Welcome aboard, hope you enjoyed it, and hope you both are "all in" for 2023!

Several other volunteers that have recently taken on areas are getting phenomenal coverage in areas now considered all theirs! Karen Zeleznik in the too often neglected Area #4 in the northeast corner, Twinsburg area. Ann Gilmore in the Silver Lake/Stow region of Area #12. Adam Jackson in Bert Szabo's old stomping grounds of Area #15 - couldn't have asked for a better transition! Aimee Phillips in Area #24 getting not only the occasional surprise finds in such an urban area, but enough city birds to make one's head spin! David Hochadel in Area #21. And David and Lisa Shiner taking over Ed Pierce's old area that includes Firestone Metro Park in Area #26. Big shoes to fill in some of these cases and the hand-off's couldn't have gone more seamlessly. This is what gives us hope for the future, when losing some of our older mentors and friends, that this census continues on without a hitch. As these recent volunteers get to know their home areas the results and the comments of exciting new finds gets one willing and ready to see what's next as the new breeding season census nears. Thank you!

Speaking of mentors and friends - some of you have been at this so long that it is etched on your calendar right along with yearly holidays! Dwight and Ann Chasar, Marian and Jeff Kraus, Susan Jones and Clyde Witt, Patrick Coy and Karin Tanquist, Marie Morgan and Craig Griffin, Bill Osborne and his pied-piper-like following of volunteers year in and year out (does he buy lunch or something?), Dave and Nancy Reinhart, Janet Wertz (another heavy recruiter), John and Judy Wilkinson, Ann Gulbransen, Rob and Sandy Harlan, Jim Reyda (steady as rain), Wolfgang and Joyce Pelz, Fred Dinkelbach, and George Novosel. Nobody knows your areas better than you! Not to mention the many of you pulling double- or triple-duty. Hope Orr and her merry band of followers, Rob and Peg Bobel, Heather Berenson, Kathy Mock, the seemingly everywhere Susan Carpenter, Tom and Mary Anne Romito and crew, Doug Marcum and his rotating cast of recruits, Bob & Sherilyn Burns, Paul Ellsworth, Joe Wojnarowski, Henry Trimpe, Brian Tinker, Joanne Priest, I could go on and on. Without all of you and many more, this would not be nearly as rewarding! Thank you all as well as those unmentioned!

WATERFOWL

Water? Check! Grass? Check! Canada Geese? Check! Once again the Canada Goose has hit a new high as it doesn't take much for these geese to be successful, whether lake, pond, river, golf course, or the highly aggressive and territorial "mall goose" attacking one and all at a parking lot near you! Closing in on 3,000 geese in the county in the near future will surely keep us all in step as we watch our step. Mute Swan numbers have decreased for the time being as hopefully the general public will become more educated about their evil ways, but some will never sway from their undying love of the white menace. On the other hand, the success of the Trumpeter Swan reintroduction into Ohio shows no sign of slowing up. Earlier this year I had people from as far away as the Ohio River side of West Virginia sending me pictures of swans asking me if they truly were Trumpeter Swans. They were. Breeding this year took place at Bath Nature Preserve in Area #5 per Patrick Coy and Karin Tanquist and at the Benner Rd. Wetlands in New Franklin Township in our area, Area #28. Pairs were also reported in Area #4 for Karen Zeleznik and in Area #19 for Kathy Mock.

As for ducks, we set a new high for Wood Duck, but other than the American Black Duck family in Area #24 for Aimee Phillips and the solo Hooded Merganser found by Jim Reyda in Area #30, no odd ducks that failed to go north this breeding season were found in any of the 30 areas that make up the territory. Another success story is the Common Merganser, now nesting along both the Cuyahoga River and Little Cuyahoga River, a great sign that the health of the river is more positive than negative. If you'd told me when I was a kid that the Cuyahoga Valley would eventually be home to these fish-eating ducks, as well as Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, large heronries, as well as Northern River Otters, I'd have said you've got the wrong river! I recently started fishing again after thirty-some years of staring at my fishing rods and tackle, and on a recent Cuyahoga River fishing outing on August 12th., John Henry and I caught seven Smallmouth Bass and lost five more, and John even had an aggressive young Channel Catfish hit one of his spinners. Along with all the Creek Chubs, Northern Hog Suckers, Bluntnose Minnows, Barred Fantail Darters, etc., etc., it's no wonder there are so many fish-dependent animals here. It truly is, and continues to be, an amazing success story.

WILD AMERICA (as in WILD TURKEY to AMERICAN COOT)

Wild Turkey numbers are certainly higher than were actually found due to summer foliage and hens with poults that are always super vigilant with the constant threat of both land and air predators. Pat Pickard's group of five Northern Bobwhite were a welcome find of a species sorely missed by those of us old enough to remember the pre-winter's of 1976 and 1977 numbers. These being found in one of Summit Metro Parks' properties, does anyone know if the park released any at the currently off-limits Confluence Metro Park? Dwight and Ann Chasar's spring Cuyahoga Valley census yielded a Ruffed Grouse earlier this year in the Camp Manatoc area, but unfortunately it couldn't be found come census time. We only have one record of the species in 1985, which quickly declined as the Coyote increased. I didn't do any studies, but what's one more blame on the Coyote's name? The Ruffed Grouse has been my own personal "Ivory-billed Woodpecker quest" for me in the county. A little closer than the southern swamps. My last record of one was a dead bird in the early 1990's found at the 'T' intersection of River-view Rd. and Columbia Rd. Michelle swore she heard one drumming as we hiked the Buckeye Trail near there about seven years ago, but I just couldn't get my ears on it to confirm. It was nice to know one was still around this year, although not on this count.

The birding duo of Brian Tinker and Joanne Priest reported the only Pied-billed Grebes this summer, as they continue to be a nesting mainstay at S.M.P. Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park.

Rock Pigeon numbers are always baffling this time of year. Another species that probably has higher numbers than actually reported. The high of 76 birds was reported by Aimee Phillips in the highly urban Area #24, although I know of a few areas such as the high-tension wires along I-77 and Yellow Creek Rd. and I-77 and Arlington Rd. that seem to have that many or more everytime I drive by! Last year's high of 1,068 Mourning Doves lasted but one year as we eclipsed it with 1,142 this summer.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo's were the highest where expected - in and around the C.V.N.P., but Black-billed Cuckoos appear more in the clock than out, with only three reported. Common Nighthawk numbers continue to be concerning, making one yearn for the "good old days" when they lived up to their first name. It would be nice if new buildings were constructed with this species in mind. Chimney Swifts appear holding steady, another insectivore facing tough times. If we all had a hummingbird for every empty hummingbird feeder we encountered while doing the census the numbers would be staggering, and one can only park in front of a house with a full feeder for so long before the occupants get a little worried. The 62 reported this year were slightly down from 2021's 76 birds.

Back after a one-year absence is the always welcome Sandhill Crane. Topping 2020's first record of two adults with one colt at the Benner Rd. Wetlands were two adults with two colts! Not at the Benner Rd. Wetlands as before, but a little north of there (about one country block, as the crane walks) at a swampy wetland along West Nimisila Rd. in Area #28. As always, there will be photographs on the G.A.A.S. website from several contributors. My photos of the crane family will be found there. Rails tend to go pretty silent once breeding is over and the young are being raised, but 9 Virginia Rails were encountered, one off the record of ten, and we encountered a calling Sora at the Benner Rd. Wetlands on one visit, and the only Common Gallinule was found there as well, heard three times and seen twice, but we could never find two birds at once. The only American Coots were found by the Brian Tinker and Joanne Priest duo in the large reedbeds at the bird factory at Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park.

SHOREBIRDS, GULLS, TERNS and CORMORANTS

What little shorebirds we encounter in the summer here certainly showed up, with new census highs for Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, and the far from a given Solitary Sandpiper. It's possible the dry, almost drought-like conditions this year helped these ground-nesters. The pair of Solitary Sandpipers, only our third record ever, were found by Susan Carpenter in Area #3 which includes the Hudson and Macedonia area. Only three single sightings of the always elusive American Woodcock came from the northern part of the county in Areas #1, #2, and #3, by Paul Ellsworth, Dwight and Ann Chasar, and George Novosel, respectively. An exciting find of only our fourth record of a Black Tern was originally found by Susan Carpenter the day before the start of the census, and thankfully lingered into the start of the census for Joanne Priest and Brian Tinker. A new high for Double-crested Cormorant was hit with a tally of 445 birds, most from Nimisila Reservoir. Now that they've turned the small island off of Christman Rd. into a ghost town, they've moved to the big and heavily wooded island at Nimisila. Time will tell if the O.D.N.R. will intervene as these numbers continue to spike. Kind of a Catch 22, as these birds have to nest somewhere, but no one's happy when they do!

BITTERNS, HERONS, and EGRETS

Last year's high of 7 Least Bitterns was broken with 9 this year - all from Nimisila Reservoir for Brian Tinker and Joanne Priest. What is this Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park anyway? The Magee Marsh/Ottawa N.W.R. of Summit County? What's next, a Brown Booby? Oh, wait... We couldn't find any in the three swamps we had them in last year in Area #28, but not for lack of trying. They were replacing the bridge over Nimisila Creek at the Benner Rd. Wetlands, which may have affected that, as there was plenty of construction noise going on. Same for the swamp on Eastern Rd., construction going on at the northwest end of the swamp. The Waterloo Rd. Heronry held 207 Great Blue Herons for Aimee Phillips in Area #24, and all but the uncovered Area #8 had reports. It would be nice to know the actual numbers for a species that covers a lot of territory. Six Great Egrets broke the 2017 high of five. Patrick Coy had one at Nimisila Reservoir during the count period and Ann Gilmore reported five in Area #12. Aimee Phillips had 4 Great Egrets at the Waterloo Rd. Heronry prior to the count but they could not be found during the count period. Green Herons appear to be doing well, with the high from 2018 and 2020 being eclipsed at 78 birds and Cynthia Norris reported an adult Black-crowned Night-Heron on 06/10 from, you guessed it, Nimisila Reservoir Metro Park.

BIRDS OF PREY

We'll start with the vultures here. That's right - plural! We have added our first of three new birds to the master list with Black Vulture, which just missed making the list last year. It was only a matter of time with recent reports, and nesting I believe, at a church in downtown Brecksville. Rob & Peg Bobel and their group had a pair at Crown Point Ecology Center off of Ira Rd. in Bath in Area #5. They had been seen on and off throughout the summer between there and the Bath Nature Preserve and the after the summer census sighting of a pair of Mississippi Kites in that general area put many extra eyes in the sky and more reports rolled in. Adding to this pair was a single Black Vulture in Area #28 at the intersection of Clinton Rd. and Taylor Rd. in the southern part of the county, just west of the Village of Clinton. John Henry and I found the bird soaring with two Turkey Vultures. I pulled over, fumbling for my camera, and as it passed over a wooded section a female Cooper's Hawk suddenly lifted from the woods and started an aggressive all-out assault on the interloper and drove it out of the territory. Later, on our third trip down the Towpath Trail in Clinton, this time by bicycle, Michelle, John, and I spotted (probably) the same bird high above the trail north of Clinton.

The ever-present Turkey Vulture was found just about everywhere. To be expected with a species that covers so much territory. As for us, we were lucky enough to catch all of our vultures in one fell swoop as they were all coming off of their roost in the Village of Clinton. As the thermals started to build they filed out of the trees until we had 35 in the air at one time. No need to count anymore for the entire area!

Just how many Ospreys can this county produce? Topping last year's high of 82 birds by ten, 92 Osprey is downright impressive considering we are far from being considered an inter-coastal waterway! As usual, the majority were in and around the Portage Lakes region, with a high of 19 birds counted in Area #30 for Brian Tinker and Joanne Priest. But they also appear to be branching out along the Cuyahoga River in both the Cuyahoga Valley and the Cuyahoga Falls/Silver Lake/Munroe Falls area.

The large area that makes up Area #3 and covered by George Novosel, Susan Carpenter, and Jim Tomko held the (never-a-given) Northern Harrier for Susan Carpenter, as well as our only Sharp-shinned Hawk, and led all areas with five Cooper's Hawks. They also led all areas with 6 Bald Eagles reported. George notes that, like many other areas, it's getting chopped up and fragmented by development with each passing year. Are there really 23 Bald Eagles in Summit County during the summer months? Who knows - another species that has no limits when it comes to hunting or scavenging and covers a lot of territory.

In Buteo news, the Cuyahoga Valley held all the high counts for Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Broad-winged Hawk. Broad-winged Hawks seem to be almost exclusive to the Cuyahoga Valley region and the few times we've had them in the southern part of the county they never seem to be found in back to back years.

Jim Reyda was able to find two Eastern Screech-Owls in Area #27, while the rest of us searched in vain. Always a difficult bird in the summer months. Jim also had one of the three Great Horned Owls reported this season. While his was an adult, Joanne Priest had some staked out juveniles along Rex Hill Rd. in Area #28 that lingered into the census period. Her observations came complete with an audio clip of the two juveniles still begging to be fed. Ah, technology! The easier of the three owl species to get, the Barred Owl, whether calling or passing the day away in the shady canopy, was found in one-third of the areas totalling 15 birds, the high being three birds for John and Judy Wilkinson in Area #17 and some reports consisted of young birds.

How about another new species for 2022? All three falcon species possibly breeding in Summit County this season? Sure! The Merlins in Area #22 have yet to get a restraining order against Kathy Mock and her patience and persistence finally paid off this season. Those of us that have been following Kathy's quest to get to the bottom of the high numbers of Merlins at Greenlawn Cemetery off of Romig Rd. on the Akron/Barberton border now know more than we ever did about this stealthy falcon. Look for her upcoming article in The Ohio Cardinal detailing her observations and experiences and what she has learned. American Kestrel numbers are sadly what we've come to expect. Gone are the days of easily finding this beautiful falcon perched on a wire along many a country road. The pair Jim Reyda had at the Akron-Fulton International Airport were both harassing a Red-tailed Hawk. The four Peregrine Falcon reports were from their usual haunts at the Ohio Turnpike bridge over the Cuyahoga Valley and the downtown Akron area.

And, once again, before we head into the passerine numbers, I'll throw the Belted Kingfisher in here, with sightings in just over half of the areas in 2022, with the high of 9 coming from the Cuyahoga Valley.

WOODPECKERS to FINCHES

The new high count for Red-headed Woodpecker of 23 birds in 2020 and 2021 was topped this year with 27 reports, which is very encouraging for the species, and a new high for Red-bellied Woodpecker was reached as well, with 619 birds reported. In fact, five out of the six expected breeding woodpeckers showed increases compared to 2021, with only the Pileated Woodpecker taking a somewhat significant dip.

WOODPECKERS

- 1. Red-headed Woodpecker**
- 2. Red-bellied Woodpecker**
- 3. Downy Woodpecker**
- 4. Hairy Woodpecker**
- 5. Northern Flicker**
- 6. Pileated Woodpecker**

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
23	27	+4	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
597	619	+22	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
362	377	+15	
90	113	+23	
200	207	+7	
105	82	-23	

Great Crested Flycatcher reports were identical to last year and Eastern Kingbirds showed the biggest increase with 39 more birds than 2021. New census highs were reached for both Eastern Wood-Pewee and Willow Flycatcher, while Acadian Flycatchers had a slight drop and Eastern Phoebe showed a slight increase. Both Alder Flycatchers were found in the southern part of the county as well as this season's only Least Flycatcher report, a single bird I had in a hedgerow along a soybean field east of Barberton.

FLYCATCHERS

- 1. Great Crested Flycatcher**
- 2. Eastern Kingbird**
- 3. Eastern Wood-Pewee**
- 4. Acadian Flycatcher**
- 5. Alder Flycatcher**
- 6. Willow Flycatcher**
- 7. Least Flycatcher**
- 8. Eastern Phoebe**

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
134	134	EVEN	
98	137	+39	
481	493	+12	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
230	212	-18	
2	2	EVEN	
158	181	+23	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
3	1	-2	
125	151	+26	

As for vireos, we were only four off the all-time high for White-eyed Vireo with 28 reports. We were ten birds less than last year for the Yellow-throated Vireo with 56 and all of the Blue-headed Vireo reports were in the northern third of the county except for one that Jim Reyda had in his southern part of the county Area #27. We tied 2020's high for Warbling Vireo with 241 and Red-eyed Vireos were found in 26 out of our 30 Areas, but I'm pretty sure there was at least one in the uncovered Area #8 - if not twenty. Did I mention Area #8 is open?

VIREOS

- 1. White-eyed Vireo**
- 2. Yellow-throated Vireo**
- 3. Blue-headed Vireo**
- 4. Warbling Vireo**
- 5. Red-eyed Vireo**

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
23	28	+5	
66	56	+10	
8	12	+4	
156	241	+85	TIED HIGH from 2020
565	605	+40	

Do the "resident" Fish Crows at Chapel Hill suddenly disappear come census time? John & Judy Wilkinson are another "double-duty" operation come census time, meaning they already have Area #17, but Area #16 could use some more birding saturation. I haven't heard of any Fish Crow reports during the "official/unofficial" census period, but for several years now that has been our go-to place to add this eastern corvid to our yearly lists. Currently they cover mostly the Water Works Park area in eastern Cuyahoga Falls, but there is plenty left "un-censused."

Please consider this area another "open" area, either to help the Wilkinson's out or take it over altogether. Believe me and Michelle, we know what it's like to spread yourself thin and have a bit too much on your plate! If we could spend 12:00am from the start of the census until 11:59pm at the end of the census after 10 days, we would. Wait... I was just informed that 'I' would, there is no 'we' in this matter. But, seriously, if you live near this area, and once again, Wolfgang has all 30 areas on the G.A.A.S. website at your convenience, please check the area out. Or, I can put you in touch with John and Judy to help them out. Or, as has happened in the past, we've had census takers take over areas closer to home when openings happen. This ultimately works in the best interest of this census, as in there is nothing better than birding on your "home turf" when you have all access, all the time. Contact me, and I in turn, or through this write-up, with contact from the Wilkinson's, will see where we go from here. Now, back to the movie, folks!

Ah, the ubiquitous, take it or leave it, Blue Jay. Me? I'll take it! Often despised due to their raucous nature, overlooked and taken for granted because of how common they are - but could you sketch one from memory? Would you get the "cape and collar" placed just right? Would you get the hashmarks on the feathers right? The wingbars? The black from the eye to the bill? The thick, robust neck? As I said, often taken for granted! I'd love to see all of our sketches from this little exercise! We might have 50-plus versions of our only, yet so very beautiful, jay. And often a young budding birdwatcher's first bird encounter that sparks that interest, the bird that "gets the hooks" in them.

And "cousin crow" - very much the same as the jay. Egg thieves that constantly deceive, nest-robbers and raptor-mobbers. How amazingly quiet and under the radar they become once nesting gets under way, as if they know their evil ways merit some sort of punishment. How many owls have you overlooked were it not for the keen eyes of these two corvids? We counted plenty in 2022, with a new high established for the American Crow.

CORVIDS

1. Blue Jay

2. American Crow

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
1,337	1,150	-187	
727	765	+38	NEW CENSUS HIGH!

With farms and quiet country roads being almost non-existent in this now bustling county, Horned Larks are becoming a thing of the past - unless you go to the airports. The two for Jim Reyda in Area #27 were found at Akron-Fulton Airport near the old Rubber Bowl and the five for Area #30 for the Brian Tinker/Joanne Priest team were at the Canton-Akron Airport boundary. Safe to say we won't be reaching anything near the high of 37 back in 1985. Looking back, we can see how these numbers have decreased.

Horned Lark

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
LOOKING BACK -----	13	37	15	17	14	8
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
RECENT NUMBERS ----	6	8	8	7	3	7

Other than the ebb and flow of Bank Swallow numbers and the usually missing in action Cliff Swallow, we set new highs for all of the other more "common" swallow species. It's possible the extremely dry spring into summer conditions could have helped these numbers, especially with the nook and cranny nesting habits of the Northern Rough-winged Swallow. No heavy downpours to wash them out of abandoned factory drainpipes and other cracks and crevices. Bank Swallows would benefit from better habitat. The majority of the birds found this year were in Area #15 where Adam Jackson got 62 of the reported 88 birds observed this breeding season. It would be nice if either Summit Metro Parks or Cuyahoga Valley National Park had a few parcels of land just to have some large piles of dirt, carved off on one side and fenced-off, of course, to give these birds a sporting chance. Something to mimic the earthen cliff face at Cascade Valley's Overlook in Adam's area, but maybe on a smaller scale. That would be one big educational tool for youth on a school fieldtrip! As usual, the Purple Martin factory in the southern part of the county in and around the Portage Lakes Area held all of the martins - quite the success story. Tree Swallows and Barn Swallows were found in great numbers in both semi-urban and rural areas, especially near water. The Cliff Swallow continues to be an enigma. Just when you think they will become a permanent fixture at a bridge over the Cuyahoga River, (Bolan Rd. and Station Rd., in recent years) they completely vanish the next year, and the next, and... well, you get the point.

SWALLOWS

1. Bank Swallow
2. Tree Swallow
3. N. Rough-winged Swallow
4. Purple Martin
5. Barn Swallow
6. Cliff Swallow

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
68	88	+20	
424	690	+266	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
289	505	+216	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
1,103	2,246	+1,143	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
547	656	+109	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
0	2	+2	

Tufted Titmouse numbers continue to trend higher than Black-capped Chickadee numbers, for whatever reasons. Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were in their typical single-digit breeding numbers and White-breasted Nuthatch took the biggest dip, with a drop of 71 birds compared to 2021. Brown Creeper was a no-show for the second year in a row, a bird that is never a given even in the best of habitats, with the most recent sighting being of three in 2020.

WINTER FRIENDS in SUMMER

1. Black-capped Chickadee
2. Tufted Titmouse
3. Red-breasted Nuthatch
4. White-breasted Nuthatch
5. Brown Creeper

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE
621	588	-33
653	649	-4
4	5	+1
404	333	-71
0	0	0

How the Tufted Titmouse has overtaken the Black-capped Chickadee in the last 6 years. Chickadees went from +74, +29 and +43 to -31, -32 and -61 in that span. Thoughts?

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<u>1. Black-capped Chickadee</u>	636	550	454	660	621	588
<u>2. Tufted Titmouse</u>	562	521	411	691	653	649

Other than the always vocal House Wren, which showed a spike of 150 more birds than in 2021, the rest of the wren family showed almost zero change. The Cuyahoga Valley continues to have several prime areas for breeding Winter Wrens, places like Ritchie Ledges, the ravines of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center, and this season's locale, Boston Ledges along the Summit Metro Parks' Bike & Hike Trail. Cool, shady areas with Eastern hemlock are preferred. The always difficult Sedge Wren was still a no-show, with our most recent sighting being in 2017.

WRENS

1. House Wren

2. Winter Wren

3. Sedge Wren

4. Marsh Wren

5. Carolina Wren

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
692	842	+150	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
1	1	EVEN	
0	0	0	
7	9	+2	
305	301	-4	

Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were found in half of the 30 areas that make up Summit County, and as expected, the high of 43 birds were found in and around the Cuyahoga Valley. Amy Longley and Betsy MacMillan were able to pull a pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets out of the Tree Farm Trail area off of Major Rd., always an exciting find outside the colder months. It all boils down to habitat, and as my late father Jim used to say, "Thank you, Mr. Seiberling!"

Thrush numbers were very good in 2022, with new highs for Eastern Bluebird and American Robin. Bluebirds were 33 birds higher than last breeding season, and at 4,730 robins, let's just say that's a ton of pre-dawn singing! The always subtle Veery jumped up 21 more birds from 2021 and ten more birds than 2020. Hermit Thrush is most often a miss with larger tracts of suitable habitat farther north, and the "flutist of the woods," the Wood Thrush, holding steady even with further forest fragmentation throughout the county and the constant plague of the Brown-headed Cowbird.

THRUSHES

1. Eastern Bluebird

2. Veery

3. Hermit Thrush

4. Wood Thrush

5. American Robin

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
225	258	+33	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
52	74	+22	
2	0	-2	
241	233	-8	
4,303	4,730	+427	NEW CENSUS HIGH!

Gray Catbirds were found most everywhere, with 2022's tally being just four birds shy of 2010's all-time high, and a new high for Brown Thrasher was achieved at 54 birds. We were also 1 bird shy of topping the Northern Mockingbird high, at 6 birds. Persistence paid off for us as we finally got a 'mock on probably our twentieth drive down Van Buren Ave. south of Barberton, a bird perched on a wire along a cow pasture on the second to last day of the count.

MIMICS

1. Gray Catbird

2. Brown Thrasher

3. Northern Mockingbird

2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
1,121	1,177	+56	(four shy of the 2010 high)
34	54	+20	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
3	6	+3	(one shy of the 2012 high)

The always nomadic Cedar Waxwing, which for me anyway, was a tough find this year from January to early June, finally showed up in time for breeding season, and at 577 birds was higher than last year's total of 449 birds by 128 birds.

And now introducing... The introduced! European Starling numbers were down, but not enough for anyone to notice. House Sparrow had another good showing, clocking in at 4,987 birds counted, with 1,530 of those coming in Aimee Phillips's Area #24. So, if you still need "*Passer domesticus*" on your Life List you can either take your chances around Summit Lake hoping to find one on your own or I can put you in touch with Aimee and she can let you in on all the hotspots! Get 'em before they're gone, kids! People only really miss them when they're out doing a "Big Day" and once home, sitting at 99 birds, out comes the scream, "We didn't get House Sparrow! Oh, the humanity!!!" House Finch showed another increase, jumping up 41 birds from 2020 to 2021, and 28 birds from 2021 to 2022.

"NATURALIZED"

1. European Starling

2. House Sparrow

3. House Finch

2020	2021	2022	2021-2022 DIFFERENCE
4,523	4,665	3,988	-677
4,756	5,231	4,987	-244
577	618	646	+28

Purple and Gold - one Purple Finch was found this season by Jim Reyda in the Lakemore area near Springfield Lake in Area #27, a difficult "summer" species that was missed in 2021, and we were just four birds shy of the all-time high for American Goldfinch at 1,316 birds. The high of 1,320 birds was reached back in 2007.

SPARROWS, CHAT, and ICTERIDS, OH MY!!!

Sparrow numbers were a little harder to read. The Grasshopper Sparrow continues to be elusive throughout the county, with the last sighting being in 2019. Chipping Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, and Eastern Towhee all showed increases, with Swamp Sparrow breaking the high of 139 birds set way back in 1995. Field Sparrow numbers continue to be quite a concern, as these numbers are a shell of what they had been in the past. To know that the Chasars area led the way, as large as it is, with a high of only 14 birds recorded really puts that in perspective. After dropping by 68 birds from 2020 to 2021 they dropped yet again by 32 birds with just under 100 birds for this breeding season. One would think that a very dry spring into summer breeding season would help all ground-nesting, or just above the ground nesters, but it looks more like it's related to the lack of habitat. Savannah Sparrow numbers continue to ping-pong from season to season, with the last four years being 33, 22, 43, and now back down to 29.

After a new census high of 32 Dark-eyed Junco's in 2021, their numbers returned to close to what they were in 2020. There's something about seeing a junco during breeding season that makes one feel good about our county. Henslow's Sparrows continue to hang on at basically just three reliable locations - C.V.N.P.'s Coliseum Grasslands, Bath Nature Preserve, and the hay fields across from Blossom Music Center.

White-throated Sparrow and Vesper Sparrow are far from a given from year to year, while Song Sparrows and Eastern Towhees, easily found and vocal species, are holding steady.

SPARROWS (Emberizids)**1. Grasshopper Sparrow****2. Chipping Sparrow****3. Field Sparrow****4. Dark-eyed Junco****5. White-throated Sparrow****6. Vesper Sparrow****7. Henslow's Sparrow****8. Savannah Sparrow****9. Song Sparrow****10. Swamp Sparrow****11. Eastern Towhee**

	2020	2021	2022	2021-2022 DIFFERENCE
1. Grasshopper Sparrow	0	0	0	0
2. Chipping Sparrow	831	694	773	+79
3. Field Sparrow	197	129	97	-32
4. Dark-eyed Junco	18	32	20	-12
5. White-throated Sparrow	1	2	0	-2
6. Vesper Sparrow	0	2	0	-2
7. Henslow's Sparrow	9	7	9	+2
8. Savannah Sparrow	22	43	29	-14
9. Song Sparrow	1,605	1,422	1,290	-132
10. Swamp Sparrow	125	114	166	+52
11. Eastern Towhee	254	251	270	+19

NEW CENSUS HIGH!

Nine Yellow-breasted Chats during one breeding season in Summit County is considered a strong showing and the high count per area were the five found in Dwight and Ann Chasar's Area #2, in and around the Cuyahoga Valley. Two were found by Dwight and Ann and another three were found by Marian and Jeff Kraus and Russ Young. Dennis Mersky was able to pull a pair out of the usually under-birded Area #25, and singles were found in Area #7 for Doug Marcum and for the Brian Tinker/Joanne Priest team in Area #30.

Bobolink numbers were down compared to last year and Eastern Meadowlark numbers were up. Forty of the 58 Bobolinks were found at the C.V.N.P. Coliseum Grasslands for Fred Dinkelbach, leaving only eighteen for the rest of us to scrounge up in other parts of the county. One-third of the county had meadowlark reports, with Fred also tallying 20 out of the 54 reported this year. A boardwalk through this area and a mowed trail in the drier spots with a few benches would be a welcome addition. Orchard Orioles were up, whereas Baltimore Orioles were down. The southern part of the county harbors plenty of Orchard Orioles, with 17 coming from our area, Area #28.

Countering these fluctuating numbers were increases for the common, flocking blackbirds. Common Grackle proved just that, common, with an increase of 345 birds compared to last year, followed by an increase of 270 birds for the ever-present Red-winged Blackbird, and Brown-headed Cowbird eclipsing the high set back in 1995. Amazing how some areas have very few grackles and others have boatloads. As family groups gather together in more and more numbers, if one has any substantial phragmite or cattail marshes in their area, it is easy to amass good numbers whether birds are leaving these roost sites or returning.

BLACKBIRDS (Icterids)**1. Bobolink****2. Eastern Meadowlark****3. Orchard Oriole****4. Baltimore Oriole****5. Red-winged Blackbird****6. Brown-headed Cowbird****7. Common Grackle**

	2021	2022	DIFFERENCE
1. Bobolink	87	58	-29
2. Eastern Meadowlark	30	54	+24
3. Orchard Oriole	62	77	+15
4. Baltimore Oriole	290	258	-32
5. Red-winged Blackbird	2,875	3,145	+270
6. Brown-headed Cowbird	506	633	+127
7. Common Grackle	1,004	1,349	+345

NEW CENSUS HIGH!**NEW CENSUS HIGH!**

THE COUNTY JEWELS

If we'd gladly take eighteen species of warblers during spring migration here, you can bet we'll take that many during breeding season! A pretty impressive number for "the little county that could." We had 17 species in 2020 and 16 species in 2021. Worm-eating Warbler was missed this year, but thanks to Patrick Coy and Karin Tanquist, Northern Waterthrush was found, the last of the three new species to be added to the master list this year. Also making three appearances this breeding season is the Black-and-white Warbler and a solo Mourning Warbler was found as well. New highs were established for both Common Yellowthroat and Pine Warbler. Prairie Warbler continues to flirt with the all-time high of six birds, as it is always nice to find this dazzler a short drive from home instead of heading south for what you know will turn into an all-day affair. Take a moment to think of each species of warbler listed and the preferred habitat each species needs and then you will realize just how good this number is for a county with a city as big as Akron in the middle of it and all the surrounding suburbs. This isn't Zaleski State Forest, after all!

WOOD-WARBLEDERS

	2021	2022	DIFFERENCE	
<u>1. Ovenbird</u>	22	37	+15	
<u>2. Louisiana Waterthrush</u>	13	8	-5	
<u>3. Northern Waterthrush</u>	N/A	1	+1	NEW TO CENSUS!
<u>4. Blue-winged Warbler</u>	39	36	-3	
<u>5. Black-and-white Warbler</u>	0	3	+3	TIED HIGH from '03 & '05
<u>6. Prothonotary Warbler</u>	7	7	EVEN	
<u>7. Mourning Warbler</u>	0	1	+1	
<u>8. Common Yellowthroat</u>	387	486	+99	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
<u>9. Hooded Warbler</u>	175	177	+2	
<u>10. American Redstart</u>	22	40	+18	
<u>11. Cerulean Warbler</u>	22	12	-10	
<u>12. Northern Parula</u>	10	5	-5	
<u>13. Yellow Warbler</u>	621	720	+99	
<u>14. Chestnut-sided Warbler</u>	7	14	+7	
<u>15. Pine Warbler</u>	11	15	+4	NEW CENSUS HIGH!
<u>16. Yellow-throated Warbler</u>	9	15	+6	
<u>17. Prairie Warbler</u>	5	5	EVEN	
<u>18. Black-throated Green Warbler</u>	5	3	-2	

RED, WHITE, (BLACK) and BLUE

After two back-to-back years of a Summer Tanager, no surprise encounters with this rarity were found. Scarlet Tanager numbers rebounded from a slight dip in 2021. Our state bird continues to try to reach 2,000 birds, falling short yet again, for this nester of forest, farm, field, park and yard. Rose-breasted Grosbeak numbers are holding consistent, and Indigo Bunting numbers perked up compared to last year. No Dickcissels could be found out at the PPG Lime Lakes south of Barberton, despite ample habitat in Area #28. I haven't observed any out there since 2018 when I had four birds. Time will tell if their absence will continue. Such is birding.

**TANAGER, CARDINAL,
GROSBEAK & BUNTING**

1. Summer Tanager

2. Scarlet Tanager

3. Northern Cardinal

4. Rose-breasted Grosbeak

5. Indigo Bunting

2020	2021	2022	2021-2022 DIFFERENCE
1	1	0	-1
161	101	124	+23
1,755	1,949	1,938	-11
186	189	197	+8
373	261	289	+28

Well, that's all the birds that are fit to print! Even though it seemed like a down year and many were questioning where all the birds were, myself included, it was another productive breeding season in Summit County. To those new to the Greater Akron Audubon Society's Summer Breeding Bird Census - welcome aboard, hope you had fun, and hope you are on board for 2023! For those of you, and there are many, who set your calendars to this annual rite of summer - thanks for your continued coverage of your areas, "that no one knows better than you" according to Philosopher Vogus. A lot to digest, I know, so let's not forget about the aforementioned "OPEN" areas that are in need of ownership or areas that could use a few more feet on the ground, or eyes in the sky, or just a few more hours of coverage. Since 1978 the years of data do not lie and all of us have played such a big part of this puzzle. All this, right here, in "the little county that could" - and did! Be proud! We are a select few that truly care about these important things. If not for birds, what would we do!?!?!?

Thank You All for Your Time, Effort, and Expertise!!!

*Douglas W. & Michelle Vogus
Summer Census Coordinators
Greater Akron Audubon Society*