

HISTORY & FACTS of the FEBRUARY CENSUS

FEBRUARY	13-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS							
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
43 / 1,244	41 / 1,183	40 / 744	39 / 658	45 / 1,863	42 / 1,342	41 / 734	44 / 1,092	41 / 1,383
2019	2020	2021	2022					
44 / 2,451	39 / 1,017	47 / 2,591	42 / 1,371					

Most Species seen in February : 47 on 02/01/2021.

Most Individual Birds seen in February : 2,591 on 02/01/2021.

Fewest Species seen in February : 39 on 02/01/2013 & 02/01/2020.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in February : 658 on 02/01/2013.

Species Average in February : 42.2 Species.

Total Individuals Average in February : 1,359.5 Individuals.

Lowest Temperature on February Census : 9-degrees F on 02/01/2019 & 02/05/2022.

Highest Temperature on February Census : 47-degrees F on 02/01/2014.

Longest Time Afield on February Census : 9 hours & 50 minutes on 02/01/2019.

Shortest Time Afield on February Census : 6 hours & 20 minutes on 02/04/2012.

LAST FEBRUARY'S FIELD REPORT

02/01/21	TOTAL SPECIES:	47	START / END TIME:	7:20am - 5:00pm		
	TOTAL BIRDS:	2,591	TIME AFIELD:	9:40	FT. MI.:	13.51
ROUTE:	Red Lock Trailhead south to Merriman Valley with a stop at Trail Mix in Peninsula.					
TEMP.:	28F ~ 32F ~ 30F	OBSERVERS:	John Henry and Douglas W. Vogus.			
CONDITIONS:	Cloudy and gray with steady snow all day.					
TRAIL CONDITIONS:	About 2-inches of fresh snow at Red Lock, adding up to about 3-inches as the day wore on.					
RIVER CONDITIONS:	Normal.					

TWELVE YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

In one of our oldest bird species census highs, we tallied 34 White-breasted Nuthatches on 02/05/2010. This species is an easily identified, year-round resident in Ohio, and chances are that if you have a birdfeeder with either black oil sunflower seeds or raw peanuts, you've encountered this tree-climbing bird. Sexes are almost identical, except that the male has a jet-black cap, whereas the female's cap is gray. These birds are very approachable and those that put in the time and effort may eventually have them taking seed right from the palms of their hands.

FEBRUARY 2022's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (*Sitta carolinensis*)

DESCRIPTION: Though small, it is the largest of the North American nuthatches. The species has a black crown and nape that contrast with a white face and breast. **ADULT MALE:** It has a uniformly black crown and nape. Upperparts are blue-gray, similar in color to the blue-gray wing edging. **ADULT FEMALE:** They are duller than males; paler crown often contrasts with a blacker nape. Rear flanks in both sexes are tawny. **IMMATURE:** Resembles the adult, but primaries, secondaries, and most wing coverts are brownish gray and lack the edging found on the adult (and contrast with the mantle.)

LENGTH: 5" to 6" **WINGSPAN:** 9 & 1/4" to 11 & 1/2"
WEIGHT: 8 to 12.7 grams, or about 1/3 to 1/4 oz.

VOICE: **CALL:** A short, soft "yank, yank, yank" or "inh, inh, inh." **SONG:** Sings in every month of the year, a series of repeated nasal whistles on one pitch, "whi-whi-whi-whi-whi-whi."

HABITS: Less gregarious than other nuthatches, the White-breasted Nuthatch is typically seen singly or in pairs. In fall and winter it regularly forms small mixed-species flocks with chickadees, titmice and creepers, but a single flock rarely includes more than six nuthatches. Spends most of life in large hardwood forests, but also in woodlots, wooded neighborhoods and parks. Hops over bark of trunks and main branches, usually moving head downward toward ground. Sometimes hops about on ground under trees in search of nuts or insects. One study has shown that resident pairs remain together in limited feeding territory of 25-50 acres throughout the year. Each member of pair often alone in winter woods but within calling distance of each other; roost alone (except in very cold weather) in hole in tree. Very agile, can catch a falling nut in midair, run down a swaying rope, or hang upside down swinging from tiny branch.

In fall and winter eats mostly beechnuts, acorns, hickory nuts, sunflower seeds, corn; in spring and summer, bugs, ants, flies, grasshoppers, caterpillars of the destructive Gypsy Moth, weevils, cankerworms, wood-borers, tree hoppers, aphids, scale insects; comes to feeding stations for suet and black oil sunflower seeds. Individuals can become quite tame, can be lured to one's hands for food, or even one's lips for halved peanut, sunflower seeds, or piece of walnut kernel.

NESTING: **NEST:** Often high up in a large tree, in natural cavity, knothole, or old woodpecker hole, usually 15-50 feet up; also in bird boxes of correct hole size and location. Nest materials in cavity are shreds of inner bark, rabbit fur, wool, cow hair, feathers; sometimes plucks hairs from gray squirrels. **EGGS:** March (in the South) to June; 5 to 10 eggs, commonly 8, white and heavily marked with browns, reds, purples, and gray. **INCUBATION:** By both sexes, 12 days. young first fly about 14 days after hatching.

HABITAT: A variety of deciduous and mixed-forest habitats, preferring relatively open woods.

RANGE: Lower portions of Canada to Newfoundland, south to southern Georgia, Alabama, does not nest in interior portions of Great Plains, but does winter there, parts of Washington, Oregon, and California into Mexico. There are 9 subspecies throughout N. America and Mexico.

STATUS: Fairly common. Increasing or stable throughout much of range; populations thought to have declined in the Southeast.

Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the White-breasted Nuthatch in Northeast Ohio.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC
Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC	CCCCCCCC

- CCCCCCCC = Common to Abundant. Frequently encountered in this region during this time of year.
- UUUUUUUU = Uncommon. Occurs regularly during this time of year but not frequently detected.
- rrrrrrrrrr = Rare. These birds can occur more or less annually but are easily missed in their scant presence in the region.
- OOOOOOOO = Occasional. Limited history in this region and are not to be expected.
- ***** = Accidental. Few records in the past 60 years. Not expected in this region during this time of year.
- |||||||||||| = Fluctuating Abundance. May occur some years yet absent other years. Irruptive or overwintering birds.

History of the White-breasted Nuthatch on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 ~ present.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.	17	9	12	16	14	20	17	17
FEB.	34*	21	16	9	14	15	31	19
MAR.	29	11	14	8	17	9	14	20
APR.	13	14	8	12	11	13	11	9
MAY	4	5	6	5	4	7	5	7
JUN.	13	10	5	8	8	3	3	10
JUL.	11	5	9	6	5	9	16	9
AUG.	11	8	5	8	14	11	15	8
SEP.	16	12	10	7	7	10	10	6
OCT.	16	8	10	13	16	11	13	15
NOV.	20	13	14	17	18	16	12	17
DEC.	25	15	16	15	20	23	25	21

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
JAN.	19	18	20	14	17
FEB.	18	14	18	10	12
MAR.	16	24	18	19	
APR.	19	20	21	16	
MAY	10	13	18	12	
JUN.	6	1	7	15	
JUL.	11	6	8	7	
AUG.	11	12	7	7	
SEP.	12	11	10	10	
OCT.	11	15	17	8	
NOV.	22	17	12	9	
DEC.	11	9	15	17	

DID YOU KNOW?:

The scientific name of this bird can be broken down to Sittidae (SIT-ih-dee) from the Greek "sitte," used by Aristotle for a bird that pecks at the bark of trees, probably the nuthatch; nuthatch, from hacking open with bill seeds and nuts by several Old World species, a habit sometimes seen in American nuthatches ("hatch" is a corruption of "hack.") Genus name is Latin for "of Carolina."

- * = HIGHEST COUNT TOTAL ON CENSUS.
- BOLD #** = HIGHEST COUNT FOR THAT YEAR.



Hangtime for peanuts - the acrobatic White-breasted Nuthatch is a common sight at backyard birdfeeders.

(photo by: John Van Decker)

FEBRUARY'S DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW?: One of my favorite bird artists is Lawrence (Larry) McQueen? Larry works mainly in watercolors, but also oils. Larry's posters for "Common Feeder Birds" were available at many of the "Wild Birds Unlimited" stores and some nature centers. If any person deserved to make a fully in-depth North American birding field guide, I truly believe Larry's watercolor illustrations are right up there, if not better, than the more familiar works of David Allen Sibley. His birds are so life-like and as the observers eye would see them.

I could go on his website and pick out the biography highlights of his long career and put them in this issue, but lucky for me, Larry made it easy and did his own biography. It follows here...

DID YOU KNOW?: I grew up in the small town of Mifflinburg in central Pennsylvania. Birds fascinated me from the start. With colored pencils, I attempted to draw birds that I observed on early morning forays around the neighborhood. One of the first books my parents gave me was "The Junior Book of Birds" by Roger Tory Peterson, illustrated with a small selection of paintings done by several bird artists of the time. Each illustration in this slender book presents the bird in a full page of habitat. As a child, these images influenced my perceptions of the bird in nature, profoundly. Around the age of ten, I was given two books with impressive artwork: a 1937 edition of reproductions of Audubon's "Birds of America" and another large volume entitled "Birds of America", with illustrations by Louis Agassiz Fuertes. I have since studied the original work of these great bird artists, with veneration. The inspiration of others continues and I regard as pivotal, the paintings of the great Swedish wildlife artist, Bruno Liljefors, of the early 20th. Century.

DID YOU KNOW?:

At age twelve, I was invited to be a founding member of the Bucknell Ornithological Club at Bucknell University, close to my hometown. Involved with regular meetings and field-trips, I was learning about "ornithology" as a subject, and my birding skills greatly improved. I left the East in the late 50's, graduated from Idaho State University, did a stint in the Army, and ultimately settled in Eugene, Oregon, where I studied art and worked in graphic arts and scientific illustration.

Finally, in the late 70's, with the encouragement of my wife, I decided to develop a career in painting birds. I contacted Don Eckleberry ("The Towpath Traveler" from October 2020), whom I considered to be the finest bird illustrator working at the time. Don invited me to visit him at his home in Babylon, N.Y. At his suggestion, I took part in his annual bird-painting workshop at the Asa Wright Nature Center in Trinidad. He then invited me to teach this workshop the following year, which I did.

DID YOU KNOW?:

In 1980, I exhibited a painting at the "Birds In Art" show at Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin, that caught the attention of ornithologist/illustrator John P. O'Neill (LSU Museum of Natural Science). John sent me an invitation to help illustrate the "Birds of Peru", a project then in its infancy. With this work, my bird painting career was launched.

Although my work is grounded in illustrations for publications, my studio paintings continue to extend my vision of the life and beauty of the bird in nature. My wife and I currently live in Eugene, Oregon.

DID YOU KNOW?:

Over the years, Larry's work has appeared in many publications...

PUBLISHED ARTWORK FIELD GUIDES

- 1981 "Familiar Birds of The Northwest" - Portland Audubon Society.
(illustrated in part)
- 1983 "The Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding" - 3 Volumes.
(a number of paintings used for species lacking photos)
- 1986 "A Guide to the Birds of Colombia" - Two plates.
- 1990 "Book of North American Birds" - 38 paintings
(contributing authors and artists)
- 1997 "All the Birds of North America" - 21 panels.
(American Bird Conservancy's Field Guide - section including the Vireos, Warblers, Chickadees, Gnatcatchers, Kinglets and Wrentit)
- 1999 "The Most Complete Field Guide to the Birds of Brittain and Europe"
(two plates of American species)
- 2005 "Birds of South Asia, The Ripley Guide" - 24 plates.
- 2007 "Birds of Peru" - principle illustrator.
- 2008 "The Backyard Birdsong Guide" (A Cornell Lab of Ornithology Audio Field Guide)
(illustrations recycled from the Cornell posters and others)

DID YOU KNOW?:

... as well as many bird-related journals and periodicals...

- *** *"American Birds" and "Audubon" (National Audubon Society)*
- *** *"The Wilson Bulletin"*
- *** *"Bird Watcher's Digest"*
- *** *"Living Bird" (Cornell Lab of Ornithology)*
- *** *"The Auk" (The American Ornithologists Union)*
- *** *"Bulletin of the British Ornithological Club"*
- *** *"Forktail" (Journal of the Oriental Bird Club)*

As well as annual and semi-annual catalogs for "Victor Emanuel Nature Tours" from 1985-present. Also the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "Project Feederwatch" identification posters and Windsor/Nature Discovery's "Hummingbirds of the United States and Canada" and "Garden Birds of North America" series Winter 1, Summer 1, Winter 2, identification posters.

DID YOU KNOW?:

Having lived in Oregon for quite some time most of his solo exhibitions have been in Eugene or Portland. These include:

EUGENE, OREGON

- *** *McDonald's Frame and Gallery*
- *** *Washington Abby Gallery*
- *** *Jacobs Room Gallery, Hult Center for the Performing Arts*
- *** *The Gallery at The Register-Guard*
- *** *Knight Law School, University of Oregon*
- *** *Oregon Museum of Cultural and Natural History*
- *** *The Gallery At The Airport*

PORTLAND, OREGON

- *** *Convention of the American Ornithologica Society, Cooper Ornithological Society, and the Society of Southern Canadian Ornithologists*

OTHER PUBLISHED ARTWORK

- *** *1985, 1987, and 1988, International Philatelics Incorporated; World Wildlife Stamp Collection. Watercolors of various animal species for first day cover. Stamps and cachets.*
- *** *1992, Penguin Books Inc., in cooperation with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The 1993 Bird Identification Calendar, selected as Audubon Alliance Artist of the Year; featured painting of Western Tanagers.*

As well as showings from the Anchorage Museum of History and Art in Anchorage, Alaska, to the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Cleveland, Ohio, to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to The British Museum of Natural History in London, England, to the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh, Scotland, as well as many others.

DID YOU KNOW?: *In 1993 with the Artists for Nature Foundation, he was invited to Poland with 32 other international wildlife artists, for the purpose of publicizing for conservation, the only wild wetlands remaining in Europe. The resulting artwork was a travelling exhibit and published in the book, "Portrait of a Living Marsh", by Robin D'Arcy Shillcock. A boatload of accolades and accomplishments in a long and storied career of a kid from little Mifflinburg, Pa.!*



The man behind the brush, Larry McQueen's work has enabled him to travel the world in search of his avian subjects.

(photo courtesy of: Artists For Conservation)



Larry McQueen's renditions of both Ohio nuthatch species from Cornell University's "Common Feeder Birds" series.

(paintings by Larry McQueen)

LITERATURE CITED

*** Alderfer, Jonathan Dunn, Jon L.	2006 "Complete Birds of North America" <i>National Geographic Society</i>
*** McQueen, Lawrence	1936-present - Personal Biography www.natureartists.com
*** Rosche, Larry O.	2004 "Birds of the Cleveland Region" <i>The Cleveland Museum of Natural History</i>
*** Terres, John K.	1956 "The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds" <i>Alfred A. Knopf</i>
*** Vogus, Douglas W.	2010-present "The Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census" (CVTTC ~ <i>Personal Records, Personal Experiences, and Mindless Ramblings</i>)

See You on the Trail! - Doug