

**CUYAHOGA VALLEY TOWPATH TRAIL CENSUS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - JULY 2023**  
(CVTTC)

**HISTORY & FACTS of the JULY CENSUS**

JULY	13-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS							
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
68 / 823	74 / 935	72 / 1,152	76 / 1,601	66 / 1,008	65 / 1,006	79 / 1,293	71 / 1,014	75 / 1,261
2019	2020	2021	2022					
73 / 811	74 / 1,653	76 / 816	73 / 946					

Most Species seen in July : 79 on 07/08/2016.

Most Individual Birds seen in July : 1,653 on 07/03/2020.

Fewest Species seen in July : 65 on 07/11/2015.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in July : 811 on 07/05/2019.

Species Average in July : 72.4 Species.

Total Individuals Average in July : 1,101.4 Individuals.

Lowest Temperature on July Census : 55 degrees F on 07/11/2015.

Highest Temperature on July Census : 99 degrees F on 07/06/2012.

Longest Time Afield on July Census : 10 Hours & 30 Minutes on 07/06/18 & 07/01/22.

Shortest Time Afield on July Census : 6 Hours & 50 Minutes on 07/10/2010.

**LAST JULY'S FIELD REPORT**

07/01/22	<b>TOTAL SPECIES:</b>	73	<b>START / END TIME:</b>	5:45am - 4:15pm		
	<b>TOTAL BIRDS:</b>	946	<b>TIME AFIELD:</b>	10:30	<b>FT. MI.:</b>	13.85
<b>ROUTE:</b>	Red Lock Trailhead south to Merriman Valley, with stops at Trail Mix In Peninsula and Szalay's Sweet Corn Farm & Market.					
	<b>TEMP.:</b>	72F ~ 94F ~ 93F				
<b>OBSERVERS:</b>	John Henry (Red Lock Trailhead to Botzum Trailhead) and Douglas W. Vogus.					
<b>CONDITIONS:</b>	Warm early, gradually turning hot with a clouds/sun mix, turning sunny; welcome breezes from the west changing to the south.					
<b>TRAIL CONDITIONS:</b>	Great, with some areas being dry and dusty.					
<b>RIVER CONDITIONS:</b>	Very low and clear - many rockbars and sandbars visible and accessible.					

**ONE YEAR AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL**

On 07/01/2022 we set a census high for a true denizen of the cattail marshes, the aptly-named Swamp Sparrow, with 26 seen (or heard) along the census route. This very vocal sparrow really tends to belt it out come July, with the marshes full of their songs. Best places along the Towpath Trail to find this species are Stanford Swamp, Johnnycake Lock (Lock 27), and the marshy environs of the Ira Beaver Marsh.

## JULY 2023's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

### SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*)

**DESCRIPTION:** Gray face; white throat; rich rufous wings contrast with upperparts; reddish brown back streaked with black. **BREEDING ADULT:** Reddish crown, gray breast, whitish belly. **WINTER ADULT AND IMMATURE:** Buffier overall, especially on flanks; duller crown streaked, divided by gray central stripe. **JUVENILE:** Briefly held plumage usually even buffier; darker overall than the juvenile Song Sparrow or Lincoln's Sparrow; redder wings and tail.

**LENGTH:** 5" to 5.8"

**WING:** 7 & 1/2" to 8"

**WEIGHT:** 14.8 to 17.8 grams

**VOICE:** **CALL:** Hard, metallic "chip," similar to the Eastern Phoebe's. **FLIGHT NOTE:** A prolonged, buzzy "zee," similar to the Lincoln's Sparrow, but softer. **SONG:** A slow, single-pitched musical trill; male generally sings from perch on alder, willow, or cattail; while singing, spreads somewhat rounded tail noticeably; song is "weet-weet-weet-weet," somewhat like that of the Chipping Sparrow but louder and more musical.

**HABITS:** Sometimes abundant, Swamp Sparrows do not form a cohesive flock in winter; in rank brush or tall grass they may cluster with Song Sparrows and Lincoln's Sparrows. They can be brought into view with other sparrows by "pishing". They deliver a loud, metallic call note when excited and at dawn and dusk, when marshes and brushlands are filled with their chorus of "chip" notes. They often fly away straight and low, when flushed, and may flip its long tail (especially when landing). It typically does not call in flight, but often does upon landing. Does much of its feeding wading in shallow water, using its bill to pick up floating insects - beetles, ants, grasshoppers, crickets; also seeds of sedges, weeds, and grasses.

**HABITAT:** Summers in freshwater marshes, swamps, bogs, wet meadows, alder-grown shores of lakes, slow-moving streams, often where water is ankle to waist-deep; rarely in coastal brackish meadows; outside nesting season, visits upland weed-grown fields and hedges, wet or damp forest edges, mixed in with other sparrows.

**NESTING:** **NEST:** Often built, usually by female, in cattail stalks, bent-down clumps of stalks of cattails and leaves, or in green tussocks of sedge, 6 to 24 inches above water; made of coarse, dead, marsh grasses, inner cup of finer grasses, with an entrance on the side. **EGGS:** May to July, 3 to 6 eggs, usually 4 to 5, pale green to green-white, spotted, blotched, clouded with reddish browns. **INCUBATION:** By female, 12 to 15 days; young leave nest when 12 to 13 days old; fluttering young occasionally fall into water and are eaten by frogs, fish, and turtles; usually two broods per year.

**RANGE:** Breeds across northwest Canada, but not to the coast, to Newfoundland, below the boreal forest region, eastern Dakotas, central Nebraska to West Virginia to the Atlantic Coast; winters on California coast and east of the Rockies, southern states to central Mexico.

**STATUS:** Common. Most populations stable; mid-Atlantic subspecies (*Melospiza nigrescens*) sharply declined recently (reasons poorly known).

**Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the Swamp Sparrow in Northeast Ohio.**

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuuuuuu	uuuCCCC	CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC
Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC	uuuuuuuu

- CCCCCCC** = 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.
- oooooo** = 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 Swamp Sparrow on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 ~ present.**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.	1	1	3	4	2	1		3
FEB.	2		1	2	1	1		1
MAR.			1	1			1	
APR.	4	2	8	2	2	5	7	4
MAY	6	7	9	11	9	10	13	16
JUN.	10	12	9	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	10	14	<b>21</b>
JUL.	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	10	10	12	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	19
AUG.	5	7	1	9	7	7	5	2
SEP.		1		6	1	1		2
OCT.	5	5	<b>14</b>	8	8	7	5	14
NOV.	5	2	2	4	2	4	4	4
DEC.	5	1	3	4	5	1	3	4

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
JAN.	1	1	2	1	1	1
FEB.		2	1	3		2
MAR.	1	1		1		
APR.	2	13	<b>16</b>	4	1	5
MAY	16	6	11	<b>17</b>	11	<b>23</b>
JUN.	12	15	9	11	15	16
JUL.	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	15	<b>26*</b>	
AUG.	10	9	3	3	2	<b>DID YOU KNOW?:</b> Although many Swamp Sparrows drift to the southern states for the winter, there are plenty that eke out a living during the cold Ohio winter months? They are a hardy species that can usually be flushed if one is willing to take a winter romp through an Ohio swamp!
SEP.		4	1	2	4	
OCT.	2	10	2	9	11	
NOV.	4	4	7	2	4	
DEC.	6	3		2		

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



*To this day, one of my favorite species of birds, let alone sparrow species. Such a variety of color hues in just one little bird! Denizen of the cattail marshes - the subtle colors of the Swamp Sparrow are vastly underappreciated.*

*(photo by: Alix d'Entremont)*

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### **JULY'S DID YOU KNOW?**

**DID YOU KNOW?:** Perhaps the finest nature writer of the Twentieth Century, Rachel Louise Carson (1907 - 1964) is remembered more today as the woman who challenged the notion that humans could obtain mastery over nature by chemicals, bombs and space travel than for her studies of ocean life. Her sensational book "Silent Spring" (1962) warned of the dangers to all natural systems from the misuse of chemical pesticides such as DDT, and questioned the scope and direction of modern science, and initiated the contemporary environmental movement. Her book led to a nationwide ban on DDT and other pesticides and sparked the movement that ultimately led to the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**DID YOU KNOW?:** Born on May 27, 1907 on a farm in Springdale, Pennsylvania, upstream from the industrial behemoth of Pittsburgh, Carson was the youngest of Robert and Maria McLean Carson's three children. Carson was a student of nature, a born ecologist before that science was defined, and a writer who found that the natural world gave her something to write about. She developed a love of nature from her mother, and Carson became a published writer for children's magazines by age 10. She attended the Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University), graduating magna cum laude in 1929. She next studied at the oceanographic institute at Woods Hole, Massachusetts and at Johns Hopkins University, where she received a master's degree in zoology in 1932. Strained family finances forced her to forego pursuit of a doctorate and help support her mother and, later, two orphaned nieces.

**DID YOU KNOW?:** *After outscoring all other applicants on the civil service exam, in 1936 Carson became the second woman hired by the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries. She remained there for 15 years, writing brochures and other materials for the public. She was promoted to Editor-in-Chief of all publications for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Meanwhile, she wrote several popular books about aquatic life, among them "Under the Sea Wind" (1941) and "The Sea Around Us" (1951). The latter was serialized in "The New Yorker" and sold worldwide. She won a National Book Award, a national science-writing prize and a Guggenheim grant, which, with the book's sales, enabled her to move to Southport Island, Maine in 1953 to concentrate on writing. In 1955, she published "The Edge of the Sea," another popular seller. She also began a relationship with Dorothy Freeman, a married summer resident. Though much of their correspondence was destroyed shortly before Carson's death, the rest was published by Freeman's granddaughter in 1955 as "Always, Rachel: The Letters of Rachel Carson and Dorothy Freeman, 1952-1964: An Intimate Portrait of a Remarkable Friendship."*

**DID YOU KNOW?:** *In her books on the sea Carson wrote about geologic discoveries from submarine technology and underwater research - of how islands were formed, how currents change and merge, how temperature affects sea life, and how erosion impacts not just shore lines but salinity, fish populations, and tiny micro-organisms. Even in the 1950s, Carson's ecological vision of the oceans shows her embrace of a larger environmental ethic which could lead to the sustainability of nature's interactive and interdependent systems. Climate change, rising sea-levels, melting Arctic glaciers, collapsing bird and animal populations, crumbling geological faults - all are part of Carson's work. But how, she wondered, would the educated public be kept informed of these challenges to life itself? What was the public's "right to know"?*

**DID YOU KNOW?:** *After a niece died in early 1957, Carson adopted her son and relocated to Silver Spring, Maryland, to care for her aging mother. A letter from a friend in Duxbury, Massachusetts about the loss of bird life after pesticide spraying inspired Carson to write "Silent Spring." The book primarily focuses on pesticides' effects on ecosystems, but four chapters detail their impact on humans, including cancer. She also accused the chemical industry of spreading misinformation and public officials of accepting industry claims uncritically. Chemical companies sought to discredit her as a Communist or hysterical woman. Many pulled their ads from the CBS Reports TV special on April 3, 1963, entitled "The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson." Still, roughly 15 million viewers tuned in, and that, combined with President John F. Kennedy's Science Advisory Committee Report - which validated Carson's research - made pesticides a major public issue. Carson received medals from the National Audubon Society and the American Geographical Society, and induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters.*

*Evidence of the widespread misuse of organic chemical pesticides: Government and industry after World War II prompted Carson to reluctantly speak out not just about the immediate threat to humans and non-human nature from unwitting chemical exposure, but also to question government and private science's assumption that human domination of nature was the correct course for the future. In "Silent Spring" Carson asked the hard questions about whether and why humans had the right to control nature; to decide who lives or dies, to poison or destroy non-human life. In showing that all biological systems were dynamic and by urging the public to question authority, to ask "who speaks, and why"? Rachel Carson became a social revolutionary, and "Silent Spring" became the handbook for the future of all life on Earth.*

**DID YOU KNOW?:**

Seriously ill with breast cancer, Carson died two years after her book's publication? In 1980, she was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Her homes are considered national historic landmarks, and various awards bear her name.

**These are just a few of Rachel Carson's quotes, courtesy of "goodreads.com":**

"Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species - man - acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world."

"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter."

"But man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself."

"One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, "What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?"

**Part of her speech accepting the John Burroughs Medal:**

"The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for the destruction of our race. Wonder and humility are wholesome emotions, and they do not exist side by side with a lust for destruction."

**And, in my humble opinion, summing it all up in only five (true) words:**

"In nature, nothing exists alone."

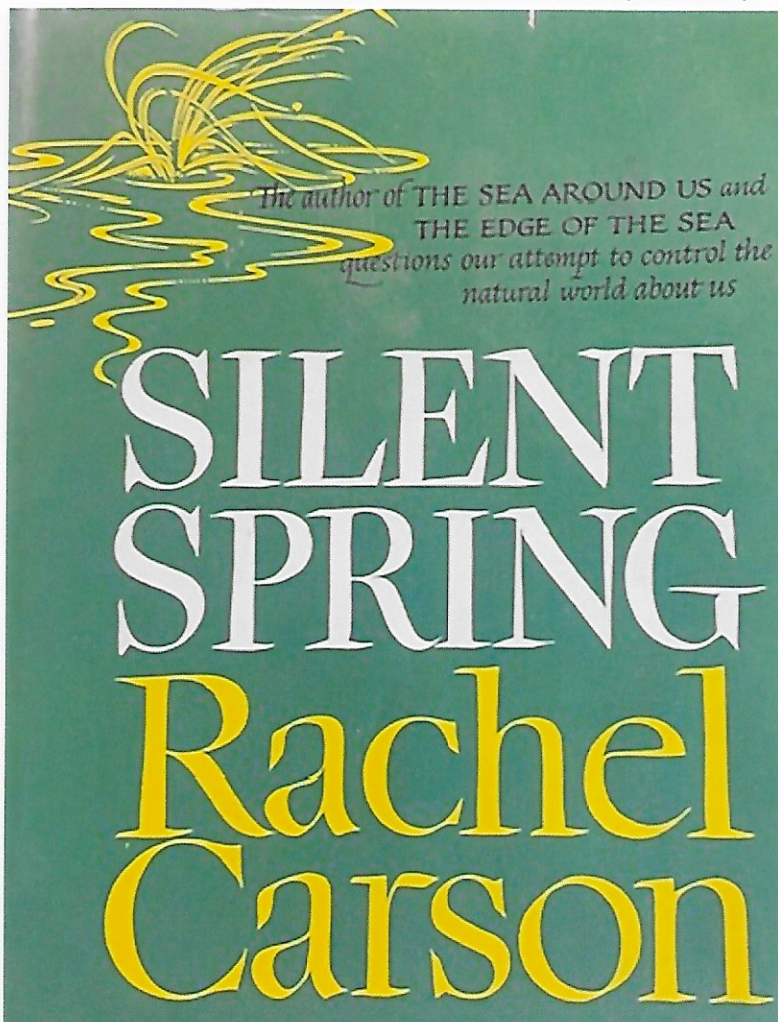
**DID YOU KNOW?:**

My Grandfather on my mother's side, Gerald (Jerry) A. Meech started the Organic Gardening Club of Akron and was their first president in 1950, and a member until 1978 when he and my Grandmother moved to Arizona for health reasons? Gardening was always a passion for my Grandfather, and before all these "doomsday preppers" became prevalent, I always knew at a young age that the first place I would go to would be my Grandfather's. He was an extraordinarily self-sufficient man, or as I liked to think, he knew a lot about everything, especially if you asked - and then listened when he spoke. I knew at an extremely young age that at every harvest there would be enough lima beans to possibly outlive every opossum, cockroach or rat left on the planet should "the bomb" drop! He built his house with his brother from the ground up, back when Montrose was "the country" before it became the mess it is now. He started working at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron at age 21, but was laid off for two years due to an economic depression. During this time, he worked WPA (Works Progress Administration) to support himself, his wife, child (my mom), mother-in-law, and brother-in-law, who was also laid off from Goodyear. My Grandfather's job was to help manually dig Nimisila Reservoir. He also knew how to harness manpower, or at least grandchild-power. My older brother and I weeded that garden every time we visited, I believe! I'll never look at a row of green beans the same! It's probably the sole reason I love gardening so much to this day. I still have the fifty-cent pieces and silver dollars he would give me for conquering this task. He retired in 1976 after 42 years of service at Goodyear. To this day, I don't know if he ever read "Silent Spring," but he certainly adhered to Rachel Carson's beliefs.

**Editor's note:** The above about my Grandfather is courtesy of my mother, Jeannette, from her "A Celebration of Life," from his remembrance, put into my context for this story, for his refusal of gardening by chemical means.



*My Grandfather, Jerry Meech, way ahead of his time in preaching the gospel (or, who preached who?) of Rachel Carson.  
(photo courtesy of: Jeannette A. Meech/Vogus/Maloney - Love You Mom!!!)*



*The cover of "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson, a book my father got for me (on my birthday), on March 03, 1998.*

*(photo by: Michelle M. Vogus)*

**"Be a part of Nature - not apart of Nature" - Douglas W. Vogus**

*(I'm no Rachel Carson, but it sounds about right to me!)*



*A force of nature - Rachel Carson enjoying time afield in one of her favorite places, the Maine woods and coastline.*

*(photo courtesy of: CBS Photo Archive/Getty Images)*

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