

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

HISTORY & FACTS of the JUNE CENSUS

JUNE	13-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS							
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
80 / 1,004	72 / 1,322	73 / 815	79 / 1,013	75 / 894	78 / 759	79 / 1,120	74 / 1,014	74 / 1,112
2019	2020	2021	2022					
74 / 1,177	79 / 770	73 / 814	77 / 760					

Most Species seen in June : 80 on 06/05/2010.

Most Individual Birds seen in June : 1,322 on 06/04/2011.

Fewest Species seen in June : 72 on 06/04/2011.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in June : 759 on 06/06/2015.

Species Average in June : 75.9 Species.

Total Individuals Average in June : 967.2 Individuals.

Lowest Temperature on June Census : 44 degrees F on 06/07/2014.

Highest Temperature on June Census : 89 degrees F on 06/04/2011.

Longest Time Afield on June Census : 11 Hours & 30 Minutes on 06/01/2019.

Shortest Time Afield on June Census : 7 Hours & 15 Minutes on 06/05/2010.

LAST JUNE'S FIELD REPORT

06/04/22	TOTAL SPECIES:	77	START / END TIME:	5:55am - 3:55pm		
	TOTAL BIRDS:	760	TIME AFIELD:	10:00	FT. MI.:	13.85
ROUTE:	Red Lock Trailhead south to Merriman Valley, with stops at Trail Mix in Peninsula and Szalay's Sweet Corn Farm & Market.					
	TEMP.:	51F ~ 76F ~ 75F				
OBSERVERS:	John Henry & Douglas W. Vogus; Michelle Vogus (Towpath Tennis to Merriman Valley)					
CONDITIONS:	Very foggy early; fog lifting at 7:15am; sunny with blue skies and beautiful for the rest of the day.					
TRAIL CONDITIONS:	Good.	RIVER CONDITIONS:	Normal and mostly clear.			

FIVE YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

On June 01, 2018 we set a high for one of Ohio's most beautiful breeding warblers, the Hooded Warbler. A stunning songbird that is fairly easy to find in the Cuyahoga Valley from early May into early October. The rich, shaded forests of the Cuyahoga Valley provide perfect breeding habitat for this warbler that seems to always be singing. It is a perfect "introductory species" to beginning birders in search of warblers.

JUNE 2023's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*)

DESCRIPTION:

ADULT MALE: Black hood and throat; contrasting bright yellow forehead, cheeks, dark lores; olive-green upperparts; bright yellow underparts. **ADULT FEMALE:** Like male, but variable head pattern: most show only narrow black border; a few show nearly complete black hood. First spring similar to immature. **IMMATURE:** Male similar to adult; hood feathers extensively tipped yellow and olive. Female dullest; no black on throat, crown; indistinct yellow superciliary, throat; olive cheeks.

LENGTH: 5 & 1/4"**WINGSPREAD:**

8" to 8 & 1/4"

WEIGHT:

10.7 grams

VOICE:

Although it spends most of its life in the forest understory, male often rises to tree-tops to perch motionless, making forest ring with loud two-note phrases; one song, rhythmically, seems to say "weeta-weeta-wee-TEE-oh." Slurred versions of this song persist into fall. Call note is a loud "chink" or "chip" similar to that of the Louisiana Waterthrush.

HABITS:

An excellent field character is this species' habit of rapidly opening and shutting its tail with a lateral movement, revealing the extensive white in the outer three pairs of rectrices; this tail-flashing occurs at a rate of more than once per second. This species has a relatively low foraging beat, usually staying within 5-10 feet of the ground and often foraging on the ground itself. Foraging behaviors include sallying, hover-gleaning, and gleaning; is an excellent flycatcher, prey consists mostly of arthropods. Males on the breeding grounds characteristically choose a song perch that is quite high in the canopy and usually somewhat concealed; some song perches are more in the open. They are persistent singers, singing well into midday, and are often the last warblers to cease singing in the evening. Males may sing on the breeding grounds well into September, and are occasionally noted to sing in fall migration.

HABITAT:

Breeds in both upland and bottomland woodlands, the key habitat features being the presence of a well-developed shrubby understory beneath extensive mature, shaded forests. Such habitats especially occur along streambottoms and ravines and in floodplains. In portions of the Great Lakes region it is found mainly in shaded ravines and gorges.

NESTING:

NEST: Built in fork of small saplings, rhododendron, laurel, buttonbush, alders, from 10-inches to 6 feet off the ground, rarely to 18 feet; made of dead leaves, plant fibers, and down, bound with spider's silk, cup lined with fine grass or horsehair. **EGGS:** April (in the South) to June; 3 to 5 eggs, usually 3, cream-white, spotted, blotched, usually at large end, with browns. **INCUBATION:** 12 days; young leave nest at 8 to 9 days old.

RANGE:

BREEDS: In eastern North America mainly south of the Great Lakes; especially common in the South. **WINTERS:** In the lowlands mainly from eastern Mexico south to the Caribbean region of Honduras and Nicaragua, with the largest numbers occurring on the Yucatan peninsula and adjacent regions.

STATUS:

Fairly common; population appears stable, but the species is sensitive to forest fragmentation.

Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the Hooded Warbler in Northeast Ohio.

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
			rr	uuCCCCCC	CCCCCCC
Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
CCCCCCC	CCCCCCC	CCCCuuuu	rrrrrrrooo		

- 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.
- rrrrrrrrrrrr** = 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 Hooded Warbler on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 ~ present.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.								
FEB.								
MAR.								
APR.								
MAY	9	2	6	8	9	12	5	6
JUN.	4	12	4	7	9	3	5	7
JUL.	7	6	7	8	6	3	7	5
AUG.			2	6	2	2	3	4
SEP.	1	1	7		3	1	1	1
OCT.			2	1		1		
NOV.								
DEC.								

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
JAN.						
FEB.						
MAR.						
APR.						
MAY	5	10		3	4	
JUN.	13*	6	4	3	2	
JUL.	5	8	4	6	3	
AUG.	7	5	3	2	4	
SEP.		1	1		3	
OCT.		1	1		5	
NOV.						
DEC.						

DID YOU KNOW?:

One study showed the Hooded Warbler's eye size to be the largest among 32 species of warblers analyzed, a character possibly related to its preference for deeply shaded habitats.

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



The brightness found in the darkness - the Hooded Warbler is a beacon of light in the shaded forest understory.

(photo courtesy of: All About Birds/Macaulay Library)

JUNE'S DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW?: *The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills, and natural disasters? To protect public health and the environment, the Superfund program focuses on making a visible and lasting difference in communities, ensuring that people can live and work in healthy, vibrant places.*

DID YOU KNOW?: *What is Superfund? Thousands of contaminated sites exist nationally due to hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or otherwise improperly managed. These sites include manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills, and mining sites. In the late 1970's, toxic waste dumps such as "Love Canal" in Niagara Falls, New York and "Valley of the Drums" in Brooks, Kentucky received national attention when the public learned about the risks to human health and the environment posed by contaminated sites. In response, Congress established the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) in 1980. CERCLA is informally called Superfund. It allows EPA to clean up contaminated sites. It also forces the parties responsible for the contamination to either perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work. When there is no viable responsible party, Superfund gives the EPA the funds and authority to clean up contaminated sites. Superfund's goals are to: 1) Protect human health and the environment by cleaning up contaminated sites; 2) Make responsible parties pay for cleanup work; 3) Involve communities in the Superfund process; and 4) Return Superfund sites to productive use.*

DID YOU KNOW?:

The Cuyahoga Valley National Park had its own Superfund site? The Krejci Dump operated as a salvage yard and waste disposal facility in Boston Township, Ohio from 1948 to 1980. It received solid and hazardous wastes from nearby cities, towns, and scores of companies. At the time, dumps were largely unregulated. Toxic materials were buried in unlined pits and allowed to seep unchecked into the environment. In 1985, Cuyahoga Valley National Park acquired the property and soon realized the scale of the pollution. The level of contamination qualified the site under Superfund law. Numerous major corporations were discovered to have disposed industrial waste at the site, including Ford Motor Company, 3M, General Motors, Chrysler, Chevron, and others. Under the Superfund law, parties that disposed hazardous materials at the site were liable for the costs of investigating and cleaning up the contamination. The decades-long effort set a legal precedent that cleaned up Krejci as well as other National Park Service sites around the country. Ultimately, the responsible parties paid more than \$50 million to remove the toxins and restore the property. NPS certified the work as completed in December 2020.

DID YOU KNOW?:

It takes a lot to be labeled a Superfund site - and none of it good. The following article by Jennifer Conn of Cleveland, for Spectrum News, gives you the rundown on this site - the ugly, the bad, and finally, the good.

CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK EARNS U.S. EPA AWARD FOR \$50M KREJCI DUMP REMEDIATION

BOSTON TOWNSHIP, OHIO - *When the Cuyahoga Valley National Park purchased a property in the mid-80s as part of its expanding footprint, park officials weren't aware they had taken on a toxic dump site. Now, after years of cleanup, working closely with the Ford Motor Co. and other companies whose waste contributed to the contamination, the site has been returned to a lush, natural environment, complete with meadows, pools and wetland habitat for wildlife, the National Park Service said. Recognizing the Herculean effort it took to clean up the site, including the park's cooperative partnerships with with federal and states agencies, developers and local entities, the U.S. EPA has awarded Cuyahoga Valley National Park its "National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse" award, for outstanding remediation efforts, the EPA announced in a release. "By investing in a major environmental cleanup, the National Park Service has not only honored Congress's intent, they have also restored wetlands and meadows," said EPA Region 5 Administrator Debra Shore. "Through strong federal, state, and local partnerships, this site is now a thriving recreational space that will be enjoyed for generations to come."*

Known as the Krejci Dump, the site covered more than 40 acres between Hines Hill Rd. and I-271. The former owners, the Krejci family, had run a scrap operation there from 1948 to 1980, collecting waste from municipalities and companies, at a time when dump sites weren't closely regulated. After buying the property, the CVNP realized there was a problem when visitors and rangers became ill at the site. (Editor's note: the "visitor" was actually a man collecting old bottles, and that's what initially brought the contamination to the forefront. The man, it was said, opened a rusty barrel to look inside it and got violently ill from whatever fumes came out. I hiked the area once as a youngster of maybe twelve or thirteen years old. I had no problems - although some may beg to differ - but then again, I was smart enough not to go looking in old rusted barrels. Nothing good comes out of an old rusty barrel. DWV).

The park brought in the Ohio and U.S. EPAs to investigate and, with thousands of barrels leaking industrial waste, the land was found to be so contaminated it qualified as a Superfund site requiring a major cleanup, the park service said. The 1980 law that created Superfund, made the parties responsible for cleaning up the contamination or reimbursing the government for cleanup work executed by the EPA. Cleanup at the Krejci site began in 2000, and as part of the settlement, Ford Motor Co. took the lead role, with assistance from General Motors Co., 3M, Chrysler Corp., Chevron and others, and overseen by the EPA, the park service said.

A year later, the park service scored a major victory when 3M was ordered by a federal judge to repay the park service more than \$20 million it had spent on the initial site investigation, the park service said. The money was put into a fund that launched the NPS's own site cleanup and enforcement program. Removing toxic soil and material at the Krejci site took years. Veronica Dickerson, Environmental Protection Specialist at CVNP, served as project manager for 10 of those years, ensuring the remediation was implemented as it was designed and that the project proceeded as it should, she said. That meant managing the entities responsible for the contamination and keeping the park service and EPA apprised of the progress. "It's exhilarating," Dickerson said. "I tend to thrive on that level of chaos. You have to be able to pivot." During the project, the depths of the contamination varied, with some areas 25-foot deep, as more and more barrels were uncovered. "It's where it could kind of derail your excitement, but it actually intensifies it, because you're still getting closer to the end goal and getting a site cleaned up and brought back to the public," she said.

By 2012, the park service reported that more than 375,000 tons of contaminated material had been shipped to a licensed hazardous-material facility in Michigan. What the contents of some of the barrels was used for was never identified, Dickerson said, as none of the companies involved wanted to claim them. Scientists could identify the molecular structure of the fluid, but not the use. It would have been nice to know because, some of us were curious, like, 'what's that for?'" she said. "It was pretty nasty." Once the contamination was removed, workers began stabilizing the ravines on either side of the dump area through extensive grading.

In 2013, work began to recreate the natural features of the landscape, preparing nearly four acres of the area for meadows and wetlands, the park service said. It was then seeded with a variety of native grasses and wildflowers. By 2015, the plants were becoming well established and the wetlands returning, the park service said. In 2020, the park service determined the objectives of the site restoration had been achieved and a certificate of completion was issued to Ford. In the end, those deemed responsible for the contamination paid out more than \$50 million for the property's cleanup and restoration, the park service said. For now, the CVNP is letting the site rest in its new state, as the land slowly rejuvenates. "In time, the plants, and the flora and the fauna, and just kind of the circle of life, will start to re-add those micro and macro nutrients back into the soil," Dickerson said. "So as time goes on, we'll see those get to healthier levels."

No trails or structures are currently being planned for the site, although park visitors do stop on the nearby access road to enjoy the beauty of the area often, said NPS Community Engagement Supervisor Pam Barnes. "It's lovely," she said. "It's amazing to get out of the car and just listen, and contemplate what it used to be." The Krejci site is illustrative of the larger efforts of the national park, she said. "This park has really been striving to take the damage that man has done in the past, and clean it up for the future," Barnes said. "We've done a great deal to scar this environment." Barnes said she is hopeful society is heading into an era underscored by land revitalization and that upcoming generations are learning important lessons. "Not to repeat history," she said.

(excerpts from David Beach's article "Let the Buyer Bemoan" - 1993)

One of the most forlorn sights in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area is a farmhouse on Hines Hill Rd. The little white house is a Greek Revival gem from the mid-nineteenth century that begs to be restored and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Instead, the house hides in the weeds. Its siding rots. Bricks from the chimney crash onto the roof. Park maintenance crews don't dare, however to make repairs. They aren't even allowed to because the house sits in the middle of a hazardous waste site.

The house was once occupied by the Krejci family. Starting in the 1940s, they ran a salvage yard and landfill operation on the land surrounding the house. It was your all-too-typical country dump. A location close enough to highways and industry, yet far enough away from nosy neighbors. A convenient ravine to fill. Maybe some of the stuff was dangerous, maybe not. Back then, who cared?

When Congress established the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area between Cleveland and Akron in 1974, the Krejci Dump happened to fall inside the park boundaries. Needless to say, the dump did not conform to the management objectives of the National Park Service. So the Feds started the condemnation proceedings. In the resulting settlement, the park received 234 acres of land and the Krejcis walked away with \$1.4 million. The Krejcis were given a few years to clear out, and the park took over the dump in late 1985. A collector of antique bottles rummaging through the dump one day happened to sniff an old 55-gallon drum. He then became dizzy and reported it to a park ranger. After walking through the site, the rangers, too, began complaining about rashes, headaches and nausea. The park superintendent closed the area, put up snow fencing and "Danger" signs and called the EPA.

In the Krejci case, the deepest pockets belonged to the Federal Government. Commendably, the Park Service chose to proceed with the cleanup rather than argue - for the sake of its image, for the safety of park visitors and because it's usually cheaper to clean up sooner rather than later. However, Justice Department attorneys will now spend many more years trying to recover some of the costs from the Krejcis and others. The litigation will go on and on. Eventually, the blame and the costs may get fairly apportioned. Perhaps the only sure thing is that the lawyers will be kept busy. All this has been a sobering experience for the National Park Service, which is accustomed to managing more pristine public lands. Mention hazardous waste in the CVNRA to Park Service officials across the country, and they will sigh, "Ah yes - Krejci."

As for the distinctive white farmhouse, it will be demolished. The soil around it is contaminated, and the Park Service does not like to move historic structures away from their original sites. "It's very sad," says the park's historical architect, "but safety concerns have to outweigh cultural values." The debris from the demolition will be sent to a landfill.

JUST SOME OF THE CONTAMINANTS FOUND

Arsenic

Carcinogens

Dioxins & Dioxin-like Compounds

Heavy Metals

Polyaromatic Hydrocarbons

Polychlorinated Biphenyls

(**Editor's note:** I never could find anything about the Krejci family being fined for their huge role in this entire debacle, as if it were a \$1.4 million ride off into the sunset. DWV.)



The highway to hell? Just one of the pathways through the scarred and toxic Krejci Dump shortly after purchase.

(photo from the National Park Service collection)



The National Park Service thought they were just getting a "junkyard" but they got much, much more than that!

(photo from the National Park Service collection)



Like it never happened - the former Krejci Dump is proof of man's foolish disregard and nature's resiliency.

(photo by: Chris Davis)

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