

CUYAHOGA VALLEY TOWPATH TRAIL CENSUS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2021

(CVTTC)

HISTORY & FACTS of the NOVEMBER CENSUS

NOVEMBER	12-YEAR TOTALS of SPECIES / INDIVIDUALS							
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
52 / 1,101	46 / 702	55 / 1,314	47 / 1,425	50 / 1,933	52 / 967	46 / 711	51 / 2,206	50 / 1,052
2019	2020	2021						
47 / 1,106	43 / 793	51 / 1,302						

Most Species seen in November : 55 on 11/03/2012.

Most Individual Birds seen in November : 2,206 Total Birds on 11/04/2017.

Fewest Species seen in November : 43 on 11/07/2020.

Fewest Individual Birds seen in November : 702 on 11/05/2011.

Species Average in November : 49.2 Species.

Total Individuals Average in November : 1,217.6 Total Birds.

Lowest Temperature on November Census : 23-degrees F on 11/05/2011.

Highest Temperature on November Census : 72-degrees F on 11/07/2020.

Longest Time Afield on November Census : 9 hours & 40 minutes on 11/05/2021.

Shortest Time Afield on November Census : 6 hours & 55 minutes on 11/06/2010.

LAST NOVEMBER'S FIELD REPORT

11/07/20	TOTAL SPECIES:	43	START / END TIME:	6:50am - 4:05pm		
	TOTAL BIRDS:	793	TIME AFIELD:	9:15	FT. MI.:	13.51
ROUTE:	Red Lock Trailhead south to Merriman Valley with a stop at Trail Mix in Peninsula.					
TEMP.:	45F ~ 72F ~ 70F	OBSERVERS:	John Henry and Douglas W. Vogus.			
CONDITIONS:	Cool and crisp early, clear skies and warming throughout; unseasonably warm, clear and sunny, with light southerly breezes; absolutely beautiful conditions.					
TRAIL CONDITIONS:	Excellent - dry and recently leaf-blown by the park maintenance staff; heavy trail traffic, though.					
RIVER CONDITIONS:	Normal and mostly clear.					

SEVEN YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

On 11/01/2014 we set a census high of 29 Red-bellied Woodpeckers along the census route. This beautiful woodpecker is one of the most commonly seen woodpeckers in Ohio, whether in the field or at bird feeding stations. Most people who identify one for the first time often ask, "Where's its red belly?", and perhaps "zebra-backed woodpecker" or "buff-bellied woodpecker" may be more fitting, but at the right angle or underside view, the faint red wash of its underbelly will be seen. This species is also one of the most vocal woodpeckers, with several types of calls revealing its presence.

NOVEMBER 2021's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes carolinus*)

DESCRIPTION: All Red-bellied Woodpeckers show a black-and-white barred back, white uppertail coverts, buff to grayish white underparts, black chevrons on the lower flanks and undertail coverts. **ADULT MALE:** Entire crown, from bill to nape, is bright red, surrounding a gray to buff face/cheek area; there is a suffusion of pink or red on the center of the belly. **ADULT FEMALE:** Red on the head is limited to nasal tufts (just above the bill) and nape; wash on the belly is paler, less extensive. **JUVENILE:** Duller version of adults, lacking red nape.

LENGTH: 9 to 10 & 1/2" **WINGSPREAD:** 15" to 18"

WEIGHT: average 72.5 grams, or about 3 oz.

VOICE: In breeding season, the Red-bellied gives a rolling "churrr", it also gives a conversational "chiv chiv." Drumming is a simple roll of up to a second of about 19 beats per second.

HABITS: After undulating flight from tree to tree, hammers on trunks and limbs for larvae of wood-boring insects. Also feeds on the ground, eating ants, beetles, grasshoppers, crickets, caterpillars, flies, also acorns, beechnuts, pine seeds, juniper berries, mulberries, elderberries, blackberries, bayberries, wild grapes, poison ivy berries, cherries, apples, etc. Comes to feeding stations for sunflower seeds, suet, peanut butter and waste corn, often cacheing seeds and nuts.

HABITAT: Heavily timbered bottomlands, swamps, wooded groves of hardwoods preferred, but also a mix of conifers with large trees, parks, wooded neighborhoods with ample trees.

NESTING: **NEST:** Both sexes assist in digging nesting cavity in old stumps, decayed tops of dead trees; digs in softer-wooded trees such as elms, cottonwood, basswood, maple, poplar, willows, sycamores, but partly decayed stub or limb seems preferred. Entrance hole about 2-inches in diameter, cavity 10-12 inches deep, 5 to 70 feet above ground but usually less than 40 feet. Sometimes uses same nesting cavity in succeeding nesting seasons; also other woodpecker holes.

EGGS: April (in the south) to July; 3 to 8 eggs, usually 4 to 5 eggs, all white. **INCUBATION:** In turn, by both sexes, male incubates at night; female incubates slightly more than male; about 11 & 1/2 days; both parents brood young during first week of their nest life; young leave nest 24 to 26 days after hatching; young remain near nest site for about two days before leaving area to follow parents; about 42 days after leaving nest, young appear capable of caring for themselves.

RANGE: From Florida up to the New England states, west to the eastern Dakotas, through the eastern Great Plains, south to northern and eastern Texas. Ever-expanding.

STATUS: Abundant in the Southeast, uncommon to fairly common in the Northeast, Midwest, and Great Plains. Population is generally stable.

DID YOU KNOW?: The Red-bellied Woodpecker has been expanding its range northward since the 1950's? Expansion has gone into the Great Lakes region and New England and is also expanding northwestward into the Great Plains.

Abundance Codes on the graphs below indicate the best time of year to find the Red-bellied Woodpecker 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 Red-bellied Woodpecker on the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail Census 2010 ~ present.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.	17	9	6	22	22	16	11	7
FEB.	22	19	10	10	20	19	12	8
MAR.	22	14	21	10	14	6	16	7
APR.	16	16	9	12	8	8	9	8
MAY	10	8	12	7	14	9	12	8
JUN.	10	14	6	15	10	7	13	11
JUL.	10	10	3	6	4	6	7	4
AUG.	9	4	4	6	6	5	6	3
SEP.	9	7	9	11	8	9	12	6
OCT.	13	14	20	18	18	13	26	26
NOV.	22	8	7	19	29*	20	15	18
DEC.	18	11	15	18	15	14	10	15

	2018	2019	2020	2021
JAN.	20	8	14	16
FEB.	18	14	21	12
MAR.	13	13	16	16
APR.	24	15	24	12
MAY	14	12	10	13
JUN.	16	13	4	11
JUL.	8	2	6	7
AUG.	10	3	4	4
SEP.	7	9	6	10
OCT.	25	22	21	22
NOV.	14	13	21	21
DEC.	18	7	15	

DID YOU KNOW?: A male, banded at Hillsboro, N.C., was caught in same area and re-released on Feb. 22, 1967, when 20 years and 8 months old. At that time it was the greatest known age of any wild North American woodpecker!

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

DID YOU KNOW?:

Below is all the proof one needs in regards to the increase of the Red-bellied Woodpecker in Ohio. The Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge's monthly bird census was started on March 02, 1969 by Bob Crofts. The refuge straddles Ottawa and Lucas Counties in northwestern Ohio along the Western Basin of Lake Erie, between Port Clinton and Toledo.

Red-bellied Woodpecker records from 1969 to 1976:

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
JAN.	 	1		1				1
FEB.	 				1		1	
MAR.			1	1	FOG*	3		
APR.		1	2	3		2		
MAY			4	3				
JUN.			1	2	1			
JUL.								
AUG.			1					
SEP.								
OCT.	6		4					
NOV.		2	2	1		1		
DEC.		2	5	2				

FOG* = census was cancelled due to heavy fog.

Red-bellied Woodpecker records from 2014 to 2021:

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
JAN.	28*	12	6	23	14	27	10	14
FEB.	14	9	8	8	13	13	12	9
MAR.	6	7	5	14	17	9	8	9
APR.	7	11	7	12	10	9	10	8
MAY	3	6	6	5	13	9	11	5
JUN.	5	5	7	2	6	2	6	6
JUL.	2	2	1	8	7		7	8
AUG.	2	3	3	2	5	4	7	3
SEP.	6	9	12	9	11	5	10	8
OCT.	8	8	12	21	13	12	15	5
NOV.	16	3	17	15	11	8	11	9
DEC.	17	6	17	10	14	12	18	6

*

= HIGHEST COUNT TOTAL ON CENSUS.

BOLD #

= HIGHEST COUNT FOR THAT YEAR.

NOTE : Ottawa N.W.R. census records from March of 1969 to February of 1980 compiled by the late Bob Crofts and are courtesy of the late Ed Pierce.



The striking (and very common) Red-bellied Woodpecker is a great "starter bird" for beginning birdwatchers.

(photo courtesy of: New England Forestry Foundation)

NOVEMBER'S DID YOU KNOW?

DID YOU KNOW?: *The name of two Western species of birds - the Townsend's Solitaire and Townsend's Warbler - are actually named in honor of a naturalist from Philadelphia? John Kirk Townsend, an American naturalist and explorer, was born August 10, 1809. Townsend was a young physician in Philadelphia when he got the call in 1834 to accompany Thomas Nuttall on an expedition to the Pacific Northwest (usually known as the Second Wyeth Expedition, after the leader, Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth).*

DID YOU KNOW?: *Nuttall and Townsend travelled by coach from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, took a steamship to St. Louis, walked across Missouri to Independence, and there met up with Wyeth and his caravan. They then went by wagon train up the Platte River into Wyoming, through the South Pass and into Idaho, and then down the Snake and Columbia rivers to Vancouver, thereby becoming the first scientist-explorers to cross the country from Atlantic to Pacific in one continuous trip!*

DID YOU KNOW?: *Townsend and Nuttall collected specimens all the way. Townsend discovered a host of new bird and mammal species in the Pacific Northwest, some 30 in all, a few of which would be later named after him, such as the Townsend's Shrew-Mole and Townsend's Warbler. Others of his discoveries were named in honor of other naturalists, such as Vaux's Swift and the Douglas Squirrel. Townsend took his time returning home, as he went by way of Hawaii and then around The Horn, and he did not get back to Philadelphia until 1837, after 3 and 1/2 years of travel.*

DID YOU KNOW?: Once home, he found, to his distress, that John James Audubon had used dozens of Townsend specimens to create paintings for his "Birds of America" and had given Townsend no credit? Audubon would do the same in the "Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America." In fact, one of Audubon's paintings, the basis for two engraved plates in the "Birds of America," depicts 11 Western American birds, and every single one was based on a Townsend specimen. This painting is preserved (like all of Audubon's preparatory paintings for the "Birds of America") in the New York Historical Society. Townsend did publish his own "Narrative of a Journey Across the Rocky Mountains" in 1839 detailing the expedition, but he had no money for plates and the work is unillustrated.

DID YOU KNOW?: Townsend worked for a while at what would become the Smithsonian Institution, and then as a dentist in Philadelphia, but his taxidermic past eventually caught up with him, for he sickened and died in 1851, at age 42, a victim of cumulative arsenic poisoning. Arsenic powder was commonly employed in the preservation of mammal and bird skins, and Townsend had apparently inspired too much of it. He is buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

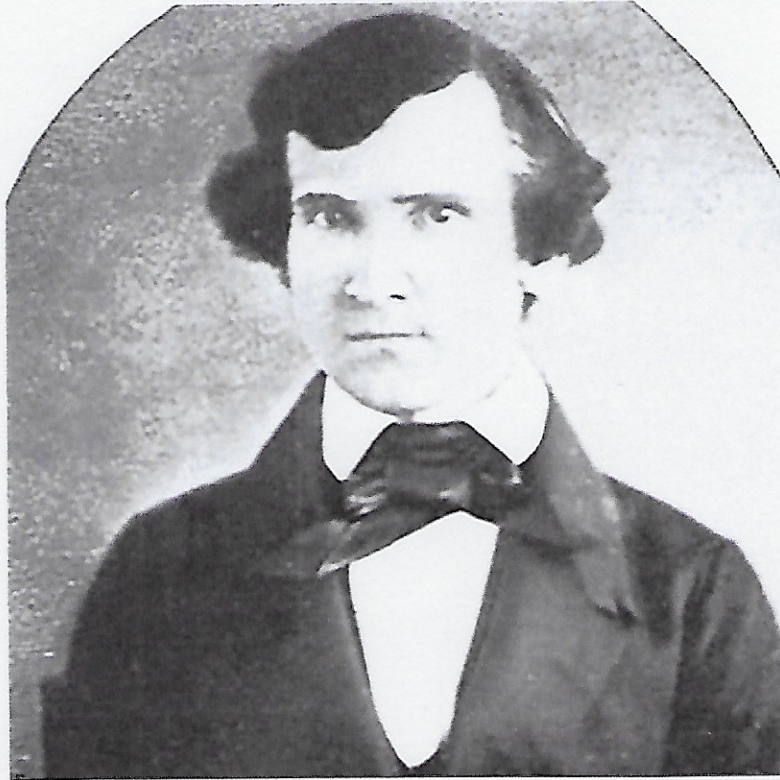
DID YOU KNOW?: Townsend was of Quaker ancestry and was educated at Westtown Boarding School in Chester County, Pa., the famous Quaker institution attended by Thomas Say, John Cassin (see: "The Towpath Traveler" Volume 34 from 09/2017), Edward Drinker Cope, and others who became prominent in science.



As occupants of mountain coniferous forests, Townsend's Warblers breed in western North America from Alaska to northern Oregon and Wyoming. The first accepted record of this accidental visitor to Ohio was a male discovered along the Magee Marsh Bird Trail (right next to Ottawa N.W.R.) in Lucas County, on April 7, 1993, by Elliot Tramer and members of his ornithology class from Toledo University.

(photo by: Matt Brady)

See You on the Trail! - Doug



A life cut short - John Kirk Townsend was done in by a type of preserving arsenic powder that he helped develop.

(portrait from: Oregon Historical Society)

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