

CUYAHOGA VALLEY TOWPATH TRAIL CENSUS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2022
(CVTTC)

HISTORY & FACTS of the NOVEMBER CENSUS

NOVEMBER	13-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	2022					
47 / 1,106	43 / 793	51 / 1,302	46 / 1,109					

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 : 48.9 Species.

Total Individuals Average in November : 1,209.3 Total Birds.

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

Highest Temperature on November Census : 77-degrees F on 11/05/2022.

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

11/05/21	TOTAL SPECIES:	51	TOTAL BIRDS:	1,302		
START / END TIME:		8:00am - 5:40pm	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.:	34F ~ 52F ~ 48F	CONDITIONS:	Chilly and crisp early, turning sunny and clear, blue skies with few clouds - a beautiful Autumn day.			
OBSERVERS:	John Henry and Douglas W. Vogus.					
TRAIL CONDITIONS:	Good.	RIVER CONDITIONS:	Slightly above normal.			

TEN YEARS AGO on the TOWPATH TRAIL

On 11/03/2012 we set a census high for one of Ohio's year-round resident raptors, the Red-shouldered Hawk, with four birds seen along the census route. We have since tied that high in January of 2014 and April of 2015. These beautiful hawks of the Buteo genus are much more approachable than the wary Red-tailed Hawk, which tends to fly right away when getting too close or stopping one's car to observe the bird. They are also more apt to be found nesting in wooded neighborhoods or parks than the larger and much more common Red-tailed Hawk.

NOVEMBER 2022's BIRD SPECIES PROFILE

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK (*Buteo lineatus*)

DESCRIPTION: A medium-size *buteo* with rounded wing tips that do not reach the tip of the tail. **ADULT:** Brown above with some streaking on the head. Rufous on the upperwing coverts gives the "red shoulders." The primaries are barred or checkered black and white, giving the back view a "salt-and-pepper" appearance. The dark tail has three white bands. Underparts are rufous with white barring. **JUVENILE:** Mostly brown above, with less rufous on the shoulders than an adult. Undersides are buffy with variable dark streaks, the brown tail has multiple bands.

LENGTH: 17" - 24" **WINGSPREAD:** 32" - 50" **WEIGHT:** Male: 1lb. 3oz.; Female: 1lb. 9oz.

VOICE: The noisiest of the *buteos*, especially during spring courtship. Utters loud, rapidly repeated musical "KEE-you" or "KEE-ahh", often repeated 8 to 10 times. Blue Jay imitates this call perfectly.

HABITS: Catches and eats mice, shrews, moles, tree squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, young opossums, muskrats, skunks, a variety of small to medium-sized birds, snakes, lizards, turtles, toads, frogs, salamanders, grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, caterpillars, wasps, katydids, snails, spiders, earthworms, etc. Spends a lot of time perched and sight-hunting for prey below.

HABITAT: A common hawk of wet deciduous forests, swamps, wooded river bottoms, lowland wet tracts of woods either in remote areas or in thickly settled farm country, city parks or cemeteries that have suitable trees; usually in different area than that of the larger Red-tailed Hawk, which prefers upland woods.

NESTING: **NEST:** Well built, often deep; 20 to 60 feet up, filling crotch of branch or branches against main trunk of hardwood or conifer (in Florida, in palmettos); built of sticks, twigs, bark, mosses, lichens, frequently decorated with sprigs of evergreen, often uses nests of previous years. **EGGS:** Florida in January; California, March to April; northern U.S. and Canada, March to June. Two to six eggs, commonly 3 to 4 eggs; white, blotched with browns. **INCUBATION:** By both sexes, about 28 days; young leave nest when 35 to 42 days old.

DID YOU KNOW?: The Red-shouldered Hawk has a strong attachment to its nesting territory? In one woodland, either same pair or succeeding generations known to occupy same tract each year for 26 consecutive years; another recorded site for 45 years.

RANGE: A widespread breeder throughout the East, into southern Canada. Found throughout the South, into eastern and southern Texas. California subspecies is coastal and in the Central Valley, up into Oregon and southern Washington. Northern birds migrate to southern states and into Mexico. Southern birds are nonmigratory.

STATUS: Stable, as far as is known.

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

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
JAN.	1		2	2	4*	2	1	
FEB.	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
MAR.	2	1	1	1	1	1		1
APR.	1	1			3	4*	1	
MAY	1		2		1		1	
JUN.	1		2	1	1	1		
JUL.		3		2	1			1
AUG.				3	1			
SEP.	1	1	1	2	1		1	
OCT.	1			2	3			
NOV.	1	1	4*	1		1	1	
DEC.	1			1		2		

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
JAN.	1			1	
FEB.	1	2		2	
MAR.		3	1	1	1
APR.					1
MAY	2		1	2	
JUN.			2	2	1
JUL.			2		2
AUG.					
SEP.			1	1	
OCT.	1				
NOV.	1		1	1	
DEC.		1			

DID YOU KNOW?:

Wherever nesting Red-shouldered Hawks are found, occupied nests are decorated with a sprig of greenery? It might be the leaves of an early-blooming flower such as the violet. It might be a branch cut from an evergreen. Whatever its source, its message is clear. It says to prospecting Red-shouldered Hawks, "this nest is occupied."

DID YOU KNOW?:

The Red-shoulder Hawk's flight speed during migration has been recorded at 18 to 34 mph?

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



One beautiful Buteo - the Red-shouldered Hawk is a very approachable hawk and found throughout Ohio year-round.

(photo by: Elizabeth Waddington)

DID YOU KNOW?: *The George M. Sutton Avian Research Center was named after George Miksch Sutton (1898-1982), who until his death served as Professor Emeritus at the University of Oklahoma and as an example to all aspiring ornithologists. The following is an appreciation of Sutton's life from Jerome A. Jackson titled "An Eye for Birds - The Life of George Miksch Sutton"*

*George Miksch Sutton was born in Bethany, Nebraska, on 16 May 1898. He was the only son and oldest child of Harry Trumbull Sutton and Lola Anna Mix Sutton. We know of Doc (as he was known to all who knew him) as a result of his art, his ornithology, his popular writings, his philanthropy, and for some lucky ones among us, his friendship. To better understand the man that George became, it helps to know his parents and of his youth. George wrote of his youth in his autobiography, *Bird Student* (1980, Univ. Oklahoma Press), but many of the details included there are recollections that are not completely accurate. In the course of preparing a more detailed biography of Sutton, I have ferreted out many new details. In the paragraphs that follow I share only a brief glimpse of this man: George Miksch Sutton.*

Harry Trumbull Sutton was a minister and a teacher at Cotner College in Bethany when George was born - the chairman of the Department of Eloquence, a wonderful name that at any college today would be the "Department of Speech" or "Communications." But "Eloquence" was befitting the times and the man. Harry was a master at recitation of the works of Shakespeare and frequently traveled to perform his recitations as well as to preach at various churches. In 1906, Harry ran for governor of Nebraska on the Prohibition ticket, though he lost by a considerable margin. His wife, Lola Anna Mix, was of Moravian ancestry. She had been born Lola Anna Miksch, but when her family moved to Minnesota during her teens, her father changed the family name to the phonetic spelling "Mix" in order to better fit in. Although she used the name "Mix" during her tenure at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, she never really approved of the change. To perpetuate the family name, she gave each of her children the middle name "Miksch."

Harry and Lola had traveled with the Chautauqua program in the 1890's, Harry lecturing and Lola leading songs and playing the piano. Lola was 30 when they settled down in Bethany and George was born. Throughout her life she taught music and occasionally English. George certainly came to share his father's eloquence and his mother's love of music.

One of the most influential features of George's childhood was that his family moved frequently. In 1901 they moved to Aitkin, Minnesota. By 1903, they were back in Bethany, Nebraska. Around 1907 they moved to Ashland, Oregon, and shortly after that, to Eugene, Oregon. A year later they were in Eureka, Illinois. In 1910, his parents split up while his mother studied music in Chicago. For a year, George and his sisters were separated, George living with his grandparents in Winnibego, Minnesota. In 1911, the family was back in Illinois, then moved to Fort Worth, Texas, and by 1914 had moved to Bethany, West Virginia. The positive sides of this itinerant youth were that George saw America and learned much about regional differences and similarities in habitats and birds, that he was quite close to his family, and that he became incredibly self-reliant. The negative side was that George had little opportunity to establish long-time friendships with other children or his teachers.

Birds were the threads that provided continuity through his childhood. At age five his parents gave him Frank Chapman's book "Bird-Life." At the age of 10 he corresponded with a journal editor about his observations of swallows catching feathers. At age 11 he got his first bird-skinning lessons. At age 12 his first bird drawing (of an oriole at its nest) was published, and George joined the American Ornithologists' Union. At age 13, George took mail-order taxidermy lessons from the Northwestern School of Taxidermy in Omaha, and was keeping a menagerie of birds and mammals - including a skunk - and was attending special classes as a high school student at Texas Christian University. By age 16, George had published articles in "The Oologist" and "Bird-Lore."

By 1915, George began corresponding with the famed bird artist, Louis Agassiz Fuertes. Fuertes responded with kindness and constructive criticism. This was exactly the stimulus that he needed; he was on the path he had been seeking. During late summer of 1916, George traveled by train to spend a few weeks with Fuertes. Although he painted no birds while he was there, the experience was crucial.

In 1918, George began work at the Carnegie Museum, at first in charge of the egg collection, but later accompanying W.E.C. Todd on field expeditions to Labrador and the far north. Although he was to have graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia, in 1919, he was expelled instead - for leading a student revolt against mandatory ROTC training at the college. In 1923 he was allowed to finish his work there and finally graduated.

In 1925 George left Carnegie to become State Ornithologist for Pennsylvania, a position from which he defended birds of prey to sportsmen and which included travel throughout the state. This work ultimately resulted in his first book, "An Introduction to the Birds of Pennsylvania" (1928). George quit his job as State Ornithologist in 1929 in order to begin graduate research for the Ph.D. under Arthur A. Allen of Cornell University. He left Pennsylvania in the summer of 1929 to spend a year on Southampton Island in the Canadian Arctic. On his return, he settled in at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, to complete course work and his dissertation. It was

there that he met and became a lifelong friend of Sewall Pettingill. Following graduate school, Doc remained at Cornell as Curator of Birds, travelling frequently to collect specimens and to paint. He maintained his ties with Carnegie, joining further expeditions to the Arctic, Texas, and Mexico. During these two years he also wrote two books, "Eskimo Year" (1934) and "Birds in the Wilderness" (1936), and illustrated several others. Although employed at Cornell, Doc developed close ties with Joselyn Van Tyne at the University of Michigan, spent summers working at the University of Michigan field station, and sought a position at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. When one was finally offered, he chose to stay at Cornell.

With the outbreak of World War II, Doc felt obliged to enlist. He inquired of opportunities in both the Navy and the Army and was finally enlisted in the Army Air Corps to test Arctic survival gear. While stationed at various bases in North America, Doc continued painting birds and writing for both professional and popular audiences. He rose to the rank of Major shortly before he was discharged with undulant fever. While in the Army Air Corps, Sutton birded with other Army Ornithologists such as Sergeant Roger Tory Peterson and Lieutenant Franklin McCamey. Peterson once told me he could never think of Sutton without thinking "Sir." Following the War, Doc got another offer of employment at the University of Michigan and this time he took it.

Another book, "Mexican Birds: First Impressions," appeared in 1951. This book elaborated on articles he had published in Audubon Magazine during the 1940's and stimulated further work that ultimately led to the establishment of the Rancho de Cielo field station. Unfortunately, the long sought position at Michigan didn't work out to his liking - apparently in part due to a personality conflict with Van Tyne. At a distance they had become good friends; being close destroyed that friendship. Doc began looking for employment elsewhere. He wanted a full-time faculty position.

In the summer of 1951, Doc taught at the University of Oklahoma Biological Station and established contacts that led, in 1952, to a position of Professor of Zoology at the University of Oklahoma. The same year, Doc was awarded an honorary doctorate from Bethany College. Doc and his friend Sewall Pettingill, along with Sewall's wife, Eleanor, spent the summer of 1958 in Iceland. It was a grand adventure that resulted in Doc's book "Iceland Summer." One of the paintings Doc created, of a Gyrfalcon on a ledge, was used in preparing an Icelandic postage stamp. For his book and artwork focusing on Iceland, George Miksch Sutton became "Sir George Miksch Sutton" when he was awarded the Knight Cross Order of the Falcon by the Icelandic government in 1972.

Sutton's book, "Oklahoma Birds" (1967), came as a culmination of a long effort that had stimulated ornithological research throughout the state. Although Doc officially retired from the University of Oklahoma in 1968, he remained as Curator of Birds at the Stovall Museum and as George Lynn Cross Research Professor Emeritus. He also continued to work with graduate students, to paint, and to write.

More books appeared: in 1971, "High Arctic"; in 1972, "At a Bend in a Mexican River"; in 1975, "Portraits of Mexican Birds"; and in 1977, "Fifty Common Birds of Oklahoma and the Southern Great Plains." In 1977 he was named "Master Wildlife Artist" by the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Museum in Wisconsin. In 1979, Doc published his correspondence with Louis Agassiz Fuertes in

"To a Young Bird Artist" - a book that should be must reading for any aspiring bird artist. Throughout his life George Sutton was a bridge between birds and people and between amateur birders and professional ornithologists. His artwork illustrated many books and the covers of several journals. These included longtime cover illustrations for the cover of the Sewickley Valley Audubon Society journal, "The Cardinal"; for the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union journal, "Nebraska Bird Review"; and for the "Wilson Bulletin" (two different covers). Early in his professional life he committed himself to supporting professional ornithology and he was especially supportive of the Wilson Ornithological Society. In addition to his cover illustrations, Doc served as President of the Society, and later as editor of the "Wilson Bulletin." He contributed many color plates and other illustrations to that journal and in 1972 donated funds to establish the Sutton Color Plate Fund to assure that there could be a color plate in each issue of the "Wilson Bulletin." Doc also nourished the Oklahoma Ornithological Society with funds, artwork, his expertise and enthusiasm.

Over the years Doc's art evolved from illustration of birds to illustration of birds in their habitats. He sought recognition as a fine artist, not merely as an illustrator of birds. In my opinion his later art, as exemplified in "High Arctic," made him deserving of that recognition. Sutton was a master with pen and ink and watercolor. His paintings of baby birds are especially exciting. He knew birds; he knew his medium; he understood light.

Although Doc didn't like to sell his paintings, when there was need, he was there. His art helped raise funds for Rancho de Cielo, for the Oklahoma City Zoo, for scholarships at the University of Oklahoma, for a diorama at the Minnesota Museum of Natural History, for the purchase of a grand piano at the University of Oklahoma, for funds to assist a friend with cancer, and many other causes. Following a long bout with prostate cancer, George Miksch Sutton died on 7 December 1982. Heeding his wishes, friends took his ashes to the Black Mesa country of western Oklahoma, where they were dispersed by the wind among the birds and habitats he loved so much. It is not surprising that Doc left behind a number of manuscripts as contributions to the "Bulletin of the Oklahoma Ornithological Society", and that many of his friends saw to it that his last book, "Birds Worth Watching" (1986) was brought to fruition.

DID YOU KNOW?: *The George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center (Sutton Center) was founded in 1983 with the mission of finding cooperative conservation solutions for birds and the natural world through science and education. The Sutton Center is a private, nonprofit organization located near Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The Sutton Center is a leader in avian research and conservation through conducting intensive, conservation-oriented, ecological field research on declining grassland birds, developing and applying techniques for the reintroduction and monitoring of Southern Bald Eagles, managing the successful captive breeding of endangered species and performing bird surveys in Oklahoma and across the world.*

DID YOU KNOW?: *Through media and the visual arts, conservationists alert us to today's important environmental issues. They help us develop a greater understanding of the complex relationships upon which all life depends. In that regard, the Sutton Avian Research Center offers an annual scholarship competition for the Sutton Art Award. This award recognizes those students who demonstrate the ability to communicate current conservation topics in compelling ways.*



George Miksch Sutton



Artist,
Scientist,
and Teacher

Jerome A. Jackson

George Miksch Sutton in the field sketching and the cover of Jerome A. Jackson's biography of his life and times.

(courtesy of suttoncenter.org)

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