

## The Adventures of a 13-Year-Old on a January 100 Mission By Parker J. Garver, OYBC Central Chapter

**January 17:** I was in my room, sleeping peacefully, and, ironically, dreaming about seeing a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker on a telephone pole. I was awakened by my parents yelling hysterically and bursting through the door. They were both yelling “Sapsucker, it’s at the feeder!” I of course took a few moments to process this information, considering the fact that I was nearly comatose a few moments earlier. After realizing what they said, I jumped from my bed, and almost got all the way to the door before my feet even hit the floor. For some reason, this bird had been difficult for me to get this year and I was very excited to finally see it. I ran to the living room absolutely ecstatic and saw it on the hook where the jelly feeder rests in the summer. He was just another backyard bird for some, but to me, he was number 100.

The entire point of the January 100 is to try to get 100 species of birds in January in Ohio, or whatever state you live in. The only problem is that, unlike in the spring, you can’t go out and check off tons of warblers and other migrants and make it to 100 in one day. For many birders, the first 50 are easy, up to 75 gets a little more difficult, and to get to 100 you have to chase. For those of you who have eBird (I’m guessing most of you do), there is a top 100 list. This list comprises the top 100 eBirders in a region. I sit at around 20th for January as I type this with 110 species.

**January 14:** My favorite bird this year was the Northern Wheatear (#92). I not only loved this bird because it was a rarity but because of its personality and its color and markings. We went to Upper Sandusky Reservoir #2 and pulled back the drive to its favorite place to hang out. We parked the car and took out the scopes, then went over to a man who told us he hadn’t seen it for around twenty minutes. We were glassing the reeds when a woman nearby beckoned us to her side. She pointed to a rock pile not 10 yards away and there it was. I was able to get the scope on it and it gave us very good looks. I got some very nice photos, although the lighting was not the best. I really loved seeing that bird and I’m glad it was so cooperative.

**January 18:** The funniest bird of the year wasn’t actually about the bird itself, but its location. There were reports over the last few years of a Barn Owl in a silo in the middle of nowhere in Wayne County. My mom, dad, two friends, Michele and Dave, and I drove out to the farm and began walking to the silo. The barnyard was very difficult to get through. It was muddy and had big puddles of something I didn’t want to think about. When we reached the silo, and couldn’t get inside. There was no door, only a hole about 2 ½ feet by 2 ½ feet that was about three feet off the ground. Through that opening, we could hear many pigeons inside. We all managed to get through, although we had to pass around binoculars and cameras in order to squeeze inside. We swiftly realized that we were



Snow Bunting

about 2 feet higher inside than the ground was outside. Looking closer, the “ground” in the silo was a thick coating of pigeon poop! We got past that gross mental speedbump and began looking at the upper edges of the silo for the owl. It was very easy to see, although it was early morning so the light was dim. The owl put me at 101 for the year! Then we all had to remove our binoculars and pass them to the first person through the hole back to the outside world. We managed to get back to the car without getting stuck in the...mud.

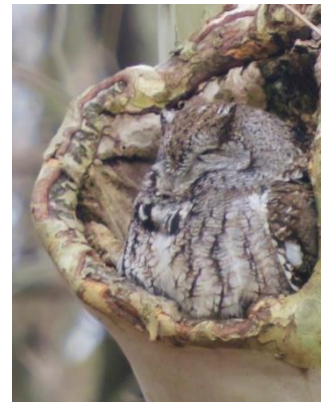


Barn Owl

**January 7 (first try)-23 (found it!):** The bird that was hardest for me to get was the Brant. I went out once to Mansfield to get it, but I missed it. I also went to another area where it was reported and missed again! I scoped each body of water we went to but still, no dice. We went to Shelby Reservoir #3 where the Brant had been reported. We were looking through the scopes before the sun even came fully over the horizon. The Brant wasn't there, and neither were the Greater White-fronted Geese that were reported there. We went across the town, going to the other reservoir hoping that they would be there instead. We walked up the ramp onto the dike and set up our scopes. I panned the water through all of the Canada Geese and finally saw something smaller, all curled up sitting on the ice. Standing on that dike at Reservoir #2 in Shelby, I looked through the spotting scope again and saw for certain number 104, the Brant. Continuing to pan across the water, I saw three Greater White-fronted Geese as well, putting me at 105. I couldn't feel my hands or my face, and the morning sun was rising above the water, making it very bright and hard to see, but there it was, the hardest one of the year.

**January 10 (first try)-23 (last try):** And finally, there is the one that got away. The Great Horned Owl. I went all over Ohio, but never got him. I went to Lakewood Park Cemetery in Rocky River where there is always one reported. We searched for an hour, looking at the tree from every angle, but still didn't find him. We dropped Michelle off at home that night and she called us to say she heard a Great Horned right after we pulled out of the driveway. We went to Ottawa and got the Long-eared (#95) and Eastern Screech Owl (#97), then headed down the trail to find the Great Horned. As we were going into the woods, another group of people came out and told us the Great Horned flew from its perch into a near woodlot. We walked all of the trails around where it flew off but still didn't find it. I went all the way to Columbus and looked for it. We went to the Green Lawn Cemetery and looked all around.

Although I didn't get the owl, I did get the Black-throated Blue Warbler (#108), and the Pine Warbler (#107) which made the trip to the cemetery completely worth it.



Clockwise: Eastern Screech Owl, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk with prey.