

August 2019 eBird Summary
Very Unusual and Rare Sightings
by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the very unusual and rare eBird sightings for August 2019 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable, on inaccessible private property and those with sketchy details.

Pleasant, warm and dry weather started the month and continued through mid-month with only a few periods of rain. By the 18th we entered a muggy period with temps in the mid-80s. By the 22nd a cool, dry Canadian airmass moved in before more precipitation on the 26th and 29th. The cool, mostly dry pattern finished off the month.

A nice representation of eleven shorebird species was observed at the Muskegon Wastewater by Hannah Landwerlen Aug 12. Although individual numbers were small, the highlights included Black-bellied and Semipalmated plovers, Upland, Baird's and Least sandpipers and Greater and Lesser yellowlegs. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58938734> to view her entire checklist. **A Muskegon Co Nature Club field trip to the Wastewater on Aug 17** yielded 63 species including eleven shorebird species with good numbers. Highlights included a Piping Plover, a Stilt Sandpiper, nine Baird's Sandpipers, 125 Lesser Yellowlegs, an Osprey and one of the resident Common Ravens. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59056201> to view the entire checklist compiled by Mark Moerdyk.

The north pier at Grand Haven was a hotspot (along with the usual Muskegon Wastewater) for the month. Chip Francke commented there was an abundance of "algae and detritus on and near the pier, which was attracting shorebirds in larger numbers than usual." On Aug 22, along with the other shorebirds present, Steve Minard discovered a **Red Knot** and a juvenile **Little Gull**. See photo link below.

Before the rain moved in, on the late afternoon of Aug 26, Rick Brigham, Marylou Graham, Caleb Putnam and Chace Scholten took a pelagic trip on Marylou's Boston Whaler. They traversed a very windy Lake Michigan from about five miles west of the Kalamazoo River mouth upstream to Wade's Bayou Park in Douglas. The group makes these trips several times a year and they usually turn up something exciting. This trip did not disappoint. A rare **Hudsonian Godwit** was spotted 4.8 miles out from the Lake Michigan shoreline on the leading edge of an approaching rainstorm moving in from the south. According to Marylou, "the bird was fighting a very strong headwind and heading toward land at water level." Caleb and Chace (their first HUGO for Allegan Co) were the only ones who viewed the bird at close range, about 75 to 100 ft from the boat. Other trip

highlights included a juvenile Black Tern, Caspian, Common and Forster's terns, a Common Nighthawk and a conservative 120 Purple Martins.

Mourning Doves are hardly rare, but these had to be impressive sights: Tim Cornish estimated at least **340** (est 300 still there the next day) in a freshly manured field along 116th Ave W of 2nd St in Allegan Co on Aug 27. On the same day, Elizabeth Notman estimated **300** on the power lines at the 84th Ave access of Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co.

Small numbers of warblers started moving through the last week of the month.

Northern Waterthrush, Mourning (one at Crockery Creek Natural Area in Ottawa Co Aug 31), Hooded, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian and Blackpoll were the most notable.

Muskegon SP Snug Harbor Marsh yielded a good movement of 16 species Aug 31 for the Lautenbach party. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59396710> to view the checklist of 62 total species.

Notables for the month: An out-of-season **Snow Goose** at the Wastewater Aug 6. A good number of **Wood Ducks** at Harbor Island in Grand Haven with **179** counted Aug 25. An early **Horned Grebe** at the Wastewater Aug 24-25 and 31. Two **Eared Grebes** still in breeding plumage at the Wastewater Aug 8. A **Least Bittern** continued since June at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Aug 1, one continued since June at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access and 132nd Ave access Aug 4, two at Little Tom Lake in Allegan Co Aug 4, one along Ruddiman Creek trail near Ruddiman lagoon in Muskegon Aug 7, one at Hofma Preserve in Ottawa Co Aug 17. Twenty-two **Great Egrets** (they are starting to gather for migration) at Frederik Meijer Gardens Aug 7. Up to three **Common Gallinules** continued since June at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access Aug 4, up to fourteen continued since July in a pond on SE corner of 116th Ave and 8th St in Allegan Co Aug 18, two at Covell Park and one at Lions Park in Whitehall Aug 10, three at 116th Ave and 8th St wetland Aug 26. Three **American Avocets** at Holland SP observed by the Mannings and Elizabeth Notman Aug 5 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58762324> to view Judi Manning's photos along with the Piping Plover on same date), one at Grand Haven SP seen by Dave Herdegen Aug 29. A **Black-bellied Plover** at the Wastewater Aug 6 and 17-22 and 31, four there Aug 12 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58954897> to view James Markham's photo along with a Baird's Sandpiper), two briefly at Harbor Island Grand Haven Aug 29. Three **American Golden-Plovers** along 116th Ave W of 2nd St in Allegan Co Aug 27-29, two at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Aug 31. A **Piping Plover** (first year banded individual first observed by the Mannings and Elizabeth Notman; see photo link above) at Holland SP Aug 5-7, one observed by Rick Brigham at the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Aug 11-12 (different bird than one seen at Holland SP; visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58915829> for photos), one at the Wastewater observed

on Muskegon Co Nature Club field trip Aug 17. Up to two **Willetts** at the Wastewater Aug 11-12, up to three at the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Aug 18-19. Two **Ruddy Turnstones** at Pere Marquette Park in Muskegon Aug 6, up to three at Grand Haven north pier Aug 24-26 and 31. A **RED KNOT** was discovered by Steve Minard at Grand Haven north pier Aug 22 and continued Aug 23-24 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59174554> to view Steve's photos and also Little Gull). **Sixty-two Semipalmated Sandpipers** at Grand Haven north pier Aug 25. A **Baird's Sandpiper** at Holland SP Aug 6 and 17, up to ten at the Wastewater Aug 7-31, up to five at Grand Haven north pier Aug 15-31 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S59004590> to view Emily Tornga's photos), two at 116th Ave and 8th St wetland in Allegan Co Aug 21, one at Pere Marquette Park Muskegon Aug 26. Up to three **White-rumped Sandpipers** at the Wastewater off and on Aug 11-31. A **Stilt Sandpiper** continued since July 31 at the Wastewater Aug 1 and up to six there Aug 13-31, one at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Aug 6, one at Grand Haven north pier Aug 23-24. Two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at the Wastewater Aug 31. One **Short-billed Dowitcher** at 116th Ave and 8th St wetland in Allegan Co Aug 14-15, one at the Wastewater Aug 17-22. Two **Wilson's Phalaropes** at the Wastewater Aug 24-25. Five **Red-necked Phalaropes** at the Wastewater Aug 17, twelve there Aug 24. A juvenile **LITTLE GULL** was found by Steve Minard at the Grand Haven north pier Aug 22 (see photo link above with Red Knot). A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at the Wastewater Aug 27-29, one at Holland SP Aug 28. Up to two **Eurasian Collared-Doves** continued Aug 10-16 at same location (intersection of Byron Rd and 84th Ave) in Ottawa Co as found in June. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at a residence on Cramton NE in Kent Co Aug 18, one at Ottawa Sands County Park in Ottawa Co Aug 23, one at Muskegon SP Lost Lake Trl Aug 25. **Eight Common Ravens** at the Wastewater landfill Aug 22 (most ever observed at the Wastewater to my knowledge). Four juvenile **Sedge Wrens** along 52nd St SE E of Kraft in Kent Co Aug 3 confirming breeding at this location. A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Eastmanville Farm County Park in Ottawa Co Aug 28, one at Muskegon SP Snug Harbor Marsh Aug 31, one at private residence in western Ottawa Co Aug 31. Movement of **14 Swainson's Thrush** at Lake Harbor Park at NW end of Mona Lake in Muskegon Co Aug 30. A **Henslow's Sparrow** continued since June along 52nd St SE E of Kraft Aug 1. A few **Dickcissels** continued to be observed intermittently at the Wastewater through Aug 24. Twenty-seven **Rusty Blackbirds** along 116th Ave W of 2nd St in Allegan Co Aug 29. Four **Brewer's Blackbirds** at same location Aug 28 and six Aug 31.

At least one of the **Lark Sparrows** continued since July at Ives Road Fen Preserve in Lenawee County Aug 3. See details and photos in July report.

Whooping Crane "Lily" continued to be observed near Schoonover WPA in Lenawee Co in the area south of Canandaigua Rd.