

December 2021 eBird Summary
Very Unusual and Rare Sightings
by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the very unusual and rare eBird sightings for December 2021 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.

The first two days of the month were near 50 degrees, melting the snowcover we received at the end of November. On the 3rd below normal conditions and a little snow returned, but quickly melted. A sunny and pleasant 4th was the calm before a messy rain/snow system moved in on the 5th. Much colder temperatures followed, transitioning to lake effect snow and then rounds of snow/rain as it warmed through the week. By the 11th temps rose into the 50s along with a powerful storm system with rain, very strong winds and widespread power outages. Several pleasant days in the 40s followed, warming to 62 degrees by the 15th breaking the record high of 61 (and 63 deg on the 16th broke another record high) along with another powerful, massive windstorm (which produced an unprecedented outbreak of severe weather in the Plains/upper Midwest including snow, high winds, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and straight-line winds 80-85 mph along the cold front/squall line). It weakened somewhat before passing through our area, but the 50-60+ mph wind gusts behind the front produced areawide power outages on the 16th. This storm was finally classified by the National Weather Service as a serial derecho, driven by very strong winds in the atmosphere, the first ever in December. The temperature roller coaster continued, dipping back into the seasonable 30s by the 17th. A tranquil weather pattern settled in through the 26th (Christmas Eve/Day warm 50s/40s and a little rain) with occasional mixed precip and very little snow. Small systems brought occasional mixed rain/snow and snow through the remaining five days.

Large numbers of waterfowl will continue to congregate/winter until the lagoons freeze at the Muskegon Wastewater (Canada Goose and Northern Shoveler the most prevalent) and along the Lake Michigan shoreline (Long-tailed Ducks {thousands}, Red-breasted Mergansers {hundreds to thousands}, Common Goldeneye {thousands}, scoters and other divers). Loads of dabbling ducks wintering at Morrison Bayou on the Kalamazoo River were reported by Rick Brigham and Caleb Putnam December 6. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S98570530> to view Caleb's checklist.

Snowy Owls were observed at the following locations: **Allegan:** One along 140th btw Lincoln Rd/52nd St Dec 19-24, one at Allegan SGA Todd Farm (116th Ave E of 60th St) Dec 26, one at Lakeshore Dr guardrail Dec 29. **Kent:** One at Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport Kraft Ave access Dec 28-31. **Muskegon:** Up to three at the Muskegon Wastewater since Nov – known wintering location, one at Maple Island Rd/Holton Rd Dec 15, one at Pere Marquette Park Dec 19-31, one along Hile Rd W of S Moorland Rd Dec 23. **Ottawa:** One at Holland SP Dec 5-29, one at 128th Ave/Port Sheldon St Dec 10, one at 120th Ave/Blair St Dec 11-12, one at 128th Ave/Bingham St area Dec 18-28, one along 68th Ave S of Garfield St Dec 21-26, two along N Shore Dr N of Grand Haven channel Dec 26, one along State Rd near New Holland Agriculture near Coopersville Dec 26, one at Port Sheldon Windsnest Park Dec 27.

Please note: This report does not include unusual or rare birds observed on area Christmas counts unless a specific location was given.

Notables for the month: Up to twelve **Snow Geese** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Dec 31, up to ten at S Swanson Rd potholes in Muskegon Co Dec 15-19, one along N Fairview Rd S of Riley St in Zeeland Dec 18, one at the John Ball Zoo in field near the parking area Dec 20-25. A **ROSS'S GOOSE** (found by Stan Koster) at Kent City Wastewater (restricted access) in Kent Co Dec 28. Thirteen **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE** (found by Caden Klanderman) at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Dec 13, one (found by Steve Minard) at S Swanson Rd potholes in Muskegon Co Dec 15, **30** along Hallacy Dr S of Ransom St in Ottawa Co Dec 18 (on Hudsonville CBC; visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99049794> to view Mark Parker's photos) continued Dec 19 (34 showed up briefly at Window on the Waterfront in Holland on Dec 21, likely same group, but flew off), 24 along Silverton Dr N of Quincy St Dec 22 and at Macatawa Legends West Dec 25, 21 at Window on the Waterfront Dec 26, 26 along 136th Ave N of Quincy St Dec 30 (all likely same group initially seen along Hallacy Dr moving about the area). Two **Cackling Geese** on the Kalamazoo River in downtown Allegan Dec 1-7, up to six continued since Sep at the Wastewater Dec 30. **Tundra Swans** still reported in area at various locations and also flyovers. Three **Ring-necked Ducks** on Lake MI at Port Sheldon Windsnest Park Dec 17 – odd location, usually prefers inland bodies of water. A **HARLEQUIN DUCK** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Dec 4, one (found by Edward Hicks) at Pere Marquette Park in Muskegon Dec 28. A **Surf Scoter** at Lakeshore Dr guardrail S of Douglas Dec 25-30, three at Douglas Beach Park Dec 25-31, one (found by Caleb Putnam) at Reeds Lake Dec 28 – unusual inland location. **White-winged Scoters** continued at Holland SP since Oct with a high count of six Dec 1, eight at Casco NP in Allegan Co Dec 3, 30 on Lk MI seen from Kouw Park in Ottawa Co Dec 19. Up to

nine **Black Scoters** at Lakeshore Dr guardrail S of Douglas Dec 25-30, up to nine at Douglas Beach Park Dec 25-31. A **Long-tailed Duck** at Reeds Lake Dec 14 – odd location. An adult male **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** (found by Tim Cornish) at Lakeshore Dr guardrail S of Douglas Dec 25 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99408124> to view photos; Tim also found one near this location on Dec 28, 2019) continued Dec 29; was relocated at Douglas Beach Park Dec 31. Three **EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm 118th Ave/62nd St area Dec 8 – known location for several years, six (found by Adam Byrne) at Ravenna Feed and Grain in Muskegon Co Dec 28-31 (observed here previously Dec 29, 2020-early Jan 2021). A **Virginia Rail** again wintering at Allegan SGA 44th St wetland. A **PURPLE SANDPIPER** (found by Matthew Iglesias) at Pere Marquette Park Dec 26 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99459262> to view photo) continued Dec 31 (several observers saw two Dec 30-31; visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99757743> to view Jonathan Lautenbach's photos). Up to two **Iceland Gulls** continued since Nov at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center in Kent Co Dec 30, one at Oval Beach in Saugatuck Dec 6, up to four continued since Nov at the Wastewater Dec 31, one along 122nd Ave btw 2nd St and Patterson in Allegan Co Dec 11, one at Gun Lake Park in Allegan Co Dec 16, one at Dunton Park in Holland Dec 28, five at Autumn Hills Landfill (56th Ave/Adams St) in Ottawa Co Dec 29. An **Iceland Gull (Thayer's)** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Dec 30, one continued since Nov at Holland SP Dec 28, two at Autumn Hills Landfill (56th Ave/Adams St) in Ottawa Co Dec 29. Up to four **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** continued since Nov at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center in Kent Co Dec 30, one continued since Oct at Holland SP Dec 31, up to six continued at the Wastewater Dec 28, up to two at Byron Lakes in Kent Co Dec 8-9, four at Green Lake in Allegan Co Dec 9, one at Eldean Shipyard Lake Macatawa Dec 14, five at Gun Lake Park in Allegan Co Dec 16, one at Pere Marquette Park Dec 26, one at Autumn Hills Landfill (56th Ave/Adams St) in Ottawa Co Dec 29. Up to four **Glaucous Gulls** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Dec 31, two at Oval Beach in Saugatuck Dec 6 and one Dec 18-19, up to two continued since Nov at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center Dec 23, one at Holland SP Dec 13-31, one at Autumn Hills Landfill (56th Ave/Adams St) in Ottawa Co Dec 29. A **Red-throated Loon** continued since Nov at Holland SP Dec 23, two at Casco NP in Allegan Co Dec 3, one at Oval Beach in Saugatuck Dec 6, three at Pere Marquette Park Dec 28. Up to five **Short-eared Owls** continued since Oct at the Wastewater Dec 31 – known location. A late **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** along Sandy Shores Ln in Saugatuck Dec 30-31. A **Northern Shrike** continued since Nov at Roselle Park Dec 2, one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing Dec 13 and 27, one at S Swanson Rd potholes in Muskegon Co Dec 15, one at a residence

along Barry St W of 88th Ave in Ottawa Co Dec 18-24. Est **1,500 American Crows** observed from Shelby St SW/Division Ave by Josiah Willink streaming SW for at least 15 min around 4:30 PM Dec 23 – likely heading toward communal roosts. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Dec 5 – late. A **Hermit Thrush** at Casco NP in Allegan Co Dec 3, one at Allegan SGA Swan Creek at 116th Ave Dec 6, one at Seidman Park in Kent Co Dec 7, two at Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Dec 7, one at Causeway Marsh power line easement in Muskegon Dec 18 – all late, but known to linger/winter with adequate food supply. A **VARIED THRUSH** seen briefly by Bailey Mitchell at Lost Lake Trail in Muskegon Co Dec 27 was not relocated (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99547468> to view photos). Good numbers of **Common Redpolls** observed in all for counties with a high count of est 70 at Littlejohn Lake Co Park in Allegan Co Dec 27. Two **WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS** heard by Beth Miller at Lost Lake along Lost Lake Trl in Muskegon Co Dec 20 continued Dec 21 (at least 30 were seen flying overhead and calling in same area on City of Muskegon CBC Dec 18). Ten **Pine Siskins** at Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Dec 12, five at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co Dec 28, a few reported at a couple of residences. **Snow Buntings** present in all four counties with a high count of 100 at the Wastewater Dec 1. Two **Field Sparrows** at the Wastewater Dec 26 – very late. A **Fox Sparrow** at a residence on Fennessy Lake in Ottawa Co Dec 6 – late. A **White-crowned Sparrow** at Window on the Waterfront in Holland Dec 6, up to five at a residence S of Holland in Allegan Co Dec 7-31, one at a residence along 118th Ave W of 62nd St in Allegan Co Dec 21 – all late, but known to winter; Outdoor Discovery Center S of Holland in Allegan Co has been a known location in past years. An **Eastern Towhee** at Allegan SGA Swan Creek Marsh Dec 17, one at a residence along Cramton Ave N of Conservation St NE in Kent Co Dec 25 – both late, but known to winter with adequate food supply. Thirty **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Allegan SGA M-89 Kalamazoo River Bridge and boat launch Dec 6 – known wintering location, three along Kalamazoo River in downtown Allegan Dec 7, twelve at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Dec 9, one at The Bend Area in Ottawa Co Dec 13, **40** at Allegan SGA Swan Creek Marsh Dec 17 (at least **52** in this general area on Allegan SGA CBC Dec 27), up to two at Millennium Park Dec 24-25, one at Autumn Hills Landfill (56th Ave/Adamas St) in Ottawa Co Dec 29 (odd location) – all late, but will winter in right habitat (along rivers/wetlands) with adequate food supply. Late **Red-winged Blackbirds** observed at several locations. A **Rusty Blackbird** at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co through the month – late. An imm **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at a residence on Dunlin Ct in NE Grand Rapids Dec 24 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S99387160> to view photos) – very late.