

## December 2018 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 2018 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable and those with sketchy details. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website. Unusual species observed on area Christmas Counts are not included in this report unless a specific location is noted.

Rain and mild temps in the 40s started the month, but by the 4th the cold returned with a little snow. Then we entered a partly sunny and pleasant (by December standards) period through the 11th. Above normal temps followed through most of the remainder of the month with rain on New Year's Eve. Snow was definitely hard to come by this month with only flurries on Christmas.

**Snowy Owls** continued at these locations: **Kent:** one at Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport. **Muskegon:** two at Muskegon Wastewater, two at Pere Marquette Park/Muskegon SP area, one at Cline Rd and Ensley Rd. **Ottawa:** one at 128th Ave and Bingham St area, one at Grand Haven High School. **Thousands of waterfowl** (Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks and other divers) were seen along the lakeshore Allegan through Muskegon Co. See below for some of the more impressive numbers. **This is an irruptive year for Common Redpolls** (100s observed throughout the month at the Wastewater, including one Hoary seen by Caleb Putnam Dec 30) and **Pine Siskins** (well-represented throughout the area)

**Finds of the month:** A **Harlequin Duck** was found at Holland SP Dec 20 by the Mannings and continued Dec 31. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50824053> for photos. One was also found at the Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co Dec 23 by Rick Brigham and continued Dec 25 (one observed Dec 27 at Douglas Beach Park may be same individual). Tim Cornish discovered a female-type **Common Eider** amongst a variety of waterfowl at Douglas Beach Park Dec 19 – unfortunately, not relocated. A **Barrow's Goldeneye** was discovered by Rick Brigham amongst thousands of Common Goldeneye along the Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Dec 24. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S50932141> for photos. A **Golden Eagle** was seen by Larry Burke at the Muskegon Wastewater Dec 19. A **Eurasian Collared-Dove** was found by Steve Minard Dec 19 at Moorland and Heights-Ravenna Rd in Muskegon Co. Curtis Dykstra observed a **Long-eared Owl** at the Campbell Plant ash fields at Port Sheldon in Ottawa Co on Dec 15 (Hudsonville CBC) – there is no access to this area without special permission and escort by power plant staff. On Dec 16 an **Evening Grosbeak** was seen briefly by Bob Tarte while on a walk on his property near Lowell, but it flew away and was never relocated.

**Other notables:** **50 Cackling Geese** at the Wastewater Dec 6; a **Ross's Goose** at the Wastewater Dec 13; a **Surf Scoter** at Grand Haven SP Dec 11, one at Holland SP Dec 18, up to two at Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co Dec 20-25, one at Douglas Beach Park and Oval Beach Dec 20, one at Kalamazoo River mouth Dec 25; two **Black Scoters** at the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Dec 3, up to eight along Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co Dec 13-26, one at Reeds Lake Dec 16, four at Douglas Beach Park Dec 19-22; **2,000 Long-tailed Ducks** at Windsnest Park at Port Sheldon in Ottawa Co Dec 15, **4,800** at Pere Marquette Park Dec 26; **4,000+ Common Goldeneye** (high numbers here not unusual this time of year, but spectacular sight!) along Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co throughout Dec; **Red-throated Loons** continued since Nov at Holland SP Dec 26 with a high count of 11 there Dec 13, one continued at the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Dec 25, one at Pere Marquette Park Dec 26; one **Eared Grebe** at Pere Marquette Park Dec 26; ten **Bald Eagles** at the Wastewater Dec 5 – not unusual, but interesting to see; the **Purple Sandpiper** found at Holland SP Nov 29 continued Dec 2; an **Iceland Gull** at the Kalamazoo River mouth Dec 3, two at the South Kent Landfill in Kent Co Dec 7, one at the Wastewater Dec 12-13, one at Dunton Park in Holland Dec 18; one **Glaucous Gull** observed at the Wastewater, the South Kent Landfill, Pere Marquette Park, Holland SP, Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co, two at Oval Beach in Saugatuck; a **Northern Shrike** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Dec 1, one along 110th Ave between 20th and 21st Sts in Allegan Co Dec 5-11, one along Winans St W of 128th Ave in

Ottawa Co Dec 23, one at Millennium Park Dec 26, one at a farm 152nd Ave and Ransom St in Ottawa Co Dec 29-31; several **Hermit Thrushes** observed lingering late in the area; a late **Gray Catbird** at a residence on Fennessy Lake in Ottawa Co Dec 21-31; a very late **Brown Thrasher** at Reeds Lake Dec 18; an extremely late **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Plaster Creek Park in Kent Co Dec 16; a late **Common Yellowthroat** at Reeds Lake Hodenpyl Woods Dec 26; two **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Dec 23, one at East Paris Nature Park in Kent Co Dec 27; a late **Chipping Sparrow** at a residence on Fennessy Lake in Ottawa Co Dec 3; up to four late **Field Sparrows** at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co continued Dec 22; up to three late **Swamp Sparrows** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Dec 14, one continued at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co Dec 19, one at a residence in Allegan Co S of Holland Dec 31; a very late **Lincoln's Sparrow** at 128th Ave and Bingham St area in Ottawa Co Dec 13; **White-throated** and **White-crowned sparrows** hung around through late month; a late **Eastern Meadowlark** at the Wastewater Dec 1.