

February 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 February 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.

We finally, got a reprieve from the relentless arctic blast that hammered the state the last week of January. Temperatures rebounded into the thirties and even forties with rain the 2nd through the 4th, but that led to melting snow, localized flooding and then refreezing as the temps dropped. A near to below normal pattern followed through the remainder of the month with several significant weather events: a catastrophic ice storm on the 6th and 7th paralyzed the area around Grand Rapids and northeast of town with widespread power outages lasting several days; a snow/mixed precip storm hammered the area again late on the 11th through the 13th; and an intense “bomb cyclone” storm with wind gusts over 50 mph and mixed precipitation moved in the last weekend of the month.

Waterfowl were in abundance at Pigeon Lake, Port Sheldon (this location remains unfrozen in the winter due to the warm water discharge from the power plant so waterfowl tend to congregate here) on Feb 2. Along with a Harlequin Duck and four Black Scoters, twenty other waterfowl species were seen by seven observers. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S52303353> for the entire checklist and numerous photos. This location and the Pigeon River outlet were hotspots throughout the month. **Long-tailed Ducks** showed up at several unusual inland locations in Kent Co – on the Grand River in downtown Grand Rapids and near Millennium Park, Roselle Park and the lake at Versluis Park. Weather definitely influenced the number of birders and observations in the field.

Snowy Owls continued at the following locations: **Kent:** one at the Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport. **Muskegon:** one at Muskegon Wastewater. **Ottawa:** one at the Coopersville/Garfield farmland W of 68th Ave, two along 72nd Ave between Cleveland and Taft Sts, one at 128th Ave and Bingham St area, one along Byron Rd near Zeeland Executive Airport.

Find of the month: A **Bohemian Waxwing** was found amongst 100s of Cedar Waxwings along the Grand River channel at the Grand Haven boardwalk by Lisa Casler Feb 25. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S53144403> to view Judi Manning's photos.

Other notables: a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at Macatawa Legends Golf Course in Ottawa Co Feb 4, one 126th Ave and 66th St in Allegan Co, up to 36 at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Feb 15-27; up to four **Ross's Geese** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Feb 6-19; one **Harlequin Duck** at Pigeon Lake/Pigeon River outlet Port Sheldon Feb 2-16; up to four **Black Scoters** at Pigeon Lake Feb 2-3 and one Feb 16; a **Northern Shrike** continued since Jan at Harbor Island Grand Haven Feb 14, one at Roselle Park Feb 23; a wintering **Hermit Thrush** at DeGraaf Nature Center in Ottawa Co Feb 19; a **Swamp Sparrow** continued since Dec at a residence S of Holland in Allegan Co through the month; **Common Redpolls** and **Pine Siskins** still reported in good numbers in the area.

Please note: Due to health reasons, until further notice, I will no longer compile a monthly eBird report for the Caller/website or search the eBird sightings for posting on the GRAC website. Please follow the county eBird links provided on the bird sightings page for sightings in the area.