

January 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 January 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. 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.

The month started out fairly uneventful, above normal and sunny except for a little mixed precipitation after midnight on New Year's Day and a little snow on the 2nd. A wintery mix changing to rain and windy conditions entered the picture on the 7th followed by snow showers. Temperatures remained near normal through mid-month. Very icy conditions developed on the 15th and 16th due to rounds of freezing drizzle. Winter and substantial snowfall finally arrived on the 19th with an arctic blast, low temps in the single digits and wind chills below zero. The arctic pattern continued through the end of the month with historic cold, wind chills nearing 50 below in some places, a huge snowstorm and lake effect dumping nearly two feet of snow.

Snowy Owls were observed at these locations: **Allegan:** one along Lincoln Rd (M-40) N of 140th Ave, one at 142nd Ave and 44th St, one at 139th Ave and 44th St, one at 141st Ave and 45th St. **Kent:** at least one at the Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport. **Muskegon:** two at Pere Marquette Park/Muskegon SP area. **Ottawa:** one along Perry St W of 68th St, one at Coopersville/Garfield farmland W of 68th Ave, two at the Zeeland Executive Airport off Byron Rd, one along 72nd Ave between Cleveland and Taft Sts. **Thousands of waterfowl** (Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Mergansers, Long-tailed Ducks and a few scoter species) continued to winter along the shoreline of Lake Michigan. As last month, as a result of the open winter through mid-month, many migrants remained late or are wintering in the area. See below for species. Hopefully, some of these have moved on because of the frigid, snowy conditions and lack of easily found food during the last week of the month. No new rare birds were observed this month.

Notables: the **Harlequin Duck** seen at Holland SP in Dec continued Jan 24, one at Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co Jan 12-20; a male **Barrow's Goldeneye** at Douglas Beach Park Jan 18 – most likely same individual found by Rick Brigham in Dec; up to two **Red-throated Loons** continued since Dec at Holland SP Jan 2, one continued at Pere Marquette Park Jan 1, one at Oval Beach in Saugatuck Jan 2, one at Lakeshore Dr guardrail in Allegan Co Jan 21; a good number of **Bald Eagles** wintering at the Muskegon Wastewater – 23 (18 alone counted on ice near dump) Jan 3; a **Golden Eagle** continued since Dec at the Wastewater Jan 5; three **Sandhill Cranes** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Jan 9, at least **340** along 62nd St N of 127th Ave in Allegan Co Jan 18; a late **Killdeer** at the Wastewater Jan 14; **18 Great Black-backed Gulls** at the Grand Haven north Pier Jan 3 – although this species is now common in the area, this number is more than usual; three **Iceland Gulls** (two Thayer's type and one kumlieni) at the South Kent Landfill Jan 10 and up to two continued Jan 20-22, one at the Wastewater Jan 14, one at Lakeshore Dr guardrail Jan 20, one at Dunton Park in Holland Jan 26; up to two **Glaucous Gulls** at the Wastewater through mid-month, one at Grand Haven north pier Jan 5 and 14-16, up to two at the South Kent Landfill Jan 10-20, one at Holland SP Jan 24; two late or wintering **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** at Millennium Park Jan 5; a **Northern Shrike** continued since Dec along 110th Ave between 20th and 21st Sts in Allegan Co Jan 1, one at Harbor Island Grand Haven Jan 13-24, one at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Jan 22; a late or wintering **Gray Catbird** at Prairie Wolf Park in Kent Co Jan 13; a late or wintering **Brown Thrasher** at Reeds Lake Jan 1 and at the Bend Area in Ottawa Co Jan 4; a late **Hermit Thrush** at Aquinas College Jan 1 and at Crahen Valley Park in Kent Co Jan 6; **Lapland Longspurs** and **Snow Buntings** in good numbers throughout the area – not unusual, but a much better representation than the previous year, especially longspurs particularly in Allegan, Muskegon and Ottawa cos; an extremely late or wintering **Orange-crowned Warbler** at Prairie Wolf Park in Kent Co Jan 14; ten **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at Riverside County Park in Ottawa Co Jan 13; up to two

wintering **Swamp Sparrows** at the Bend Area along the Grand River in Ottawa Co Jan 3-11, one at Campbell Lake in Kent Co Jan 4, one at Millennium Park Jan 5, one continued since Dec at a residence S of Holland in Allegan Co Jan 26, one at Huff Park Jan 6, up to four continued since Dec at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Jan 26, one at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co Jan 23; a few **White-throated and White-crowned sparrows** wintering throughout the area through the month; a late **Eastern Meadowlark** continued at the Wastewater Jan 4; good numbers of **Common Redpolls** (100s still present at the Wastewater including a **Hoary Redpoll**) and **Pine Siskins** continued to be observed in the area.