

**July 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 July 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.

Above normal temperatures, lots of humidity and occasional rounds of showers and thunderstorms continued into the first week of July. A comfortable, pleasant period followed through mid-month before the heat and humidity returned in the form of a heat wave (the 17th-20th) with temps nearing 90 degrees, and above near the end of the week, with dew points in the grossly uncomfortable 70s. In the early morning hours of the 20th, a line of severe thunderstorms with high winds (gusts clocked at 60-80 mph) feasted on the high humidity and brought widespread power outages. After two more rounds of storms that day and the passage of a strong cold front, a dry and pleasant period followed through the 26th before the heat and humidity returned for the weekend. Pleasant, seasonal conditions ended the month.

**July 4 was a fantastic day of birding at Muskegon Wastewater for Linda Ar with 77 species.** Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S57920144> to view her entire checklist. Highlights included an Osprey, five Upland Sandpipers, three Sedge Wrens, a Henslow's Sparrow, 54 Grasshopper Sparrows, 26 Dickcissels, 19 Eastern Meadowlarks and five Orchard Orioles. **Elizabeth Notman had a great morning of birding at Upper Macatawa Natural Area on July 31.** Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58589984> to view her entire checklist of 50 species. Highlights included five Sandhill Cranes, a Great Egret, ten Marsh Wrens, 14 Swamp Sparrows, eight Bobolinks and a conservative 35 Common Yellowthroats (known breeding location).

A **Northern Bobwhite** at Muskegon Wastewater July 11 (very tame – most likely released bird or game farm escapee). A pair of **Common Loons** with one young was observed at Banks Lake near Gowen in Kent Co July 4 (good to hear as their breeding range has retracted in the Midwest due to numerous factors). An **American White Pelican** made a brief appearance at Muskegon Wastewater July 4 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S57929909> to view Amy Lyyski's photo along with other species). One **Least Bittern** continued since June at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access in Ottawa Co and at Window-on-the Waterfront in Holland, one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing, one at Pigeon Creek County Park and two at Hofma

Preserve both in Ottawa Co, one at Allegan SGA Kalamazoo River Webster Marsh. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Window-on-the-Waterfront in Holland July 10 (initially seen by John VanOrman; visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58070450> for photo). At least two **Common Gallinules** continued since June at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access July 18, four at Kalamazoo River Newport Harbor in Allegan Co July 5 (one July 8), one seen while kayaking Stearns Bayou in Ottawa Co July 8 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58026940> to view Curtis Dykstra's impressive list while traveling from Green St to nearly 128th Ave), one at Covell Park in Whitehall in Muskegon Co July 10, one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing July 12, up to **20** (two adults and 18 juveniles – two distinct broods determined by size of young) in pond on SE corner of 116th Ave and 8th St in Allegan Co July 24-28, eight (five adults and three chicks) at Allegan SGA Kalamazoo River Webster Marsh July 28 Two **American Avocets** were seen by John VanOrman at Port Sheldon Pigeon River outlet in Ottawa Co July 10, two were seen by the Mannings at Holland SP July 19 (one there July 27), two at Muskegon SP beach were seen by Diane Bantle July 27, two were seen by Lily Johnson-Ulrich near the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co July 28. A **Black-bellied Plover** at Oval Beach in Saugatuck July 29. Two **Piping Plover** chicks and one adult observed at Muskegon SP beach July 4 (continuing birds; visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S57936487> to view R Green's photos). Up to three **Willetts** at Holland SP throughout the month, at least nine at Port Sheldon Pigeon River outlet in Ottawa Co July 10, one at Oval Beach in Saugatuck July 21 and 29, one at the Kalamazoo River mouth July 23. A **Marbled Godwit** was observed by John VanOrman at Port Sheldon Pigeon River outlet in Ottawa Co July 10. One **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Wastewater July 17. Three **White-rumped Sandpipers** at the Wastewater July 7. Four **Stilt Sandpipers** at the Wastewater July 31. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Coopersville Sewage Ponds July 10, up to four at the Wastewater July 12-22. One **Eurasian Collared-Dove** observed by Tim Cornish along 144th Ave E of 20th St in Allegan Co July 13 (this is in the same area as the birds seen in Feb of 2018) and up to six continued in same area July 21 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58323467> to view Jeff Kunitzer's photos). Nine **Sedge Wrens** (all singing males) along 60th St E of Kraft S of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport July 6 (good possible breeding representation). At least two **Worm-eating Warblers** continued at Allegan SGA 116th Ave/Swan Creek to Swan Creek Pond area through at least July 8 (known location; four were seen in June including a juvenile; see photo link in June summary). At least one **Clay-colored Sparrow** continued since June at the Allegan SGA Todd Farm July 7. A high count of **54 Grasshopper Sparrows** at the Wastewater July 4 (known breeding location). A **Henslow's Sparrow** continued since June at the Wastewater July 4, known locations in Kent Co near and at Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport: up to three continued along 52nd St E of Kraft Ave through the month, one heard at E end of Kraft Ave access parking lot July 5-6 and six (numbers have

increased since June) continued along 60th St E of Kraft S of airport July 6. After a lack of good numbers in June, **26 Dickcissels** were counted at the Wastewater July 4 (known breeding location; sightings continued through the month). **Nineteen Eastern Meadowlarks** at the Wastewater July 4 (a good number for this declining grassland species). A **Western Meadowlark** continued since at least June at Allegan SGA Todd Farm July 8 (a possible second individual was heard in same location July 4). A **Pine Siskin** at a residence in Jenison July 7 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S57995766> for photo).

**Note: Whooping Crane “Lily”** continues to be seen south of the Schoonover WPA (west of Medina and south of Canandaigua Rd near M-156 and Packard Rd) in Lenawee Co. It is unknown if he mated with one of the Sandhills he was associating with.

**FYI:** Up to three **Lark Sparrows** have been present at Ives Road Fen Preserve south of Tecumseh in Lenawee Co throughout July. Visit <https://www.flickr.com/photos/90845469@N05/48191008211/in/dateposted-public/> for a map of the area within the fen (circled in pink) where the birds are located. It was mentioned that this may be a breeding location for this species (confirmed on July 21 with one juvenile observed by Brendan Klick), so this sounds like a reliable location at the appropriate time of year to add this rarity to a county, year or life list. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S58125832> to view Ken Bishop’s gorgeous photos.