

July 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 July 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.

After the excessive rainfall in June, a sunny and pleasant period started the month. By the 4th the heat had built and the high humidity returned through the 7th. A cold front with showers and thunderstorms brought some relief on the 7th with lower dew points for several days. Temperatures remained in the 70s and 80s through mid-month with increasing humidity and occasional rounds of rain and storms. Sunny, warm and dry conditions followed the 17th through the 22nd. Dew points surged into the tropical 70s the 23rd and 24th along with thunderstorms and heavy downpours. This ushered in a four-day heat wave of temps nearing 90 degrees through the 28th. Severe thunderstorms and heavy rain associated with a cold front rolled through the southern counties early on the 29th. Sunny, refreshing, below normal conditions ended the month.

Please note: Species listings are in a different order than in previous summaries. The listings are now in the latest checklist order available.

The following is an example, if you have the time, of what about 5 1/2 hrs of intense, thorough birding at a good birdy place will reward you with. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S92445481> to view Bailey Mitchell's 92 species' checklist at Muskegon State Game Area, Lane's Landing the morning of July 28.

Notables for the month: Three **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCKS** (found by Bryan K and fellow birder) at Window on the Waterfront in Holland July 10-13 and 16 and four (fourth duck reported by Pat Deventer) there July 14-15 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S91568867> to view Ed DeVries' photos and <https://ebird.org/checklist/S91598884> to view Tori Martel's photos). A **Canvasback** at the Wastewater July 18 continued July 26 – out of season. **Ruddy Ducks** (est 800 July 7 and 2,086 July 26) continued to summer at the Muskegon Wastewater – known location for years. An **Eared Grebe** continued at the

Wastewater during the month. Two **Common Gallinules** continued at Lions Park in Whitehall July 27, up to eight (possibly more) at Window on the Waterfront in Holland July 4-31 (3 chicks observed July 24, 6 chicks July 27), one at Pine Bend Park in Ottawa Co July 5, two continued at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave/Cypress St accesses July 28, two at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing through July, at least one at several locations along the Kalamazoo River during the month. Two **AMERICAN AVOCETS** (found by Tom Lechlietner/Dan Coblentz) at Fennville Sewage Ponds (restricted access) in Allegan Co July 5, two (found by Josiah Willink) at Pigeon River outlet (limited access) in Ottawa Co July 5, two (found by John Fitzpatrick, Director Emeritus of Cornell Lab of Ornithology!) at Saugatuck Dunes SP July 24. A **PIPING PLOVER** (found by John VanOrman) at Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area July 26 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S92327661> to view photos). A **Stilt Sandpiper** (found by Rick Brigham/Will Keller) at Allegan SGA Todd Farm July 18. Up to three **Baird's Sandpipers** at the Wastewater July 12-31. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing July 7 and three July 14, seven at Allegan SGA Todd Farm July 8, up to two at the Wastewater July 10-18, one at pond at residence along Barry St W of 88th Ave in Ottawa Co July 12-13. A great count of **26 Solitary Sandpipers** in drawn-down western cells at Fennville Sewage Ponds (restricted access) in Allegan Co July 23. Two **WILLETS** at Pigeon River outlet (limited access) in Ottawa Co July 5, one at Saugatuck Dunes SP July 10, two at Holland SP July 17, four at Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area July 23, one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing July 23. Up to three **Wilson's Phalaropes** continued since June at the Wastewater July 28. A **Bonaparte's Gull** at Grand Haven north pier July 7 – out-of-season/early migrant. A **LAUGHING GULL** (found by Steve Minard/James Fyfe) at Grand Haven north pier July 7 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S91388171> to view photos). A non-breeding **Common Loon** continued since June at Reeds Lake through July, two (ad with juv) at Lincoln Lake in Kent Co July 3. At least **350 Double-crested Cormorants** at Winnetaska Rd/Nugent Sand lagoons in Muskegon July 2 – known nesting/roost location. **45 American White Pelicans** at Winnetaska Rd/Nugent Sand lagoons July 2, **51** counted circling wetlands near Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve July 3 (likely same group from previous day at the lagoons). An **American Bittern** continued since Apr at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing through July. A **Least Bittern** at Lions Park in Whitehall July 2, two continued since Apr at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing through July, one at Windmill Island Park in Holland July 15 and 23, one continued at Reeds Lake July 27. An amazing **133 Great Blue Herons**

were observed by Tori Martel at Muskrat Lake (just S of Duck Lake/Duck Lake SP) in Muskegon Co July 12. Up to three **Black-crowned Night-Herons** (2 ad, 1 juv) at Window on the Waterfront July 10-31, two continued at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing July 28, one at Windmill Lakes Apts near Holland July 22. **Seventy Turkey Vultures** perched on utility poles and wires at the Wastewater July 10 – unusual sight (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S91531746> to view Kevin Wistrom's photos). The pr of **Merlins** at Calvin University campus observed in late June continued, nested and fledged young; three fledglings observed with the adults July 21 and continued July 28 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S92116327> to view Tim Ellens' photos). A **Blue-headed Vireo** continued at Allegan SGA Swan Creek (116th Ave to Swan Creek Pond) July 17 (observed feeding two juv Brown-headed Cowbirds July 4) – known location. Eight **Common Ravens** at the Wastewater July 1 – possibly the highest number ever reported there. An **American Pipit** at the Wastewater July 14 – first report. A minimum of **36 Grasshopper Sparrows** at the Wastewater July 1 – great count at known breeding location. A **Henslow's Sparrow** continued at the Wastewater, one continued at 60th St E of Kraft Ave SE S of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport and along 52nd St E of Kraft Ave SE, up to two continued at Allegan SGA Todd Farm – all known locations. A **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (found by Kyle/Amy Werner) in same general location as in June 2020 at Saul Lake Bog Nature Preserve in Kent Co July 9 continued July 18 and two there July 10 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S91510734> and turn up your speakers to hear Kyle Werner's recordings of the whistles and chatters; Wood Thrush and Common Yellowthroat among others can be heard in background). The **WESTERN MEADOWLARK** continued through the month at the traditional location at Allegan SGA Todd Farm. Seven **Orchard Orioles** at the Wastewater July 1 – good count; likely bred at this location. Two **Brewer's Blackbirds** continued off and on since May at the Wastewater July 26. A **Louisiana Waterthrush** continued at Allegan SGA 116th Ave/Swan Creek July 4 – known location. A **Northern Waterthrush** at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve July 22 – southern end of typical breeding range. **Dickcissels** continued at the Wastewater through the month with a high count of 29 July 1, several continued at Allegan SGA Todd Farm – both known breeding locations, four at 118th Ave/23rd St fields in Allegan Co July 1, one continued at 60th St E of Kraft Ave SE S of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport July 2, one continued since June at 128th Ave/Bingham St area in Ottawa Co July 3, up to two continued along 52nd St E of Kraft Ave SE in Kent Co July 11, one along Warbler Dr W of 2nd St in Allegan Co July 4.