

## March 2017 eBird Summary

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the interesting, unusual or rare eBird sightings for March 2017 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable and those with sketchy details or first returning dates of most common migrants. Unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

The roller coaster weather pattern continued through mid-month. It went from cold and snowy to warm and rainy with thunderstorms, followed by high winds and then back to below normal temperatures with snow. After mid-month the little snow that fell melted quickly, and we returned to average to above average temperatures for the remaining period.

March brings the peak of waterfowl migration. Jim and Tracy Zervos spent 40 minutes checking for waterfowl at Mill Pond Park on White Lake, Muskegon Co on Mar 4. Thirteen species of waterfowl were tallied with good numbers including Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead and Common Goldeneye. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S34957805> for the entire checklist. Muskegon Wastewater also produced plentiful waterfowl species (up to 19) and good numbers throughout the month including Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow and Ross's Goose, Tundra Swan, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye and other divers. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S35146169> for an example. Lake Macatawa in Holland, the Swanson Rd/Musketawa Trail area in Muskegon Co and Reeds Lake (later in the month) were also good locations for waterfowl. Some of the larger numbers reported in the four-county area are found below in "other notables" along with five species of early shorebirds.

Finds of the month: the **Ross's Goose** invasion continued into March. One continued since Feb 28 at the Macatawa Legends Golf Course in Ottawa Co Mar 1, two were found by Jeff Kunitzer at 120th Ave and VanBuren St in Ottawa Co Mar 2, two were spotted at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 4 by Lizzy Kibbey (two on Mar 19 and one Mar 25 seen by others), two were seen with other waterfowl at Swanson Rd/Musketawa Trl area in Muskegon Co by Jim Zervos Mar 6 and five were found at the Hopkins Wastewater Plant in Allegan Co Mar 11 (continuing Mar 12) by Daryl Bernard and John Porath. Two **Black Scoters** were observed on Lake Macatawa from the Kollen Park/Heinz Waterfront Walkway by Carl and Judi Manning Mar 24. The **Golden Eagle** first reported in Jan continued to be seen by many at the Muskegon Wastewater through the end of the month. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S35260720> for nice close up photo (plus images of the Iceland Gull mentioned below and a Glaucous Gull). A **Thayer's Gull** was spotted on the center dike at Muskegon Wastewater on Mar 5 by Ken Sapkowski and others through Mar 11. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S35010726> for Ken's photos. An **Iceland Gull** was spotted by Andrew Simon at the Wastewater on Mar 18. Two **Short-eared Owls** at the model airplane field S of Apple Ave at the Muskegon Wastewater made the afternoon for Rick Brigham, Chace Scholten and Travis Mangione on Mar 12 and continued to be seen by other observers through Mar 18.

Other notables: the influx of **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued into March - up to 56 at the Coopersville goose field (Conran Dr) in Ottawa Co Mar 3-10 and 68 there Mar 19, up to 17 continued since Feb 25 at the Hopkins Wastewater Plant in Allegan Co Mar 18, up to 33 at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 4-16, 15 at Patterson St and Wildwood gravel pit in Allegan Co Mar 5, two at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Mar 5, two at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Mar 6, up to 7 at Swanson

Rd/Musketawa Trl area in Muskegon Co Mar 6-10 and 48 at E Moore Rd and Squires Rd in Muskegon Co Mar 26; Snow Geese continued in good numbers through about mid-month at various locations in Allegan, Kent and Muskegon cos, particularly at Muskegon Wastewater and the Swanson Rd/Musketawa Trl area in Muskegon Co; up to four **Cackling Geese** at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 11-16; small numbers of Trumpeter Swans at various locations in Allegan, Muskegon and Ottawa cos; good counts of Tundra Swans in Allegan, Muskegon and Ottawa cos through the month with a high count of up to 126 at Swanson Rd/Musketawa Trl area Mar 6-16 and a flyover of **185** at the Muskegon Causeway Mar 19; **some of the larger numbers of ducks reported: 3,200** Northern Shoveler at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 25, 38 Northern Pintail at Swanson Rd/Musketawa Trl area Mar 6, **130** Canvasback along S Shore Dr, White Lake in Muskegon Co Mar 6 (**240** there Mar 17) and **175** along with **300** Redhead on Lake Macatawa near Ottawa Beach Inn Mar 12, an astounding **840** Ring-necked Duck at Allegan State Game Area Swan Creek Marsh Mar 6 (although observer mentioned this was typical for this location during migration), at least thirteen White-winged Scoter at Pere Marquette Park in Muskegon Mar 19, **480** Long-tailed Duck in Lake MI S of Douglas Beach Park Mar 12 and **550** Red-breasted Merganser at W end of Lake Macatawa Mar 9; **22** Common Loon at Reeds Lake in Kent Co Mar 28; four Ruffed Grouse at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 19; Horned Grebes were present in small numbers at Reeds Lake, Lake Macatawa, Muskegon Wastewater, Grand Haven and Blue Lake mid- to late month; one Double-crested Cormorant at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 24 – first report and at least 32 returned to the roost/nesting area at the Winnetaska Rd Nugent sand lagoons in Muskegon as of Mar 27; an Osprey along I-196 near Millennium Park Mar 26 – first report and one rebuilding nest on navigation marker #4 at W end of Lake Macatawa Mar 29; a **Northern Goshawk** at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 11; a Broad-winged Hawk along Pontaluna Rd W of Grand Haven Rd in Muskegon Co Mar 14 – early; a Virginia Rail at Windmill Island Park in Holland Mar 24 – early; at least **3,000** Sandhill Cranes gathered at Morrison Bayou in Allegan Co Mar 20; **early shorebirds:** a Pectoral Sandpiper at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 25, a Lesser Yellowlegs at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 12, a Greater Yellowlegs along 118th Ave between 23rd and 24th Sts in Allegan Co Mar 28, a Dunlin (along with 32 Pectorals) at same location Mar 26 and two Wilson's Snipe at Haworth Wetland Restoration in Allegan Co Mar 16; a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 4, 18-19 and 30, one at Moorland and Heights-Ravenna Rd in Muskegon Co Mar 7, one at Holland State Park Mar 18 and 29 (two Mar 24) and one at two other locations in Allegan and Ottawa cos; a **Glaucous Gull** at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 4 and 14-22 and up to two at Grand Haven Mar 28-31; up to 18 Great Black-backed Gulls at Grand Haven Mar 28-31 – large number for this location; a Forster's Tern at Wade's Bayou Park in Allegan Co Mar 29 – early; a **Snowy Owl** continued at the Coopersville/Garfield farmland in Ottawa Co both east of 68th Ave Mar 2-4 and west of 68th Ave Mar 4-9, one continued to be seen since late Feb at various locations around the Kent Co Int'l Airport Mar 3-4, one continued since Jan at the West Michigan Regional Airport in Allegan Co Mar 15 and one continued since Feb at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 30; Merlins reported at various locations in Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa cos – a pair observed mating at Spring Lake (N Lake St near bike path) in Ottawa Co Mar 17; two Peregrine Falcons continued in downtown Grand Rapids, at least one has been seen around the nest box and on the falcon cam at the J B Sims Plant on Harbor Island throughout the month, one at the Swanson Rd/Musketawa Trl area Mar 6-7, one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Mar 6 and one at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Mar 18; an Eastern Phoebe at a residence near 152nd Ave and Ransom in Ottawa Co Mar 20 – first report; a **Northern Shrike** at Harbor Island Mar 2 and 18, one continued since Feb 9 along 22nd Ave between Begole and Fillmore Sts in Ottawa Co Mar 6, one near Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Mar 10 (still in area Mar 14) and one since Jan at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 20-25; up to two Common Ravens continued at Muskegon Wastewater throughout the month; a House Wren at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co Mar 24 – very early; a Winter Wren at Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve Mar 21

and 27 and at Reeds Lake Mar 28; Carolina Wrens at various locations in Kent and Ottawa cos; a Hermit Thrush at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Mar 28 – first report; **50 Lapland Longspur** along 120th Ave E of Miner Lake in Allegan Co Mar 10 (seven still at this location Mar 16) and 13 at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 17; Snow Buntings still reported in good numbers through late month at various locations in the four-county area; a Yellow-rumped Warbler continued since Feb 11 at feeders at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co Mar 12; Fox Sparrows reported at several locations (mostly residences) in the four-county area throughout the month; White-crowned Sparrows continued to winter at a residence near Upper Macatawa Natural Area and at Hemlock Crossing Park; a **Dark-eyed Junco Oregon race** continued since late Feb at a residence in Douglas Mar 24 and one at a residence on Irwin Dr in Muskegon Co Mar 23; a huge flock of **350** Rusty Blackbirds along Maple Island Rd near Maple Lake in Muskegon Co Mar 4 (150 in same area Mar 5), a flock of approx **200** at 132nd Ave and Bingham St in Ottawa Co Mar 26 and small flocks observed at many other locations in the four-county area throughout the month; a Purple Finch at various locations in all four counties during the month; and one Common Redpoll at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co Mar 8 and four at a residence along 17-Mile Rd E of Division in Kent Co Mar 19.