

March 2018 eBird Summary

Very Unusual and Rare Sightings

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the very unusual and rare eBird sightings for March 2018 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable and those with sketchy details. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

March lived up to the wild side of its reputation coming in like a lion. A quick-moving, windy, rain-to-snow storm passed through the area on the 1st dumping most of the precipitation south and east of Grand Rapids. Four pleasant, dry and sunny days in the 40s followed. A wintery pattern and occasional snow showers returned by the 6th lasting through mid-month. Following a brief warm-up on the 17th and 18th, a cool and very dry pattern settled in until late month. Seasonable to below normal temperatures and another windy, rain/snow system ended the month.

Snowy Owls continued to be seen throughout the month in the four-county area. One even showed up on the roof of a building under construction adjacent to the WOOD-TV studios on College Ave NE in Grand Rapids Mar 8 (not an eBird report). As usual the most prolific sightings were in Ottawa Co. Refer to the “bird sightings” page of the GRAC website for locations and the eBird county links for the most recent sightings. **Great Horned Owls** were spotted nesting at Grand River Ravines Park near Grand Valley State University in Ottawa Co. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43926685> for Judi Manning’s sweet photos of mama and two owlets.

The best find was two **Red Crossbills** spotted Curtis Dykstra on Crowell St E of Olive Shores Ave Mar 30. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S44090544> for photos.

Up to 15 **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued since Feb 22 at S Swanson Rd potholes in Muskegon Co Mar 17; a good number of **Cackling Geese** (17) were observed at the 116th Ave and 8th St wetland in Allegan Co Mar 2, up to 21 continued there through Mar 20 (eight of the original group continued in a wet field about a half-mile east along 116th Ave Mar 25-30) and three at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Mar 15; a **Red-throated Loon** at Holland SP Mar 6 and one at Douglas Beach Park in Allegan Co Mar 11; a **Golden Eagle** continued since Jan at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 25 and one continued since Jan at Muskegon Wastewater Mar 4; a very early **Virginia Rail** at Allegan SGA 44th St wetland Mar 4 was joined by another Mar 9, both continuing through the month; at least one **Eurasian Collared-Dove** of the original nine spotted Feb 23 continued at the dairy farm on 20th St S of 144th Ave in Allegan Co Mar 11; a **Common Raven** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 21 – range expanding southward; a very early **Veery** calling at Van Raalte Farm Park in Ottawa Co Mar 29; a low est of **200 Lapland Longspurs** were spotted in cornfield along 8th Ave N of Truman Rd in Ottawa Co Mar 8 – largest number seen in Ottawa Co this winter; **Yellow-rumped Warblers** wintered at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access in Ottawa Co with eight still there Mar 2; a **Western Meadowlark** (originally found by Rick Brigham) along 58th St between 116th and 117th Aves at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 19-30 – visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S43845684> for photos; five **Rusty Blackbirds** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 2 – first report with 150 there Mar 8; a few **Common Redpolls** reported at feeders in Allegan and Ottawa cos; and **Pine Siskins** continued to be widespread and in good numbers throughout the four-county area.