

March 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 March 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.

Mostly dry, sunny and near to above normal conditions made for a pleasant start to the month. By the 8th temps rose well above normal into the 50s and 60s with some rain early on the 11th with a windy cold front. Temps returned to near normal and sunny, dry conditions returned through the 14th. Clouds moved in with a couple of systems on the 15th and 18th dropping a little mixed precipitation and rain. By the 19th dry, sunny and above normal conditions returned and four consecutive days well into the 60s/low 70s. By early on the 24th showers moved in along with cooler temps. Occasional periods of rain, periodic windy conditions and roller coaster temps lasted through the end of the month.

Notables for the month: Twelve **Greater White-fronted Geese** (found by Jason Carlson) at Covell Park in Whitehall Mar 2 – possibly same flock seen NW of this location late Feb along Butzer Rd, 18 (flock found by Amy Lyyski) at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 13-14. Up to 32 **Snow Geese** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 13-17, up to six at the Muskegon Wastewater Mar 20-23. Up to two **ROSS'S GEESE** (confirmed by Rick Brigham) at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 13-21, one (found by Kevin Wistrom) at the Wastewater Mar 20. A **Cackling Goose** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 15, up to two at the Wastewater Mar 23-26. The three female **American Wigeons** (one still there Mar 6) and the male **Blue-winged Teal** still at Riverside Park south in Grand Rapids Mar 2. **84 Canvasbacks** at Muskegon Lake Mar 8, 36 at Little Black Lake in Muskegon Co Mar 11, 65 viewed from north shore of Muskegon Lake Mar 28 – good counts for this species in our area during migration. Up to **170 Ring-necked Ducks** at Pickerel Lake Nature Preserve in Kent Co between Mar 20-31 – large numbers can be reliably found here during migration. Up to three **Surf Scoters** continued since Jan at Muskegon Lake channel/Pere Marquette Park vicinity Mar 7, two continued since Jan at Holland SP Mar 3, two at Harbor Island Grand Haven Mar 10-12. **White-winged Scoters** continued at various locations along the lakeshore through the month with a high count of **85** at Muskegon Lake channel/Pere Marquette Park vicinity (large numbers at this location since Feb) Mar 7. Up to ten **Black Scoters** continued since Jan at Muskegon Lake channel/Pere Marquette Park vicinity Mar 7, two at Lake Macatawa west end Mar 3-7, two at Medbery Park (White Lake channel) in Muskegon Co Mar 3. At least **2,000 Common Goldeneye** at Medbery Park (White Lake channel) Mar 3. A male **BARROW'S GOLDENEYE** (found by Dave Herdegen) on the Grand River observed from a private residence near Lost Channel/Martinique Island in Ottawa Co Mar 1. At least **175 Red-breasted Mergansers** at Byron Lakes in Kent Co Mar 20 and **180-220** there Mar 26-27– this pair of inland lakes off 68th St SE seems to be a perennial hangout/roosting spot for this species during migration. Two **Red-throated Loons** at Oval Beach in Saugatuck Mar 29. A **Common Loon** still wintering at Versluis Lake in Kent Co Mar 13. Twelve **Horned Grebes** at Reeds Lake Mar 17, 23 at Oval Beach in Saugatuck Mar 29. A **RED-NECKED GREBE** (found by Gordon Atkins) at Muskegon Lake channel/Pere Marquette Park vicinity Mar 1. A rare **BLACK VULTURE** (found by Sandra Hartman) at a residence along Kalamazoo Dr (4th St) N of 139th Ave NE of Wayland Mar 27 continued in the area through Mar 30 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S84366425> to view Rick

Brigham's photos and see article in April *Caller*). A **GOLDEN EAGLE** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Mar 9, one juvenile (found by Steve Walker) at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 15-20. A **Virginia Rail** again wintered at Allegan SGA 44th St wetland. A **Sora** was heard at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Mar 10 – first report; early. A **Lesser Yellowlegs** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 21 – first report. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Wastewater Mar 21 – very early. Persistence pays off! After making nightly trips for a week, Andrew Lidral finally spotted six **American Woodcock** in their courtship display at Luton Park in Kent Co the evening of Mar 9 – first report. A first year **Iceland Gull** (kumlieni) at the Wastewater Mar 23 and an adult (kumlieni) Mar 24, one at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center in Kent Co Mar 29. A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continued at the Wastewater Mar 1 and up to three adults there Mar 23-24, one at Lake Macatawa west end Mar 3, one at Grand Haven north pier Mar 12, one at Lakeshore Dr guardrail S of Douglas in Allegan Co Mar 22, one at Byron Lakes in Kent Co Mar 23 and 30, two at Green Lake in Allegan Co Mar 28, one at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center in Kent Co Mar 30-31; this species appears to be becoming more common in the area. Up to two **Glaucous Gulls** continued since Jan at the Wastewater Mar 20, one at Dunton Park in Holland Mar 6, one at Lake Macatawa west end Mar 10, one at Grand Haven north pier Mar 12-20, one at Holland SP Mar 13, one at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center Mar 31. Up to two **Snowy Owls** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Mar 24, one continued since Nov at Muskegon Lake channel/Pere Marquette Park vicinity Mar 9, one near the end of the south runway of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport viewed from 52nd St SE (later viewed from Kraft Ave access by many) Mar 28 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S84321832> to view John VanOrman's photo). One **Short-eared Owl** continued at Allegan SGA Todd Farm 120th Ave/60th St/62nd St area Mar 13, one continued at the Wastewater Mar 24, six (found by Caleb Putnam/Julie Pedreros) at Kraft Ave access of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport Mar 27 and up to five continued through Mar 31. A **Northern Shrike** at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Mar 6, one at MSGA Lane's Landing Mar 7, one at 116th Ave (M-222) and 24th St wetland in Allegan Co Mar 17. A **Marsh Wren** at Windmill Island Park in Holland Mar 19 – first report; early. The **VARIED THRUSH** seen in early Feb at a private residence near Lowell continued Mar 24. Forty **Lapland Longspurs** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 14, 35 along 28th St N of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Mar 28. A **Savannah Sparrow** at the Wastewater Mar 17 – first report; early. A **WESTERN MEADOWLARK** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 13 continued through the month – at same location as previous years along 58th St N of 116th Ave near the red gate. Nine **Rusty Blackbirds** along 24th St S of 102nd Ave in Allegan Co Mar 3 – first migrant report; observed at various locations in all four counties with a high count of 100 at 118th Ave marsh (W of 8th St) in Allegan Co Mar 11 and at least that many at Crockery Creek Natural Area in Ottawa Co Mar 27. Ten **Brewer's Blackbirds** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Mar 16 – first report, one at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Mar 20. Up to **100 Common Redpolls** coming daily since Feb to feeders at a residence along Barry St W of 88th Ave in Ottawa Co through Mar 18 with numbers diminishing after that date; only 37 counted Mar 31, conservative est of **110** coming to feeders daily at a residence in Douglas, large flocks still present at the Wastewater through late mid-month – high count 70 Mar 4, at least 70 coming to feeders daily since Feb 25 at a residence in Zeeland through at least Mar 5, large flocks coming to feeders daily since Feb (conservative count of **150** Mar 11-15 and an astounding **190** Mar 16) at a residence at Lakeview St/Niles Ave in Ottawa Co through Mar 18. A **HOARY REDPOLL** continued since Nov at the Wastewater Mar 16, one at a residence along 21st St btw 116th and 114th Ave in Allegan Co Mar 15, one at a feeder at a residence in Allendale Mar 26.