

May 2017 eBird Summary

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the unusual or rare eBird sightings for May 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 migrants unless early. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

The temperatures the first week and a half of May were below normal, but the rain was not as persistent as the latter part of April. By the 10th, warmth was on the way with a brief warm up into the 70s and 80s for mid-month. The remainder of the month except Memorial Day weekend was below normal with occasional rain.

Warbler migration was slowed somewhat by the cooler start to May, but by the 10th it really started to pick up and was going full force by that weekend and the following two weeks. Caleb Putnam spotted 15 warbler species among his 68 total species in two and a half hours spent at Reeds Lake early on May 10. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36703777> for the entire checklist. Another productive morning for Caleb on May 11, this time at Millennium Park with 14 warbler species with good numbers and 61 species total. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36734138> for another spectacular checklist. There was an incredible warbler (17 species) and other migrant fall out at Cascade Peace Park on May 16. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36901221> for Caleb Putnam and Rob Emelander's checklist.

In all, 35 warbler species, including the two Golden x Blue-winged hybrids (Lawrence's and Brewster's), either returned or passed through the area, many with good numbers, by month's end. The more interesting included **Worm-eating** (two at the usual location at Allegan State Game Area 116th Ave to Swan Creek Pond area May 16,20), Louisiana Waterthrush, **Golden-winged** (one at Morse Lake Ave and 108th SE in Kent Co May 11, Calkins Ave near Wealthy SE May 12, Rosy Mound Natural Area in Ottawa Co May 12, at E Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 14,15, two at Muskegon State Park, Snug Harbor May 15 and one at Huff Park May 16-18), **Lawrence's** and **Brewster's** (Golden x Blue-winged hybrids) – see below, Prothonotary (many locations), **Connecticut** (one at E Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 13, along Irwin Dr in Muskegon Co May 14, Riley Trails Park in Ottawa Co May 16, along Paul Henry Trail between 52nd and Wing SE in Kent Co May 26 and at Port Sheldon Natural Area May 29), Mourning (one at E Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 12 – early, two at Cascade Peace Park in Kent Co, one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, at a residence in Douglas, at Hoffmaster State Park and at Roselle Park), **Hooded** (many locations), Cape May, **Cerulean** (various locations in all four counties), Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Black-throated Blue and **Prairie** (one at E Grand River Park in Ottawa Co found by Dave Herdegen May 11 – visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36745353> for photos).

Lizzy Kibbey's GRAC Birdathon team tallied 76 species in approximately two and a half hours at Muskegon Wastewater, including 14 species of shorebirds, on May 12. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36765668> for the entire list. She returned on May 14 and outdid her previous effort with 80 species, including 15 species of shorebirds. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36857583> for the checklist. By month's end a total of 27 shorebird species had passed through or returned to the area. The more interesting species observed this month included Black-bellied and American-Golden Plover, Semipalmated Plover (up to 30 at Muskegon

Wastewater mid-month), **Piping Plover** again nesting on the beach at Muskegon State Park, Upland Sandpiper will most likely nest again at Muskegon Wastewater, a **Whimbrel** seen by Thomas and Tanya Smythe at the Wastewater May 29 – visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S37270238> for photos, Ruddy Turnstone, a **Western Sandpiper** was seen by Thomas Gass at the Wastewater May 2-3, White-rumped (also at 120th Ave potholes, Allegan Co) and Stilt sandpipers at Muskegon Wastewater, Short and Long-billed dowitchers at various locations, two Wilson's Phalarope at the Wastewater and one at 120th Ave potholes, Allegan Co and a Red-necked Phalarope at the Wastewater.

Finds of the month: the **Lawrence's Warbler** seen by Casey Irwin at his residence on Irwin Dr in Muskegon Co in late Apr continued through May 15 joined by a **Brewster's Warbler** (another Golden x Blue-winged hybrid) May 15. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36887688> for photos of both. The **Harris's Sparrow** continued since Apr 30 at the Notman residence in Zeeland Twp in Ottawa Co through May 5. Thanks to Elizabeth Notman's generosity, many observed this Ottawa Co rarity. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36494844> for a beautiful close-up photo. A flash of red alerted Tom Espinoza to a beautiful first spring **Summer Tanager** while on Philo Ave near Lakeside Cemetery in Muskegon May 4. A great lifer for him! Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36537554> for photos of this awesome find. An adult **Franklin's Gull** was observed at the Muskegon Wastewater by Chip Francke May 4 and continued until May 6, two were also seen there by Michael Boston May 16 and continued through May 22 and one at Holland State Park seen by Carl and Judi Manning May 25. A **Laughing Gull** was observed at the Wastewater by James Markham May 5. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36568908> for photo. A rare **Lark Sparrow** (a first Ottawa Co record) was found at Harbor Island in Grand Haven by Emily Tornga May 9. It was hanging out with a group of White-crowned Sparrows along the two-track behind the restroom building. Unfortunately, by the next day, the bird had moved on. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36677121> for photos. A **Western Kingbird** (initially found by Will Walgren) stopped briefly at Allegan State Game Area, Todd Farm 120th Ave E of 62nd St May 16. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S36919498> for photo.

Other notables: a **Greater White-fronted Goose** with Canada Geese in a residential pond near Lincoln Golf Course in Kent Co May 26; a **Red-necked Grebe** at Muskegon Wastewater May 29; up to three **Eared Grebe** continued since Apr at Muskegon Wastewater May 29; three **American White Pelicans** at Muskegon Wastewater May 20-21 and 14 on Grand River near Martinique Island, flew to Lloyd's Bayou later in Ottawa Co May 31; an **American Bittern** at various locations throughout the month in Muskegon and Ottawa cos; a **Least Bittern** at various locations in Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon cos; three **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at Muskegon Wastewater May 12; a late Rough-legged Hawk at Coopersville/Garfield farmland in Ottawa Co May 7; a **Common Gallinule** at Muskegon SGA, Lane's Landing, up to nine at Window-on-the-Waterfront in Holland and up to six at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th St access and up to three at Cypress St access; two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Muskegon Wastewater May 4 and at Meinert Park in Muskegon Co May 24; a now rare **Black Tern** at Reeds Lake May 9 and 23 and two there May 21, two at Muskegon Lake channel May 12, three at Coopersville Sewage Ponds May 20 and one at Muskegon Wastewater May 29; a Common Tern at Reeds Lake May 10 and 13; sporadic reports of Yellow and Black-billed cuckoos in all four counties; a few reports of the declining Common Nighthawk in all four counties; surprisingly, many reports of **Red-headed Woodpeckers** throughout the month at various locations in Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa cos including some possibly nesting; **Peregrine Falcons** were nesting at two locations in downtown GR (courthouse and GVSU Eberhard Center – chicks hatched about mid-month at the Eberhard Center and unfortunately, no falcon has been seen at the courthouse nest box since May 24 according to the

grperegrines blog), JB Sims plant stack on Harbor Island, Grand Haven (four small chicks visible on FalconCam May 18 during feeding) and at the JH Campbell Plant at Port Sheldon, one along the Paul Henry Thornapple Trl 84th St to Kraft SE, Kent Co May 14 – too far from downtown GR to be one of the locals and one at Muskegon Wastewater May 21; a near threatened **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at Norman F Kruse Park and Hoffmaster State Park both in Muskegon Co and Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk in Holland, E Grand River Park, Port Sheldon Natural Area, Hager Park and Grand River Park all in Ottawa Co; up to two Common Ravens at various locations in Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon cos; a late Winter Wren at Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk in Ottawa Co May 15; Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush good migration with many reports all four counties; a **Northern Mockingbird** continued since Apr 26 at the Wassink residence in Ottawa Co May 2, one at Muskegon State Park May 6 and at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 24; two Lapland Longspur 2 at Muskegon Wastewater May 1; up to two **Clay-colored Sparrows** observed at various locations through about mid-month in Allegan, Muskegon and Ottawa cos; up to two **Henslow's Sparrows** continued since Apr 16 along 60th St SE south of S runway of Ford Int'l Airport May 3 and four at Kraft Ave access Ford Int'l Airport May 13; a late White-crowned Sparrow at a residence in western Ottawa Co May 26; up to five Dickcissel at various locations in the Allegan State Game Area since May 17 and at least two at Muskegon Wastewater since mid-month; Bobolink observed in small numbers throughout the month in all four counties – high count of 41 at the Todd Farm May 17; a flock of 30 Rusty Blackbirds at Hodenpyl Woods, Reeds Lake May 2; up to 10 **Brewer's Blackbirds** continued since Apr at Muskegon Wastewater May 29; up to four Orchard Orioles observed at various locations in all four counties throughout the month; a Purple Finch at Kirk Park in Ottawa Co May 3 and at Muskegon State Game Area, Lane's Landing May 8; and two Pine Siskins at Muskegon State Park May 21.