

## May 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 May 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.

May started out summer-like with thunderstorms on the 2nd and 3rd. After a windy cold front passed on the 4th, pleasant and sunny weather followed with temps in the 60s and 70s. Rain and thunderstorms with temperatures falling into the 40s and 50s entered the picture by the second weekend of the month, just in time for the North American Migration Count on the 12th. Warmer weather followed with occasional showers and thunderstorms and temps soaring into the 90s by Memorial Day weekend.

Warblers seemed to explode into the area as the weather warmed at the beginning of the month. A major influx occurred at Millennium Park May 2. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45170856> for Caleb Putnam's impressive checklist of 10 warbler species, lots of individuals and 71 total species. Following the passage of a strong, windy cold front, Ethan Kibbey had an exciting afternoon of birding in general including 14 warbler species at Huff Park May 4. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45258635> to view his entire checklist of 69 species tallied in two hours. Warblers were in abundance, along with other passerine migrants, the first weekend of May (and the following week). They were easily found due to the lack of foliage on the trees. An approaching upper level low originating to the west of us, pushed hundreds of birds east along the shoreline at North Beach Park west of Ferrysburg the morning of May 9. Among the impressive numbers observed on an Ottawa County Parks bird walk were 33 Scarlet Tanagers, 159 Indigo Buntings, 416 Baltimore Orioles and 205 American Goldfinch. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45483835> for the entire checklist of 47 species. Eighteen warbler species were observed by Caleb Putnam at Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk in Ottawa Co May 10. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45525002> for the entire checklist of 57 species.

Shorebird migration through the area was good at area potholes, Muskegon Wastewater and Caledonia Sewage Ponds. See below for rarities and unusual species.

**Lots of best finds:** Three rare **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** were found by Jess Sory, while on a Grand Lady boat trip on the Grand River, along the riverbank opposite Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 17. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45775226> for photo. A very rare **Glossy Ibis** was found by Brad Heath in a flooded field along Swanson Rd S of Heights-Ravenna Rd in Muskegon Co May 31. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S46184643> for photos. A **Black-necked Stilt** was discovered by Steve Minard at Roselle Park in Kent Co May 2, a first Kent Co record. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45173318> for Caleb Putnam's photos. Unfortunately, the bird could not be relocated the next day. An **American Avocet** in breeding plumage was seen by Brad Heath at Muskegon Wastewater May 29 and continued May 30. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S46131442> for his close-up photos. A **Little Gull** was found by Steve Minard at the Muskegon Wastewater May 11. A **Franklin's Gull** was found at Holland SP May 20 by Curtis Dykstra and continued May 21. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45870251> for Judi Manning's photos. One was found by Brad Heath in one of the concrete cells at the Muskegon Wastewater May 25 and continued May 30. Caleb Putnam and Rob Emelander observed a **White-eyed Vireo** at Caledonia Lakeside Park (along the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail) in Kent Co May 5. One observer got within 10 feet of the bird. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45279131> for photo. Another was found by Charlie DeWitt at Harbor Island in Grand Haven the same date. Another individual was seen by Dave Herdegen at Hofma Preserve in Ottawa Co May 6. None of these birds hung around. A **Lark Sparrow** was found by Doug Wassink at his farm 152nd Ave and Ransom St in Ottawa Co May 3, but it did not linger. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45218189> for Judi Manning's photos. A **LeConte's Sparrow** was found at Muskegon SGA, Lane's Landing by Marc Miedema and M Poort May 5. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45283526> for Marc's photos. A first year male

**Summer Tanager** was found by Carl and Judi Manning at Perry St and Algonquin Ave in Ottawa Co May 4. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45258027> for Judi's photos. A **Kentucky Warbler** was discovered at East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 4 by Chip Francke. The bird was extremely cooperative and continued through May 7. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45265059> for Judi Manning's photos. A **Yellow-breasted Chat** was found by Tom Espinoza at Lake Harbor Park in Muskegon Co May 7. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45415557> to view Tom's photos. A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was found at Harbor Island, Grand Haven by Lisa Casler May 4. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45253960> for her photos. One also seen at the Glossy Ibis location by the Mannings May 31. A surprising find by Malise Prieto of **nine very late Red Crossbills** on May 30 at Kelly Lake in Allegan Co. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S46159523> for photos.

A **Snow x Ross's Goose hybrid** at Muskegon Wastewater (the Wastewater) May 11; up to three **Eared Grebes** continued since Apr at the Wastewater May 30; three **American White Pelicans** at Harbor Island May 12, one on Grand River near Lost Channel in Ottawa Co May 27; an **American Bittern** at Allegan SGA 44th St wetland, at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access, two at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access in Ottawa Co; a **Least Bittern** at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access, at Windmill Island in Holland, at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access, at White Lake Pathway and White Lake Dr near Whitehall, at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing, three at Harbor Island; a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Harbor Island May 19, one at Byron Lake, Kent Co May 29; three **Common Gallinules** at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access and two at 132nd Ave access, two at 116th Ave and 8th St wetland in Allegan Co, one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing, two at Window-on-the-Waterfront in Holland; two **Black-bellied Plover** at the Wastewater May 6 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45386576> for photos) and up to twelve there throughout the month, one at Holland SP May 12, one at 76th Ave and Garfield St in Ottawa Co May 13, up to two at Allegan SGA Todd Farm May 15-19, six in full breeding plumage at the Kraft Ave access Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport May 22; two **Piping Plover** returned to Muskegon SP beach May 1 – on nest as of May 19; up to three **Willet** at the Wastewater May 3 and 11, seven at Upper Macatawa Natural Area May 5, one at Harbor Island May 9, five at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co May 15; five **Whimbrel** were found by Doug Wassink at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co May 15 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45705910> for photos along with the Willets), one at the Wastewater May 29; two **White-rumped Sandpipers** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm May 20, up to five at the Wastewater May 25-31; six **Short-billed Dowitchers** at the Wastewater and four at Caledonia Sewage Ponds May 11, one at 76th Ave and Garfield St in Ottawa Co May 13, 22 at 118th Ave and 23rd St in Allegan Co May 13, two at AAA Turf Farm May 15; two **Long-billed Dowitchers** at the Wastewater May 7; a **Wilson's Phalarope** at 120th Ave potholes in Allegan Co May 4-5, up to three at the Wastewater May 11-31; up to seven **Red-necked Phalaropes** at the Wastewater May 25-28; an **Iceland Gull** at Holland SP May 10; up to two **Glaucous Gulls** at Holland SP May 20-24; a now rare **Black Tern** at Reeds Lake May 11, two at Camp Lake in Kent Co and one at Caledonia Sewage Ponds May 12, four at Holland SP May 18; a late **Snowy Owl** at Muskegon SP beach May 1 and an extremely late individual at Fisherman's Landing in Muskegon May 17 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45774860> for photo); **Red-headed Woodpeckers** can be reliably found at Ashwood Reserve along Waukazoo Dr and Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk both in Holland and at Long Lake County Park in Kent Co (I can remember seeing them at this location in the 1950s) – all likely nesting locations; a **Northern Mockingbird** was found by Eric Gustafson at Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk in Ottawa Co May 6; **warblers:** two **Worm-eating** at the usual known breeding location at Allegan SGA Swan Creek at 116th Ave May 5, one at Ken-O-Sha Park in Grand Rapids May 13; **Golden-winged** were observed at numerous locations from early to mid-month with many of the following observed on the 9th downed by rain: one at Prairie Wolf Park in Kent Co, one at Allegan SGA Swan Creek 116th Ave to Swan Creek Pond, one at Cannonsburg SGA in Kent Co, one at Roselle Park, one at Eastmanville Bayou County Park in Ottawa Co, up to two at Hofma Preserve in Ottawa Co, three at Rosy Mound Natural Area in Ottawa Co, one at Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk, one at Clear Lake Access Trail in Kent Co, one at Mt Baldhead Park in Allegan Co, one female at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access, one at Allegan Mountain Bike Park, one heard along Indian Mounds Dr SW to Market in Kent Co, one female at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co; a **Connecticut** (found by Caleb Putnam) along the Paul

Henry Thornapple Trail between 52nd St and Wing SE in Kent Co May 22; a **Mourning** at Patterson Park in Muskegon Co, at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, at Hofma Preserve, along 128th Ave E of 58th St in Allegan Co May, at Pickerel Lake NP in Kent Co, at Grand Ravines Park in Ottawa Co, two along Paul Henry Thornapple Trail between 52nd St and Wing SE in Kent Co; **Hooded** at multiple locations in Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa Co, (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45457960> for Brad Heath's gorgeous photos of two at Hoffmaster SP); four **Cerulean** at Allegan SGA Allegan Dam and at Allegan SGA M-89 Kalamazoo River Bridge and Boat Launch, one at Allegan SGA Swan Creek Marsh, one at Allegan SGA Highbanks Unit (all are known locations in Allegan Co), one female at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45525005> for Judi Manning's photos along with other warbler species), one at a residence near Lowell, one along Indian Mounds Dr SW to Market and at Millennium Park both in Kent Co, at least one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing and the Headquarters, one at Dolan Nature Sanctuary in Kent Co (known location); a **Yellow x Prairie hybrid** at 41st St and 122nd Ave in Allegan Co May 5 – known location; a **Henslow's Sparrow** at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co May 2 (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45171632> for Brad Heath's photos), one along 60th St SE near S runway of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport May 6 and 28, one at Kraft Ave access Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport May 7 and 26, up to two at E end of 52nd Ave SE May 17-30 (all known locations in Kent Co); one **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou Cypress St access, at a residence in W Ottawa Co, at East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co, along N Shore Dr Grand Haven, at Harbor Island, at Hopkins WWTP, at the Wastewater, at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve, at Allegan SGA Todd Farm; a male **leucistic Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was visiting a feeder at Robin Smith's home in southern Kent County since early May (visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45550612> for photo) - you may remember that Robin had a male Baltimore Oriole that lingered into December last year, which she diligently offered mealworms, but it succumbed to the frigid weather late in the month; **Dickcissels** returned to the Wastewater May 25, two at Allegan SGA Todd Farm May 29, three at 128th Ave and Bingham St in Ottawa Co May 31; the **Western Meadowlark** continued since Mar 19 at Allegan SGA Todd Farm 58th St between 116th and 117th Ave May 29; up to six **Brewer's Blackbirds** at the Wastewater May 1-11, up to eight continued since Apr at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co May 18, three at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing May 17; and **Pine Siskins** lingered through the month (two still coming to my feeders until May 28, when another showed up which exhibited begging behavior to one of the others and two still at my feeders and eight at the Mannings' through May 31) with a high count of 58 at the Mannings' property in Ottawa Co May 9 (migrants on the move likely knocked down by inclement weather).