

May 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 May 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.

After three days in the 70s and 80s, rain moved in late on the 3rd into the 4th. This ushered in cooler weather, more rain on the 6th and not one high temp above the high 50s through the 11th and frost/freeze problems in the area each night through early on the 12th. A very dry period continued through the 22nd with temperatures slowly moderating into the 60s and 70s and finally well above normal into summery humid mid-80s. The passage of a cold front early on the 26th brought a pattern change of cooler temps (the 28th was only in the low 50s, blustery and damp!) and finally some periods of decent rain putting a dent in the droughty conditions. Memorial Day weekend was seasonal, sunny and pleasant.

Cascade Peace Park in Kent County is always a good spot for warblers during migration and May 2 did not disappoint. Caleb Putnam and Julie Pedreros picked up eleven species including, among others a Louisiana Waterthrush, a possible Golden-winged, four Hooded and a Northern Parula. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S86892829> to view the entire checklist. Ty Wagenmaker's impressive 84 species checklist, 15 of which were warblers with 59 individuals, at Upper Macatawa Natural Area May 13 was the best of the day in Ottawa County. These migrants finally had favorable conditions and obviously came in overnight. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87984934> to view the entire list. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88162644> to view the 72 species observed by the Muskegon County Nature Club at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing on May 15 (the club's Big Day Count). Eleven warbler species (56 individuals), three Black-crowned Night-Herons, three late American Tree Sparrows and a Common Nighthawk were a few of the highlights. The Paul Henry Trail between 84th St and Kraft Ave SE in Kent County yielded 62 species for Caleb Putnam and Julie Pedreros May 16. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88269858> to view the checklist including flycatchers, vireos and 16 warbler species including a Connecticut. Impressive general checklists for Bailey Mitchell at the Muskegon

Wastewater May 28 (92 sp) <https://ebird.org/checklist/S89172859> and the Lautenbach's at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, 84th Ave access May 29 (65 sp) <https://ebird.org/checklist/S89191680>.

In addition to the seventeen warbler species observed last month, the following were seen in May: Worm-eating (see below), Golden-winged (see below), Brewster's (hybrid – see below), Connecticut (see below), Mourning, Kentucky (see below), American Redstart, Cape May, Kirtland's (see below), Cerulean (see below), Northern Parula, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue, Prairie (see below), Canada and Wilson's for a total of 35 species (plus a hybrid) seen in the area during April and May.

Migration in general was pretty stagnant through the 13th due to the unseasonably cold weather and unfavorable north winds. With the warming temps and southerly winds, it finally got into full swing around the 14th. With those types of conditions and no rain, migrant warblers move through quickly to get to those breeding grounds with no huge fallouts and they were already on the wane by the 22nd.

General migrant/warbler hotspots: **Allegan Co:** Various locations within Allegan State Game Area, Oval Beach area (Prairie Warblers), Saugatuck Dunes State Park (Hooded Warblers). **Kent Co:** Ball Perkins Park, Cascade Peace Park, Huff Park, Ken-O-Sha Park, Millennium Park, Plaster Creek Trail SE GR, Reeds Lake area. **Muskegon Co:** Hoffmaster State Park, Muskegon State Game Area Lane's Landing/Headquarters, Muskegon State Park in general, Muskegon Wastewater (shorebirds). **Ottawa Co:** Aman Park (Louisiana Waterthrush), Crockery Creek Natural Area, East Grand River Park, Grand River Park, Harbor Island, Hofma Preserve, Mt Pisgah Dune boardwalk, Ottawa Sands Co Park, Stu Visser Trails (warbler motherlode!), Upper Macatawa Natural Area general and 84th Ave access.

Notables for the month: A **EURASIAN WIGEON** (found by Frank Schroyer/Meg Sanders and several others) at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou Cypress St access May 3-9. A female **SURF SCOTER** (found by Chace Scholten) in channel at Holland SP May 18-19 – very late straggler. A **Lesser Scaup** and two **Long-tailed Ducks** (appear unhealthy) frequented the Grand Haven north pier the latter part of the month – late/out of season. A **Horned Grebe** in breeding plumage at the Wastewater May 29-31 – late. Up to two **Eared Grebes** continued since Apr at the Muskegon Wastewater through May – known location. A **RED-NECKED**

GREBE (found by Linda Ar/Mary Trombley/Tanya Smythe) at the Wastewater May 24 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88946853> to view photos). Conservative est of **250 Double-crested Cormorants** at “cormorant island” at the Winnetaska Rd/Nugent Sand lagoons in Muskegon May 18 – known cormorant nesting/roosting colony. **American White Pelicans** continued in the Grand Haven/Spring Lake area: Thirteen at East Grand River Park May 1-2, up to 18 continued since Apr at Martinique Island marshes May 7, three at Harbor Island May 2-6 (these all may be part of same flock moving about the area), six at White River flats/US-31 in Muskegon Co May 29-30, two near Conner Bayou Park in Ottawa Co May 30 – have become much more common in West Michigan during migration over the years. At least one **American Bittern** continued through the month at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing, two continued through the month at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access in Ottawa Co, one at Muskegon SP Snug Harbor marsh May 2, one at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou Cypress St access May 17. Up to two **Least Bitterns** continued since Apr at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing through the month, one at Ottawa Sands Co Park May 15. Three **Black-crowned Night-Herons** at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing May 15, two at Harbor Island May 19. Ten **GLOSSY IBIS** (found by Tim Cornish) at 8th St pond N of 116th Ave in Allegan Co May 19 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88550097> and <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88565931> to view photos); unfortunately they flew off later that evening. A rare **WHITE-FACED IBIS** (found by Charlie DeWitt) at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing May 23 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88866383> to view Ken Sapkowski’s photos) – perhaps one of the birds that was observed in a flyover here by Bill Aurich May 21; hopefully a pure individual and no hybridization with Glossy. Three **Common Gallinules** at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou Cypress St access May 3-7 and up to ten May 8-25 (viewed from Cypress St/129th/132nd Ave accesses), up to two at Covell Park in Whitehall, eight at Kalamazoo River Morrison Bayou in Allegan Co, two at Lions Park in Whitehall, two at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing – all known locations, present also at several known locations along the Kalamazoo River. A **BLACK-NECKED STILT** (found by Bailey Mitchell/Steve Minard – birding separately at same location) at the Wastewater May 28 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S89134698> to view photos) and another found later in the day by Charlie DeWitt – both birds were seen simultaneously by Jason Carlson and one continued May 29. An **AMERICAN AVOCET** (found by Kevin Wistrom) at the Wastewater May 2 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S86923322> to view Ken Sapkowski’s photo), thirteen (found by Pete Lewandoski/James

Markham) at Reeds Lake May 3 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87018305> to view all 13 in flight), three (found by Bernie Engels) at Holland SP May 4. A **Black-bellied Plover** at 8th St pond N of 116th Ave in Allegan Co May 17, three at the Wastewater May 18 and up to 27 there May 20-31, six at 116th Ave/8th St wetland in Allegan Co May 20. A **PIPING PLOVER** (found by David/Michael Lautenbach) at Muskegon SP beach May 8 continued May 30. Three **WILLETS** at Wolf Lake in Muskegon Co May 3, up to five at Millennium Park May 3-4, six at the Wastewater May 6 and up to two there May 12 and 22. A **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** (found by Bailey Mitchell) at the Wastewater May 26 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S89054866> to view photos). A **Ruddy Turnstone** at Muskegon SP beach May 15 and 29-30, two at Pere Marquette Park May 16, up to two at Grand Haven north pier May 20-24, up to four at Holland SP May 21-28, one at the Wastewater May 22-26. A **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Wastewater May 29-31. Up to two **White-rumped Sandpiper** at Coopersville Sewage Ponds May 16-21, up to eight at the Wastewater May 18-30. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Covell Park in Whitehall May 14, up to 17 at the Wastewater May 15-16 and up to six there May 18-30. A **Wilson's Phalarope** (found by Ken Bishop – photo below with American Pipit) at the Wastewater May 6 continued May 11 and up to eight there May 15-31, one at 8th St pond N of 116th Ave in Allegan Co May 18. Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** (found by Charlie DeWitt/Kevin Wistrom) at the Wastewater May 28 and up to six May 29-31. Three **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** continued at the Wastewater May 1, one at Grand Haven north pier May 24-25. A **Glaucous Gull** at Grand Haven north pier May 1. A **BLACK TERN** (found by Ty Wagenmaker) at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou Cypress St access May 4, two (found by Josiah Willink) at Reeds Lake May 4 and two also there May 10, one (found by Rob Keys) with 13 Common Terns at Wabasis Lake Park in Kent Co May 4, one (found by Jim/Tracy Zervos) at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing May 17 – encouraging to see this once very common tern, which is now declining and considered very vulnerable. Up to twelve **Forster's Terns** at Reeds Lake May 3-5. A rare **ROYAL TERN** (found by James Markham) at Grand Haven north pier May 24 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88909930> to view photos); likely first Ottawa Co record. Two **EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm 118th Ave/62nd St May 5 – known location, one (found by Adam Byrne) along 120th Ave near Pigeon Creek GC May 31. A **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Cascade Peace Park in Kent Co May 11 – first report. A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at Hodenpyl Woods May 16 – first report. Many reports of **Common Nighthawks**; high count was a flock of 30 migrating over Cedar Springs May 20 – in general

low numbers, but encouraging they are being seen. **Red-headed Woodpeckers** reported at various locations in all four counties; some of the most reliable are Long Lake Co Park in Kent Co (known location since at least the 1950s when they were considered a common species), Ottawa Sands Co Park west of Ferrysburg, Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk in Ottawa Co. Two **Olive-sided Flycatchers** at the old West Shore Golf Club in Douglas May 19-21 – first report; observer mentioned possible nesting in old pump house at this location (unfortunate there were no follow-up observations as this species is in decline and this location is well south of normal breeding range), one at various locations in all four counties. The **WHITE-EYED VIREO** observed at Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Apr 30 by Beth Miller continued May 16, one (found by Ty Wagenmaker) at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 5 continued May 9 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87179274> to view Emily Tornga's photo). A **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (found by Carl/Judi Manning and others) at Ottawa Sands Co Park May 20, one (found by Tanya Smythe) at the Wastewater May 29-30. Six **American Pipits** at the Wastewater May 6 – first report (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87293176> to view Ken Bishop's photos). **Warblers of note:** A **Louisiana Waterthrush** at various locations in all four counties; one at known location Allegan SGA Swan Creek 116th Ave to Swan Creek Pond May 2, at least two continued since Apr at Aman Park May 13 and up to five there May 16-31 – known location, possible nest building observed May 8. A **WORM-EATING** (found by Caleb Putnam/Julie and Tomas Pedreros) at Millennium Park May 1-3 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S86860756> to view photos), one at Allegan SGA Swan Creek at 116th Ave May 14 and three continued May 31 – known breeding location. A **BREWSTER'S** (Golden-winged x Blue-winged hybrid) (found by Caleb Putnam/Julie Pedreros) at Rogue River SGA clear-cut area along 18-Mile Rd W of Division in Kent Co May 8 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87481261> to view photos). A **Golden-winged** at Cascade Peace Park in Kent Co, one at a residence in Douglas, one at Allegan SGA 46th St btw 118th and 121st Ave all on May 2 – first reports, at least one at various locations in all four counties – good representation. At least one **Prothonotary** at various locations in all four counties. An **Orange-crowned** at the Wastewater May 29 – very late. A male **CONNECTICUT** (found by Alyssa Pyman) at a residence in Norton Shores May 15, a male (found by Caleb Putnam/Julie Pedreros) along Paul Henry Trail 84th St to Kraft Ave SE May 16, one (found by Randy VanderMolen) at Ball Perkins Park in Kent Co May 20, two (male/female) (found by Jeff Slaughter) at Mt Pisgah Dune boardwalk in Ottawa

Co May 25. A **Mourning** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co May 17 – first report, one at various locations in all four counties. An adult male **KENTUCKY** (found by Beth/Glen Miller) at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co May 9-10 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87681411> to view photos), one heard (no visual) by James Markham at Ball Perkins Park in Kent Co May 20. **Hooded Warblers** at various locations in all four counties with a high count of five at Saugatuck Dunes SP May 16 – known location for years. A **KIRTLAND'S** (found by John Flemming) at Stu Visser Trails (bird moved from south end of park where originally found to north end east of boardwalk) in Ottawa Co May 14 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88099324> to view Judi Manning's photos). A **Cerulean** (found by Emily Tornga) at East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co May 1 continued May 2 – first report (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S86813564> to view photo), present at known locations: Allegan SGA M-89 Kalamazoo River Bridge and Boat Launch, Allegan SGA 116th Ave at Swan Creek, Allegan SGA Allegan Dam, Rabbit River Preserve in Allegan Co, Dolan Nature Sanctuary in Kent Co; other locations: Millennium Park, Aman Park in Ottawa Co, Muskegon SGA Headquarters and Lane's Landing, Hoffmaster State Park in Muskegon Co with a high count of eight at Allegan SGA Allegan Dam May 19. At least one **Northern Parula** at various locations in all four counties. **55 Yellow** at Millennium Park May 9 – impressive count of migrants on the move. A **Black-throated Blue** at Paw Paw Park West in Ottawa Co, one at Flower Creek Dunes Preserve and two at Black Lake Park both in Muskegon Co all May 4 – first reports, reported at various locations in all four counties with a high count of four at Crockery Creek Natural Area in Ottawa Co May 8. A **PRAIRIE** (found by Aaron Klanderma) at Oval Beach/Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area May 8 and up to three continuing May 16-27 – known location, one at 41st St/122nd Ave in Allegan Co May 31. A probable **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** (heard by Andrew Lidral) at Saul Lake Bog in Kent Co May 21 – one present at this location along the Old Field Trail in June 2020. **Sparrows:** Three **American Tree** at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing May 15 – very late. A **Clay-colored** at various locations in Allegan, Kent and Ottawa cos. **Grasshopper** at various locations including Allegan SGA Todd Farm, 52nd St E of Kraft SE, KC Airport Kraft Ave access and the Wastewater – all known locations. At least three **Henslow's** along 60th St E of Kraft SE S of Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport, at least one continued since Apr at 52nd St E of Kraft Ave SE, three at Allegan SGA Todd Farm – all known locations, one at Prairie Wolf Park in Kent Co May 22. A nice influx of **Swamp** at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing with **40** observed in 1 1/2 hrs on May 1 by Kevin

Vande Vusse. An adult male **HARRIS'S** (found by Jan Lewis) at her residence on Camille Dr in Kentwood May 14 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S88056386> to view her photos). A **Dark-eyed Junco** coming to feeder at a residence on Sunset Bluff Dr W of Holland May 15 – late. A 2nd year male **SUMMER TANAGER** visiting a jelly feeder at the Simon Vance residence along Seminole Rd SE in Grand Rapids May 11-12 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S87877827> to view Jim Markham's photos). A **Dickcissel** at 8th St pond N of 116th Ave in Allegan Co May 19-27, one at Ottawa Sands Co Park May 20, up to six at the Wastewater May 21-31 – known breeding location, numbers appear down. **Bobolinks** at various locations in all four counties including Allegan SGA Todd Farm, KC airport Kraft Ave access, 52nd St E of Kraft Ave SE and Prairie Wolf Park in Kent Co, 128th Ave/Bingham St area in Ottawa Co and the Wastewater – all known locations. The **WESTERN MEADOWLARK** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm continued through the month. A **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (found by Dave Herdegen) at residence near Martinique Island in Ottawa Co May 30-31 – an annual occurrence. Up to four **Brewer's Blackbirds** continued since Apr at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co May 8 and one May 21-22 – known location, up to five at Maplewood Park in Jenison May 19-22. Up to two **Common Redpolls** still coming to feeders at a residence along Kreuter Rd E of Dix Dr NE in Kent Co May 16 – very late, amazing they hung around this late into spring. **Pine Siskins** continued into May; massive movement through the area May 6-17; huge flock of est 65 at Ottawa Beach Rd/168th Ave in Ottawa Co May 7, flock of 32 at Millennium Park May 9, 35 at Hoffmaster SP Muskegon May 10, other large numbers and feeder invasions reported May 11-17 and most, except for some lingering at feeders through month's end, were out of the area by the 20th.

Whooping Crane "Lily" continues to be seen in Lenawee County (see April eBird Summary) and according to some, appears to have mated with a Sandhill Crane.

Apologies if unusual or rare species were omitted in April and May summaries. Some observers do not post checklists to eBird until two or three days after the fact. When searching through thousands of species' entries in checklists per day, especially during migration, there is not time to look back several days for lists not posted in a timely manner. Often those lists have already been eliminated from the eBird "Recent Visits" page with no way to retrieve the data.