

November 2017 eBird Summary by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the unusual or rare eBird sightings for November 2017 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.

The first week and a half of November was a temperature roller coaster. A taste of winter dominated the latter part of the first full week along with the first hard freeze on Nov 8. Temperatures moderated during the second week ahead of a strong storm system that arrived late on the 17th. The first half of the month ended up 4.4 degrees below normal. The remainder of the month was mostly dry and pleasant with a few weak fronts passing through and no snowfall.

Holland State Park was definitely the **hotspot** this month. See “finds of the month” and “other notables.”

Rafts of waterfowl started showing up along the lakeshore and at the Muskegon Wastewater including Northern Shoveler (high count of **4,584** at the Wastewater Nov 11), Redhead (250 at Winnetaska Rd Nugent Sand lagoons in Muskegon Nov 18), scaup sp (250 Lesser at Holland SP Nov 1), all three scoter species were well-represented (see “other notables”), Long-tailed Duck (high count of **1,003** at Holland SP Nov 14 and up to five at an unusual inland location, the Wastewater, from mid-month on), Bufflehead (high count of 175 at the Wastewater Nov 4), Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser (high count of **850** and Holland SP Nov 14) and good numbers of the ever-present Ruddy Ducks at the Wastewater. If the Wastewater lagoons and inland lakes freeze, many will move on, but most of the divers, bay and sea ducks will remain through the winter on the open waters of Lake Michigan.

Shorebird stragglers included Black-bellied Plover (five at the Wastewater Nov 5), Killdeer, a few Greater Yellowlegs at several locations early month, Sanderling, Pectoral Sandpiper, good numbers of Dunlin at several locations (considered a late migrator) and Wilson’s Snipe.

Finds of the month: a **Ross’s Goose** was found by Emily Tornga in a field along Hayes St E of 68th Ave, Ottawa Co Nov 22, one at the Coopersville Sewage Ponds on the same date, joined by another (perhaps Emily’s find) Nov 24 -25, was seen by many and two (may be same birds seen at Coopersville Sewage Ponds) at the Coopersville Goose Field Nov 26-27. The female **Harlequin Duck** first spotted at Holland SP Oct 28 continued Nov 2, and another, or perhaps the same individual, was seen along the Macatawa S breakwall (opposite Holland SP) Nov 13 by Ed DeVries. A female was seen again by many at Holland SP Nov 21 and 24-28. After strong westerly winds the previous day, a rare **Western Grebe** was spotted beyond the breakwalls at Holland SP by Jamie Krupka and observed by many others Nov 22. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40657561> for photo. A **Purple Sandpiper** has not been reported in the area for awhile, but lucky Ed DeVries spotted one along the Macatawa S breakwall (across from Holland SP) Nov 13, and one was seen by many on the Holland SP north pier Nov 20 and 23-26 (probably same bird observed on the 13th). It was joined by another Nov 27-28 with one still present the 29th. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40625175> and <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40798546> for photos. Kevin Vande Vusse observed the first **Snowy Owl** of the season in our area at the Allegan SGA Todd Farm Nov 7 (one seen there again Nov 23,26 and one at another location in Allegan Co Nov 26). Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40380845> for photo. Others followed: at least five at the Wastewater through the month starting Nov 10, one at the Gerald R Ford Int’l Airport sitting on runway lighting Nov 13, Muskegon Lake channel Nov 17,18 and 27, Harbor Towne Marina in Muskegon Nov 18, 72nd Ave N of Cleveland in Ottawa Co Nov 17, 128th Ave and Bingham in Ottawa Co Nov 21 and Blair St W of 124th Ave in Ottawa Co Nov 27. Perhaps the strangest sighting was one observed riding the freighter *Manitowoc* in from Lake MI at Holland SP Nov 22. After flying to the piers as the freighter entered the channel, the owl was

mobbed by crows and gulls and eventually flew away. Up to two **Short-eared Owls** of the original five seen Oct 29 continued at Allegan SGA Todd Farm through Nov 4 and one Nov 23 and 26. One was also seen Nov 16 near the headquarters. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40304479> to view Marylou Graham's photos. Another was seen at the Wastewater Nov 5 and 20 and at the Kraft Ave access at the Gerald R Ford Int'l Airport Nov 27. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was reported roosting in a maple tree at a residence in Holland Nov 8-9. The homeowners graciously allowed many to observe this secretive little owl. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40386090> to view Judi Manning's adorable photos.

Other notables: eight Snow Geese at Millennium Park Nov 2; up to seven Cackling Geese at the Coopersville Goose Field throughout the month, five at the Coopersville Sewage Ponds Nov 22 and ten at Pickerel Lake NP in Kent Co Nov 25; many reports of Tundra Swans in the four-county area (many flyovers of flocks of 50+) with high counts of **140** at the Wastewater Nov 6 and 10 and **239** migrating at Holland SP Nov 7; at least **200** Wood Ducks observed flying into roost at Bruce Bayou on the Grand River from M-231 bridge in Ottawa Co Nov 5; four **Surf Scoters** at Holland SP Nov 2, up to four at Douglas Beach Park in Allegan Co Nov 3-11, up to five continuing off and on since Oct 13 at Reeds Lake Nov 11 and one at Grand Haven SP Nov 21; up to 19 White-winged Scoters at Holland SP through the month, eight at Douglas Beach Park Nov 12 and several at other locations; up to **60 Black Scoters** at Douglas Beach Park Nov 3-19 and at least two on Lake MI at Lakeshore Dr guardrail S of Douglas Nov 11; a **Red-throated Loon** at Holland SP Nov 11, 14 and 24; an immature **Red-necked Grebe** at the Muskegon Lake channel Nov 11-18; up to five **Eared Grebes** at the Wastewater Nov 3-12; the late **American White Pelican** at the W end of Lake Macatawa first seen Oct 27 continued Nov 3; a late Great Egret at M-231 Grand River bridge in Ottawa Co Nov 5; a late Osprey in a tree along I-196 at the old Butterworth Landfill site Nov 1; an extremely late **Common Gallinule** at Newport Harbor, Kalamazoo River in Allegan Co Nov 12; a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at Holland SP Nov 2 and 25 and at the Wastewater Nov 11 and 25; a **Glaucous Gull** at Holland SP Nov 22,26-27; a late Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (immature male) at a residence in NW Grand Rapids Nov 2 and one at Millennium Park Nov 16; Peregrine Falcons in downtown Grand Rapids, 128th Ave and Bingham in Ottawa Co and the Wastewater; a late Eastern Phoebe at Reeds Lake Nov 12; a very late Brown Thrasher at Huff Park Nov 6-8 – probable first Kent Co Nov record; Lapland Longspurs at several locations in Allegan and Ottawa cos with a high count of ten along 23rd St S of 116th Ave in Allegan Co Nov 11; good numbers of Snow Buntings in all four counties with a high count of **270** at the Wastewater Nov 21; **late warblers:** an Ovenbird at a residence in NW Grand Rapids Nov 2, a Tennessee at Grand Ravines Park in Ottawa Co Nov 3 and an Orange-crowned at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co Nov 3; **late sparrows:** an extremely late **Chipping** at a residence near Nunica in Ottawa Co Nov 28 – photo <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40790697>, a Field at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co Nov 5, a Lincoln's at Huff Park Nov 1 and a Savannah at 128th Ave and Bingham in Ottawa Co Nov 1; a Dark-eyed Junco **Oregon race** at a residence in Douglas Nov 18-19; two late Eastern Meadowlarks along Blair St E of 136th Ave in Ottawa Co Nov 2; 25 Rusty Blackbirds at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Nov 12; an extremely late male **Baltimore Oriole** eating suet and sunflower seeds at a private residence at 92nd St and Eastern SE in Kent Co Nov 23-25 – per homeowner: bird had been hanging around for the previous two weeks. (This bird appeared healthy, had obviously found a food source to his liking and will eventually migrate south.) Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40688985> for photos. Purple Finch at various locations in all four counties with high counts of 11 at Hemlock Crossing Park and at least 10 in a mixed flock of over 100 finches at a residence near Upper Macatawa Natural Area both in Ottawa Co Nov 2; and four Pine Siskins at Hemlock Crossing Park and 20 at a residence near Upper Macatawa Natural Area Nov 2.

Note: Whooping Crane "Lily" was still observed associating with the Sandhill Cranes at Schoonover WPA and surrounding fields in Lenawee Co Nov 2.