

October 2020 eBird Summary
Very Unusual and Rare Sightings
by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the very unusual and rare eBird sightings for October 2020 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.

The cool (temps in 50s to low 60s) and damp period continued into the first week of the month. A very dry, pleasant period followed and temperatures warmed above normal into the 70s by the 9th. A cold front with storms on the 12th brought temps back to normal. A series of cold fronts plunged us into a stretch of 40s and low 50s with occasional rain before a brief warm up into the 60s with more rain the 22nd and 23rd. Mostly dry, below normal conditions prevailed through the remaining period.

Large numbers of waterfowl continued to congregate at the Muskegon Wastewater including a few Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese, Canada Geese (thousands), Tundra Swans, teal sp, Northern Shoveler (in the thousands), Mallard, Northern Pintail, other dabblers, scaup sp, Ruddy Ducks (nearly 10,000) and other inland divers. Redhead, scaup, scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers, other divers and loon sp began to congregate offshore in Lake Michigan mid-month.

Best finds: Two separate visuals of Northern Saw-whet Owls, a Varied Thrush and an Evening Grosbeak invasion at six separate locations after being absent from the area for years.

Notables for the month: Thirteen **Greater White-fronted Geese** (found by Joe Malott) at the Wastewater Oct 13, two (found by Tim Cornish) at 116th Ave/8th St wetland in Allegan Co Oct 17-24, six (found by Caleb Putnam) at 84th St/Kalamazoo SE flooded field in Kent Co Oct 23, one (found by Joey Hausler) at Sierrafield Lake in Kent Co Oct 24. Two **Snow Geese** at the Wastewater Oct 3 and 10 and up to five there Oct 13-15, three along 114th Ave E of 8th St in Allegan Co Oct 27. Up to two **Cackling Geese** at the Wastewater Oct 10-14 and one Oct 31. At least **100 Gadwall** at Harbor Island Grand Haven the end of the month. A **Surf Scoter** at Holland SP Oct 15 – first report, nine at Gun Lake Park in Allegan Co Oct 21, two at Kalamazoo River mouth Oct 25, three at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Oct 26, two at Grand Haven south pier Oct 27. Two **White-winged Scoters** at Holland SP – first report, 15 at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Oct 26, five at Kirk Park in Ottawa Co Oct 30. Two **Black Scoters** on pelagic trip to 5 mi W of Kalamazoo River mouth Oct 5 – first report, up to two at Holland SP Oct 17-21, one at Pere Marquette Park Oct 19. A **Long-tailed Duck** at Pere Marquette Park Oct 5 – first report; large numbers reported offshore with a high count of **1,250** at Kirk Park in Ottawa Co Oct 30. A **Red-throated Loon** at Holland SP Oct 15 – first report, one on pelagic trip 5 mi W of Kalamazoo River mouth Oct 19, one at Grand Haven SP Oct 30. A **RED-NECKED GREBE** (found by Caleb Putnam/Julie Pedreros) at Millennium Park Oct 26, one (found by Ethan Kibbey) at Cottage Grove launch ramp in Muskegon Oct 31. Up to three **Eared Grebes** continued at the Wastewater Oct 31. A **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Mill Point in Spring Lake Oct 4 – late. A **Rough-legged Hawk** at Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Oct 10 – first report. A **Sora** at Riley Trails Park in Ottawa Co Oct 14

– late. A **Common Gallinule** at 11th St lake in Allegan Co Oct 19-23 – late. Up to eight **Black-bellied Plover** continued since Sep at the Wastewater Oct 26, one at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Oct 4, two at Grand Haven north pier Oct 24, two at Grand Haven south pier Oct 27. Seven **American Golden-Plover** in field along 120th Ave S of Bingham St in Ottawa Co Oct 5, eleven continued since Sep at 116th Ave/8th St wetland Oct 7, up to 21 at 118th Ave/23rd St fields in Allegan Co Oct 23-24. A **Solitary Sandpiper** at Fennessy Lake in Ottawa Co Oct 17-28 – late. A **HUDSONIAN GODWIT** (found by Beth Miller/John VanOrman – both were at the Wastewater during same time period) at the Wastewater Oct 14 continued Oct 15 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S74824475> to view Chip Francke’s photos). A **White-rumped Sandpiper** at the Wastewater Oct 3. A **Baird’s Sandpiper** continued at the Wastewater Oct 2 and 25-29, one at 116th Ave/8th St wetland in Allegan Co Oct 22-26 – late. A **Stilt Sandpiper** (found by Ty Wagenmaker) at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Oct 4-10. Two **LONG-BILLED DOWITCHERS** (found by Matthew Haverkamp) at the Wastewater Oct 15 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S74866639> to view Judi Manning’s photos), one (found by Tim Cornish) at 116th Ave/8th St wetland in Ottawa Co Oct 25-30. Two **Red-necked Phalaropes** continued since Sep at the Wastewater Oct 3. An **Iceland Gull (Thayer’s)** at Gun Lake Park in Allegan Co Oct 17 and two there Oct 21. A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at the Wastewater Oct 3-11, one at Kalamazoo River mouth Oct 12 and 17, one at Holland SP Oct 15-22, five at Gun Lake Park in Allegan Co Oct 21, two at South Kent Recycling and Waste Center Oct 23-26. A **Short-eared Owl** (found by Ethan Kibbey) at the Wastewater Oct 31. It’s unusual to physically locate one **Northern Saw-whet Owl** during the month, but two is really a rare occurrence; one at the Rowell residence in NE Grand Rapids Oct 5 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S74478936> for Al’s photos and comments) and one (found by Brennen Beyer) at DeGraaf NC in Ottawa Co Oct 19 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75102766> to view his photos) – they both are so cute, they almost appear to be toys. An **Eastern Whip-poor-will** at the Aurich residence in Cutlerville Oct 21 – late. At least **160 Chimney Swifts** entering chimney roost at Allegan United Methodist Church in Allegan at dusk Oct 4 – this impressive sight was observed by Tim Cornish. A **Ruby-throated Hummingbird** continued at the Manning residence in W Ottawa Co Oct 11 – late. A **Northern Shrike** at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing Oct 23 – first report, one at Millennium Park Oct 29-30. A **Red-eyed Vireo** at Millennium Park Oct 26 – late. **85 Blue Jays** on southward movement over 118th Ave bog W of 8th St in Allegan Co Oct 1, **582** counted at Wau-Ke-Na, William Erby Smith Preserve south tract in Allegan Co Oct 11; large numbers migrating at various locations near and along the lakeshore during the month. Irruptive year for **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. A **House Wren** at Ball Perkins Park in Kent Co Oct 9 – late. A **Sedge Wren** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Oct 3 – late. Good movements of **Golden- and Ruby-crowned kinglets** throughout the month; high counts of 36 and 30 respectively in 1 hr 21 min at Muskegon SP channel campground Oct 16. A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at DeGraaf NC in Ottawa Co Oct 20 – late. A **Swainson’s Thrush** at Riley Trails Park in Ottawa Co Oct 22 – late. A **VARIED THRUSH** at the Holaday residence near Cascade Oct 23 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75264867> to view Mike Holaday’s photos) unfortunately did not linger in the area. A **Brown Thrasher** at Millennium Park Oct 26 – late. **50 American Pipits** at the Wastewater Oct 2 and 5, **60** there Oct 18, at least **100** at 118th Ave/23rd St fields in Allegan Co Oct 24. Up to two **Lapland Longspurs** at 118th Ave/23rd St fields in Allegan Co Oct 23-24 and up to **60** there Oct 26-31. A **Snow Bunting** at 118th Ave/23rd St fields in Allegan Co Oct 23 – first report; at various locations in Allegan, Muskegon and Ottawa cos with a high count of **223** at the Wastewater Oct 31. **Warblers:** A **Northern Waterthrush** at Muskegon SP Snug Harbor Oct 10 – late. A **Tennessee** at

Window-on-the-Waterfront in Holland Oct 31 – very late. A **Nashville** at the Bend Area in Ottawa Co Oct 31 – very late. A **CONNECTICUT** (found by Samuel Moerdyk) at Donald Lamoreaux Park in Kent Co Oct 4 – unusual and late. A **Common Yellowthroat** at the Manning residence in W Ottawa Co Oct 25 – late. One **Northern Parula** at Plaster Creek Park in Grand Rapids Oct 18 and at VanRaalte Farm in Ottawa Co Oct 20 – both very late. Two **Magnolia** along Kalamazoo River channel on boat trip in Allegan Co Oct 12 – late. Two **Bay-breasted** at Millennium Park Oct 10 – late. Huge influxes of **52 Yellow-rumped** at Millennium Park Oct 1, **80** at Paw Paw Park east in Ottawa Co Oct 3, **55** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Oct 3 and good numbers kept streaming through the area throughout the month. A **Black-throated Green** at Roselle Park in Kent Co Oct 15 – late. **Sparrows:** Two **Clay-colored** at West Side County Park in Allegan Co Oct 24. A **Grasshopper** at the Wastewater Oct 5 – late. At least **50 Savannah** at the Wastewater Oct 5. The scruffy-looking **LECONTE’S** found at the Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sep 28 continued Oct 2 after not being seen for three days. The **NELSON’S** found at the Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sep 29 continued Oct 1. A **Fox** at Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Oct 5 – first report, conservative count of 20 heard and seen at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co near dusk Oct 21. Good migration of **White-throated** and **White-crowned**. A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Oct 24 – late. An **Indigo Bunting** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Oct 6 – late. **Rusty Blackbirds** at various locations in all four counties with a high count of 19 at Muskegon SGA Lane’s Landing Oct 17. Two **Brewer’s Blackbirds** at the Smythe residence W of Hopkins in Allegan Co Oct 25 – late. Huge flock of **70 House Finches** at the Caledonia Sewage Ponds Oct 2. Numerous reports of **Purple Finches** in all four counties continued. Fourteen **Common Redpolls** at Reeds Lake south Oct 18 – first report, three at Grand Isle Park in Kent Co Oct 31, one at the Wastewater Oct 31. Irruptive year for **Pine Siskins** – large numbers throughout the area; high counts of 60 at Executive Pkwy SE in Kentwood Oct 6 and at the Wastewater Oct 16. Six **EVENING GROSBEAKS** visited briefly at the DeVries residence S of Holland in Allegan Co Oct 24 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75333923> to view Ed DeVries’ photos), eight (found by Travis Stinehelfer) at Harbor Island Grand Haven Oct 24 and flock of at least 21 observed by several at nearby Linear Park later in day before they quickly left (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75352205> to view Emily Tornga’s photos and <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75348242> to view Beth Miller’s photos), three at the Shavalier residence E of Douglas Oct 25 and 13 continued Oct 28, a flock of 30-40 at the Cater residence off Lincoln St W of 168th Ave and neighborhood in Ottawa Co Oct 26-31, nine at the Heft residence along 126th Ave W of 19th St in Allegan Co Oct 28, twelve at a residence on Crestwood Ln in Norton Shores Oct 29 and 37 there Oct 30 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75571355> to view Ric Pedler’s photos).

Please note: It has come to my attention that some people are under the impression that all sightings listed in the eBird summaries are from GRAC members...not true. The sightings are taken from eBird checklists from **all observers in the four-county area**.

Lisa Casler’s amazing and thorough checklists from Ottawa and Muskegon counties will be greatly missed (as will she). Her uncanny knack for finding Snowy Owls in the Ottawa County farmlands was unsurpassed.