

## September 2017 eBird Summary

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the unusual or rare eBird sightings for September 2017 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable and those with sketchy details. First and last fall dates (unless early or late) of common migrants are also not included in this report. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

Labor Day weekend started on a warm and pleasant note, but a strong cold front blasted through late Labor Day crashing temperatures into the sixties through Friday with intermittent cold air showers. A long, very dry summer-like warmup and a record breaking heat wave followed through late month with six consecutive, humid days of 90 plus degrees (Sept 21-26). After the passage of a strong cold front, temperatures returned to near normal ending the month.

Waterfowl began to congregate at Muskegon Wastewater. On Sept 4, Pam Rasmussen observed 17 waterfowl species including 200 Blue-winged Teal and **2,000** Northern Shoveler (plus a domestic Muscovy Duck that has been around all summer). Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39008643> to view her list of 60 total species.

A small raptor movement at the west end of Lake Macatawa and Holland SP was observed in a total of about three hours by Carl and Judi Manning on Sept 19 – a Turkey Vulture, two Northern Harriers, four Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Red-tailed Hawk, 45 American Kestrels and a Merlin were counted along with 90 Blue Jays.

Twenty-two species of shorebirds were observed in the area during the month. The good influxes from late Aug of **American Golden-Plover** continued at Muskegon Wastewater with up to **90** there through Sept 29 (numbers dwindled significantly throughout the month), up to 12 continued since Aug at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sept 27, one at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sept 9-17 and 27 and up to four along 3rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 17-18. Other notables included up to seven **Black-bellied Plover** at the Wastewater throughout the month, one at Holland SP Sept 19 and 25, at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sept 20, at Grand Haven S pier Sept 22, Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sept 26 and two at AAA Turf Farm Sept 27; a **Ruddy Turnstone** at the Wastewater Sept 4; up to eight **White-rumped Sandpipers** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sept 21 and one at 116th Ave/8th St wetland, Allegan Co Sept 5; up to seven **Baird's Sandpipers** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sept 28; up to eight **Stilt Sandpipers** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sept 21, up to two continued at the Coopersville Sewage Ponds Sept 16 and one at Holland SP Sept 19; two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at S Moorland Rd and Heights Ravenna Rd, Muskegon Co Sept 2 and up to two and the Wastewater Sept 2 and 15; a **Short-billed Dowitcher** at the Wastewater Sept 2-14; a **Long-billed Dowitcher** at the Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sept 11-17 and at the Wastewater Sept 16-17; and a **Red-necked Phalarope** continued since late Aug at Holland SP Sept 4. Noticeably absent were American Avocets.

**Good early and mid-month warbler fallout:** Huff Park in NE Grand Rapids was definitely the place to be. Sept 2 produced ten species for Steve Minard - an Ovenbird, three Common Yellowthroat, an American Redstart, two Magnolia, three Bay-breasted, a Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided, two Black-throated Green, a Canada and a Wilson's. On Sept 3, Ethan Kibbey observed 14 species with 50 individuals. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38976559> to view the checklist. On Sept 10, Ethan tallied 15 species and 45 individuals there. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39107891> for the entire checklist of 62 species. Fifteen species were observed there again by Ethan on Sept 13 along with flycatchers and vireos included in the 65-species list. Twelve species with 24 individuals were picked up by Steve Minard at Cascade Peace Park Sept 3. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38972585> for checklist. East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co produced twelve warbler species (plus some unidentified due to poor viewing conditions) with at least 33 individuals, plus a Philadelphia Vireo and two Swainson's Thrush, for Chip Francke on Sept 5. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39015616> for checklist. On Sept 10, the south end of Reeds Lake in E

Grand Rapids got into the mix. Steve Minard observed 15 species and 44 individuals plus an Alder Flycatcher and a Blue-headed and two Philadelphia vireos. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39105322> for checklist. Although warbler migration seemed spotty this fall (some locations very good and others that were productive in the past failing to produce much), and dropped off significantly by month's end, 27 species were observed in Sept. The more interesting included Northern Waterthrush, Blue-winged (one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, 84th Ave access Sept 9 and at Cedar Springs Sept 11 – late dates), Orange-crowned (one at a residence near Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sept 7 and at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Sept 15), **Connecticut** (one at a residence along 21st St S of 116th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 17), **Mourning** (one at Huff Park in Grand Rapids Sept 14, Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sept 20, East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sept 24 and Port Sheldon Sept 26), Hooded, Cape May, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue, Palm, Canada and Wilson's.

**Finds of the month:** A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** and a **Parasitic Jaeger** were found by Rick Brigham, Marylou Graham, Caleb Putnam and Chace Scholten on a Lake MI pelagic trip five miles W of the Kalamazoo River mouth, Allegan Co on Sept 17. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39241537> for photos. Albert Rowell had the surprise of his life when two immature **Glossy/White-faced Ibis** (these two species are notoriously difficult to differentiate) flew over while birding at Millennium Park Sept 19. Unfortunately, after much searching by many birders, the birds could not be relocated so a positive ID could not be made. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39297414> for photo. This flyover is mentioned only because of the super rarity of the species.

**Other notables:** up to two Horned Grebes continued since late Aug at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 14; one **Eared Grebe** continued there Sept 4; an **American White Pelican** was observed with 200 Double-crested Cormorants at the cormorant nesting/roost island on Winnetaska Rd in Muskegon Sept 22; an **American Bittern** at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Sept 15; a good number of Great Egrets (**72**) at Frederik Meijer Gardens Sept 26; a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at VanBragt Park in Holland Sept 17-23 and two at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Sept 27; **186** Turkey Vultures over the Coopersville Landfill Sept 4; up to two imm **Common Gallinules** continued since Aug along 11th St N of 117th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 8 and up to three at East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sept 23,28; up to two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Holland SP through the month, one at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 6-16 and one on a Lake MI pelagic trip five miles W of the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Sept 17; a Yellow-billed Cuckoo at a residence S of Holland in Allegan Co Sept 17 – late date; 39 Common Nighthawk over E Grand Rapids Sept 11 and 12 overhead at a residence near Holland Sept 16 – late dates and encouraging counts for this declining species; a Peregrine Falcon at Holland SP, Harbor Island in Grand Haven, Muskegon Wastewater and in downtown Grand Rapids; an Olive-sided Flycatcher continued to be sighted since Aug at Huff Park Sept 17 (this is very unusual for this species to hang around at the same location for this long; it may be a different individual than the one seen in Aug or possibly misidentified), two at Port Sheldon Natural Area Sept 5 and one at Paw Paw Park East Sept 14 both in Ottawa Co; an Eastern Kingbird at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sept 27 – late date; at least **310** Blue Jays counted in two hours migrating along the lakeshore at Jeff's Dune near Muskegon SP Campground Sept 30; Common Raven at Huff Park Sept 18; a Winter Wren at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co, two at Henderson Lake NC in Muskegon Co and one at Plaster Creek Park in Grand Rapids and Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve; up to four Sedge Wrens still at Huff Park through Sept 25; seven Ruby-crowned Kinglets at Huff Park Sept 7; very good migration of Gray-cheeked at Swainson's thrush throughout the area; 40 American Pipit at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 28; a Fox Sparrow at Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve Sept 30 – first of fall; a White-throated Sparrow at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Sept 20 and 32 at Huff Park Sept 30; six White-crowned Sparrows at Outdoor Discovery Center in Allegan Co Sept 19 – first of fall; ten Dark-eyed Juncos at a residence near Huff Park Sept 19 – very ironic, harbinger of winter arrives and then a scorching heat wave follows; **100** Bobolinks still at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 16; two Rusty Blackbirds at a residence along 21st St S of 116th Ave in Allegan Co and one at Huff Park Sept 17 – first of fall and 21 along 3rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 18; up to **60 Brewer's Blackbirds** continued since late Aug at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sept 9; and two Purple Finch at Michigan and Leffingwell NE in Grand Rapids Sept 13 and one at VanBragt Park in Holland Sept 21.