

**September 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 September 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.

A comfortable, mostly dry period with temps mostly in the 70s and some low 80s through the 12th was a welcome relief from the stifling heat and humidity of August. Our only stormy day during this period was on the 7th, which brought severe storms to parts of West Michigan preceding a strong cold front. The warmer than normal temperatures continued, mostly in the 80s, with little rain until the 20th. A strong cold front on the 21st ushered in a rainy period and much cooler temperatures only in the high 50s and 60s through the 23rd. After another cold front and rain the night of the 24th, an extended period of dry, pleasant, seasonable weather in the 70s ended the month.

**Good early month warbler counts on September 1** at Rycenga Park west of Fruitport by Alyssa Pyman (13 species with 26 individuals), at Ball Perkins Park in Grand Rapids by James Markham (nine species with 36 individuals) and along Indian Mounds Dr (Kent Trails) in Kent Co by Caleb Putnam/Julie Pedreros (eleven species with 44 individuals). Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94028626>, <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94034631> and <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94049738> respectively to view the checklists. **September 9:** Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94411925> to view Bailey Mitchell's impressive 84 species checklist of his 2 1/2 hr visit to Muskegon State Game Area, Lane's Landing with twelve warbler species plus other migrants.

**September 12:** Bailey Mitchell and Alyssa Pyman spent 2 3/4 hrs at the Muskegon Wastewater and were rewarded with 15 species of warblers and 59 individuals. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94577055> to view their checklist of 84 total species, which also includes waterfowl, shorebirds and many others. **September 19:** Steve Minard observed twelve warbler species with 39 individuals at south Reeds Lake. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94871779> to view the checklist. At the Wastewater Brendan Klick tallied 18 warbler species and 85 individuals including 19 Blackpoll along with many more migrants. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94907095> to view the checklist. Along the Kalamazoo River channel in Allegan Co Rick Brigham and Caleb Putnam had 15 warbler species with 72+ individuals plus other migrants. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94959177> to view the checklist. **September 25:** Cascade Peace Park in Kent Co nearly always yields good warbler counts during both spring and

fall migration as well as other migrants. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S95139276> to view Caleb Putnam and Julie Pedreros' 44 species checklist including 12 warbler species. **September 26:** South Reeds Lake yielded 16 warbler species and 60 individuals for Steve Minard. Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S95198545> to view the entire checklist.

**Warblers of interest:** Louisiana Waterthrush (see below), Northern Waterthrush, Golden-winged (see below), Blue-winged, Prothonotary, Orange-crowned, CONNECTICUT (see below – all at residences), Mourning (see below), Hooded, American Redstart (very numerous as expected), Cape May, Northern Parula (very good numbers in the area), Magnolia, Bay-breasted (good counts in the four-county area – high counts of ten at Michael McGraw Park in Kent Co Sep 4 and Indian Mounds Dr in Kent Co Sep 24), Blackburnian, Blackpoll (19 at the Wastewater Sep 19), Black-throated Blue (beautiful male eating elderberries at Rycenga Park in Muskegon Co Sep 2, photos by Beth Miller <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94079656>), Canada, Wilson's. Influx of at least 23 Palm at the Wastewater Sep 12 and large influx of Yellow-rumped into the area toward late month (55 at the Wastewater and other large numbers elsewhere). Considering there were not many chances through mid-month for warbler fallout (birds downed by inclement weather) with birds passing right on through the area, warbler counts were fairly good through that point, picking up considerably by the 19th.

Waterfowl began congregating in good numbers (huge numbers of Northern Shoveler and Ruddy Ducks toward month's end) at the Muskegon Wastewater mid-month (view Sam Greene's Sep 17 checklist for an example, along with many other migrants <https://ebird.org/wi/checklist/S94781777>) and shorebirds continued to move through (see those of interest below).

Visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S95278384> to view Bailey Mitchell's extraordinary **111 species checklist** from 5 1/2 hrs in the field at the Muskegon Wastewater on September 27, with 17 waterfowl species, 14 warbler species and many other migrants. This is the highest number of species I have seen recorded at the Wastewater, surpassing Ken Bishop's 99 species checklist from May 16, 2020.

**Notables for the month:** A **Snow Goose** at the Wastewater Sep 29 – first report. A **GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE** (found by Bailey Mitchell) at the Wastewater Sep 30 – first report. A **Cackling Goose** at the Wastewater Sep 28-30. A **SURF SCOTER** (found by Jason Bojczyk) at the Wastewater Sep 25-27 – unusual at this location and early. **Horned Grebes** at the Wastewater off and on throughout the month with a high count of four Sep 4-5, one at Mill Point in Spring Lake Sep 1 and 25. Up to two **Eared Grebes** continued at the Wastewater Sep 10-20 – known location. At

least one **EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVE** (found by homeowner, confirmed by Caleb Putnam) at a residence at 108th St/Byron Center Ave SW in Kent Co Sep 2, up to two there Sep 3-13 – as many as six had been seen this summer per homeowner and nested in resident's maples, up to three at Allegan SGA Todd Farm (118th Ave W of 62nd St) Sep 13 and 18 – known location for several years. At least **250 Chimney Swifts** entering chimney roosts at the Allegan library and Allegan UMC observed by Tim Cornish the evening of Sep 12. Three **Sora** at Window on the Waterfront in Holland Sep 28 – seems late. Up to seven **Common Gallinules** continued since Aug near the Mill Point area in Spring Lake Sep 5, three continued Sep 12 and one Sep 16-17, three in Grand River near Lloyd's Bayou in Ottawa Co Sep 18, four at East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sep 19. Up to ten **Black-bellied Plover** at the Wastewater throughout the month, one at Kalamazoo River mouth Sep 12, one at Grand Haven north pier Sep 15, one at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sep 15. Up to 16 **American Golden-Plover** at the Wastewater Sep 11-30, up to eight at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Sep 13-20, up to 15 at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sep 17-18. A **Semipalmated Plover** at Versluis Lake in Kent Co Sep 20 – odd location. Up to four **Ruddy Turnstones** at the Wastewater Sep 5-20, one at Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Sep 10, one at Grand Haven north pier Sep 13-19. A **RED KNOT** (found by Bailey Mitchell) at the Wastewater Sep 9. A **STILT SANDPIPER** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sep 11 and two Sep 18, one at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Sep 13. Up to 22 **Baird's Sandpipers** continued since July at the Wastewater Sep 9-30 (much lesser counts later in month), one at Holland SP Sep 7 and 17-19, one at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Sep 13 and 19-20, one at AAA Turf Farm Sep 15. A **White-rumped Sandpiper** continued at the Wastewater Sep 11. Four **BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS** (found by Amy Lyyski) at the Wastewater Sep 12 and 14-15, seven there Sep 13 and one Sep 16 and 21. A **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Patterson Rd Cattle Ponds in Allegan Co Sep 5. A **Wilson's Phalarope** (found by Carl/Judi Manning) at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sep 2. Up to four **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at the Wastewater during the month, one at Pere Marquette Park Sep 7 and three Sep 20, one intermittently at Holland SP Sep 11-26. A **Least Bittern** continued since June at Reeds Lake Sep 2, one on canoe trip on Grand River near Mill Point in Ottawa Co Sep 12, one at Millennium Park Sep 25 – getting late. **Seventy Great Egrets** viewed from a residence on Grand River near Martinique Island in Ottawa Co very early on Sep 3 – obviously roosted overnight at this location. A **LITTLE BLUE HERON** (found by Jack Pohler) at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Sep 4 – good description, but no diagnostic photos. Up to three **Black-crowned Night-Herons** continued since at least Aug at Mill Point area in Spring Lake Sep 20, one continued at 116th Ave/8th St wetland Sep 2, one at Ottawa Sands Co Park Sep 15, one at Harbor Island in Grand Haven Sep 21, one in marsh by playground at Woodland Ridge Apts W of Ferrysburg and two continued at Window on the Waterfront in Holland Sep 28 – getting late. An adult

**GOLDEN EAGLE** at the Wastewater Sep 4-9. An imm **WESTERN KINGBIRD** (found by Dave Slager) at Saugatuck Dunes SP near the disc golf course Sep 8 (visit <https://ebird.org/checklist/S94378628> to view James Markham's photos). Three **Eastern Kingbirds** at the Wastewater Sep 17 – late. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at various locations early month to mid-month in all four counties, up to two at Black Lake Park in Muskegon Co Sep 1-3, at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Sep 2-5 and at Muskegon Lake NP Sep 11, one at the Wastewater Sep 27 and one at Muskegon Lake NP Sep 29 – both very late. Two **Yellow-throated Vireos** at Ball Perkins Park in Grand Rapids Sep 22 – late. **381 Blue Jays** migrating at Muskegon SP and **225** in a continuous flow flying south observed from Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access in Ottawa Co both Sep 27, **1,676** counted migrating in 1 hr 20 min at Lake Macatawa Boardwalk West Sep 30. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** quite numerous throughout the area – likely another irruptive year. A **Winter Wren** at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Sep 6 – first report. A **Gray-cheeked Thrush** at Saugatuck Dunes SP Sep 8 – first report and many reports of Gray-cheeked and Swainson's moving through in good numbers (35 Swainson's at Port Sheldon NA North Loop Sep 13). An **American Pipit** at Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Sep 10 – first report, **75** at the Wastewater Sep 24. Six **Pine Siskins** at Versluis Lake in Kent Co Sep 20 – first report, four at Reeds Lake Sep 25. A **Lapland Longspur** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Sep 13 – first report, one at the Wastewater Sep 25. A **Clay-colored Sparrow** at the Wastewater Sep 27 – first report. A **Dark-eyed Junco** at Clear Springs NP in Muskegon Co Sep 18 – first report. A **LECONTE'S SPARROW** (found by Lonny Garris) briefly at a residence along Barry St W of 88th Ave in Ottawa Co Sep 29. Twenty-three **Eastern Meadowlarks** at the Wastewater Sep 24 – good count; likely migrants. A **Rusty Blackbird** at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Sep 24 – first report, one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area 84th Ave access Sep 29, three at Medbery Park in Muskegon Co Sep 30. **Warblers of note:** A **Louisiana Waterthrush** at Kalamazoo River channel in Allegan Co Sep 6 – very late migrant per Caleb Putnam; these birds generally just disappear from breeding grounds by early Aug. A **Golden-winged** (found by Caleb Putnam) at Paris Park in Kent Co Sep 1-3, one (found by Alyssa Pyman) at Rycenga Park in Muskegon Co Sep 1, one (found by Tom/Matt Black) at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Sep 12, one (found by Doug Howerzyl/Carl and Judi Manning) at Ottawa Sands Co Park Sep 15. An **Orange-crowned** at the Wastewater Sep 17 – first report. A **CONNECTICUT** at a residence in Douglas Sep 16 (R Brigham), one at a residence at Niles Ave/Lakeview Dr in Ottawa Co Sep 22 (Mannings), one at a residence on Grand River near Martinique Island in Ottawa Co Sep 24 (D Herdegen). A **Mourning** at the Wastewater Sep 2, one at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing Sep 3, one at Stu Visser Trails in Ottawa Co Sep 5 and 17-18. A **SUMMER TANAGER** (found by David Smitley) at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing Sep 6. A late **Dickcissel** at the Wastewater Sep 20.