

Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

Dec 1st, 2013 thru Feb 28th, 2014

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Summary: 112 species from the Michigan Bird List were reported in the Saginaw Bay Area this winter, down by over a half-dozen species from the record totals from the previous two winters. The climate is the likely cause, as the mildness of those last two winters was replaced with well below average cold this year. This report lists all of the species reported, plus one hybrid, along with the highest reported individual count for each, and a list of the SBA counties in which each was noted. Per the state compiler's request, all Trumpeter Swan records are listed. Aside from waterbirds, the abnormally cold season didn't appear to have a drastic effect on what can be considered as the recent normal for SBA bird winter populations. Carolina Wren, American Robin, Eastern Bluebird remained throughout the period, and a handful of other stragglers were reported. Snowy Owls were widespread, even abundant in a couple locations, and indeed the Arctic weather that prevailed would have made them feel quite at home. The same situation certainly did not hold true for waterbirds, as ice coverage on the Great Lakes was the most extensive recorded in last 35 years. The rivers and inner Saginaw Bay were already frozen over three-quarters of the way through December, and the usual concentrations of gulls departed many weeks before normal. From that point on ice coverage continued to rapidly expand, until only a few spots with sufficient current or warm water influx remained un-frozen. The resulting freeze-out of offshore over-wintering areas on the big lakes undoubtedly led to the rare SBA winter records for Red-Throated Loon, and unusually high winter Horned Grebe counts. New records were minimal, with just one new SBA spring early date, and one MBRC Review List species reported, a carry-over from autumn.

This report, as well as previous seasonal reports from 2000-2013, can be found at <http://www.saginawbaybirding.org>., along with updates on spring 2014 migration in the Saginaw Bay Area, as reported to Joe Soehnel at soehnelj@gmail.com or at 989-892-3687.

*Many thanks to all observers who contributed their sightings directly to this compilation. Your extra efforts result in a significantly more accurate and thorough report.
Additional thanks to Joe Soehnel for his ongoing input .*



The abnormally cold temperatures that prevailed froze over many of the Trumpeter Swan overwintering sites on the AuSable River, such as Westgate. Fortunately, Wayne and Toni Shawl live just up the road from the Cooke Dam, and Wayne monitors the ice coverage in that sector of the AuSable. This year, Wayne alerted the dam manager that more flow was necessary to maintain sufficient open water in the Trumpeter Swan wintering area immediately downstream, and Consumer Energy responded. Wayne is an excellent example of a member of the SBA birding community who both counts and acts in the best interest of SBA birdlife. Joe Soehnel captured this image of a Trumpeter Swan pair on the AuSable in the vicinity of the Cooke Dam on January 17th.



Unfortunately, wintering waterfowl conservation of the sort practiced by Wayne Shawl and Consumers Energy on the AuSable is not always feasible. As near record ice coverage froze over offshore Great Lakes waters typically used by overwintering waterbirds, the flocks were pushed into smaller and smaller areas, areas containing little if any food. As a result, an increased number of waterbirds perished on the Great Lakes from starvation this winter. Roger Eriksson captured this image of a Long-tailed Duck that likely met such a fate, on the ice at the mouth of the AuSable River, Io.

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
SNOW GOOSE:	14	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba
ROSS'S GOOSE:	2	2/28	Midland, Mi	JMS - photographed - new SBA spring early date
CAKCLING GOOSE:	1	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS
CANADA GOOSE:	9862	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
MUTE SWAN:	110	12/5	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,MW - also noted in Ar,Io,Mi
TRUMPETER SWAN:	5	12/5	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,MW
	23	12/7	Foote Dam pond, Io	PR,EC
	54+	12/7	Iargo Springs, Io	PR,EC
	70+	12/7	Westgate, Io	PR,EC
	12	12/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS
	153	12/12	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS
	6	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS
	32	12/20	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS,TS
	1	12/28	Akron area, Tu	JEV
	77	1/12	Cooke Dam area, Io	fide WWS
	79	1/17	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS,JMS,DJP
	32	1/27	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS
	25	2/7	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS
	29	2/23	Iargo Springs, Io	MH,SB
	8	2/28	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS
TUNDRA SWAN:	89	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Tu
	3	1/17	Cooke Dam area, Io	JMS,DJP,WWS
GADWALL:	2	12/3	Dow Ponds, Mi	RMD
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	124	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi
MALLARD:	11743	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	3	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS
NORTHERN PINTAIL:	16	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba
	1	12/7	Foote Dam pond, Io	PR,EC
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	1	12/3	Dow Ponds, Mi	RMD
CANVASBACK:	2	2/13	Sanford Dam area, Mi	JZ - also noted In Ba,Io,Sa
REDHEAD:	40	2/13	Sanford Dam area, Mi	JZ - also noted in Ba,Io

RING-NECKED DUCK:	6	1/18	Dow Ponds, Mi	RMD,VT - also noted in Sa
GREATER SCAUP:	92	2/16	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Io,Mi
LESSER SCAUP:	175	2/2	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Io,Mi
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	3	12/9	Tawas Bay, Io	WWS,TS - also noted in Ba,Mi
LONG-TAILED DUCK:	187	2/9	TPSP, Io	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi
BUFFLEHEAD:	23	12/1	AuSable River mouth, Io	WWS - also noted in Mi,Tu
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	3303	12/15	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa
COMMON GOLDENEYE X HOODED MERGANSER:	1	tp	AuSable River mouth, Io	WWS,RAE - for the sixth winter in a row (per RAE)
HOODED MERGANSER:	36	12/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS
COMMON MERGANSER:	2327	12/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	623+	12/1	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Ba,Mi
RUDDY DUCK:	4	12/3	Dow Ponds, Mi	RMD
	2	12/9	Dow Ponds, Mi	JMS
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	54	12/30	Fraser Twp., Ba	DLJ - also noted in Ar,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
RUFFED GROUSE:	3	2/14	Moffatt Twp., Ar	DLJ - also noted in Io,Mi,Tu
WILD TURKEY:	40	2/6	Warren Twp., Mi	JZ - also noted in Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
RED-THROATED LOON:	1	2/5	Bangor Twp., Ba	per JMS - first SBA February record - a grounded bird that was recovered by Sandy Miner, and released at the Karn Plant, Ba on 2/8
	1	2/7	AuSable River mouth, Io	SM - photographed
HORNED GREBE:	17	2/2	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Mi,Sa
DOUBLE-CRSTD CORMORANT:	16	12/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS
GREAT BLUE HERON:	7	12/15	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Mi,Sa
BALD EAGLE:	32	12/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN HARRIER:	7	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Tu
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	12/12	Frankenmuth, Sa	JAS,HFS - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
COOPER'S HAWK:	1	2/26	Frankenmuth, Sa	JAS,HFS - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	1	12/7	Jasper Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Io,Sa,Tu
RED-TAILED HAWK:	7	1/18	Ingersoll Twp., Mi	RMD,VT - also noted in Ar,Ba,Sa,Tu

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	4	1/26	Geneva Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
GOLDEN EAGLE:	2	2/25	Oscoda Twp, Io	SB - also noted in Sa
AMERICAN COOT:	4	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi
SANDHILL CRANE:	27 14 1	12/5 12/13 2/19	SNWR, Sa SNWR, Sa SNWR, Sa	JMS JMS - last fall date JMS - first spring date
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	186	12/1	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Sa
LITTLE GULL:	1	12/2 - 12/3	Saginaw River, Ba	DD,MW - photographed
RING-BILLED GULL:	150	12/1	Middlegrounds, Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Io,Sa,Tu
HERRING GULL:	870	12/9	Dow Ponds, Mi	JMS - also noted in Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
ICELAND GULL:	1	12/21	Saginaw River, Ba	DD - last date
LSSR BLACK-BACKED GULL:	1	12/5	SNWR, Sa	JMS - adult age
GLAUCOUS GULL:	6	12/10	Pinconning Twp., Ba	JMS -also noted in Io,Mi
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	5	12/10	Saginaw River, Ba	JMS - also noted in Io,Mi
ROCK PIGEON:	152	12/4	Saginaw, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Io,Tu
MOURNING DOVE:	92	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	1	12/19	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Mi
GREAT HORNED OWL:	2	2/9	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
SNOWY OWL:	7	2/12	Prairie Farm area, Sa	LMA - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
LONG-EARED OWL:	1	12/5 - 12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS
SHORT-EARED OWL:	2	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Hu
RUFIOUS HUMMINGBIRD:	1	12/1- 12/14	Spaulding Twp., Sa	MR - present from end of Autumn period - an immature male - pending MBRC acceptance, documentation submitted - banded by AC on 12/5
BELTED KINGFISHER:	1	12/3	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Hu,Mi
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER:	14	2/15	Sand Lake area, Io	LV - highest winter count in the SBA since the 1970's - also noted in Mi
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	11	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
YLLW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:	noted	12/17	Huron Co., CBC	per RMD

DOWNY WOODPECKER:	7	2/11	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	3	12/14	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS,TS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu - Absence of this species from GEP/EMP's report is notable.
NORTHERN FLICKER:	4	2/27	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Tu
PILEATED WOODPECKER:	3	1/12	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN KESTREL:	3	1/13	Portsmouth Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Mi,Sa,Tu
MERLIN:	1	12/7	Saginaw Twp., Sa	SFK - the observer noted "Remarkable birds. It flew through w/ the quivering, down tilted wings like a territorial/courting tree swallow. None of the yard birds acted like there was a raptor in the neighborhood at all. " - also noted in Ba,Hu
PEREGRINE FALCON:	2	12/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - sharing a breakfast of Rock Pigeon
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	2	12/11	SNWR, Sa	DB - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
BLUE JAY:	73	2/28	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN CROW:	244	1/14	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
COMMON RAVEN:	31	1/10	Tuttle Marsh area, Io	RAE - also noted in Ar
HORNED LARK:	187	2/27	Spaulding Twp., Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:	49	1/18	Sanford rail trail, Mi	RMD,VT - also noted in Ar,Ba,Sa,Tu
TUFTED TITMOUSE:	6	12/26	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	LMA - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Tu
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	12	12/22	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	3	12/22	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS,TS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
BROWN CREEPER:	3	2/11	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi
CAROLINA WREN:	1	12/26	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	LMA - also noted in Ba,Mi
WINTER WREN:	noted	12/17	Huron Co., CBC	per RMD
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	4	1/26	AuSable State Forest, Mi	RMD - also noted in Hu,IoTu
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	6	2/13	Pinconning Twp., Ba	DLJ - also noted in Ar,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
HERMIT THRUSH:	1	12/17	Huron Co. CBC	per RMD
AMERICAN ROBIN:	111	1/18	Ingersoll Twp., Mi	RMD,VT- also noted in Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
GRAY CATBIRD:	1	12/14	Hume Twp., Hu	MKE

EUROPEAN STARLING:	21	1/4	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,DJP - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	18	12/14	Hume Twp., Hu	MKE
CEDAR WAXWING:	177	1/17	Turner Twp., Ar	JMS,DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	6	2/13	Bombay area, Mi	JMS - also noted in Ar,Tu
SNOW BUNTING:	320	12/14	Hume Twp., Hu	MKE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
PINE WARBLER:	1	12/1 - 1/7	Bangor Twp, Ba	GSP,EMP - continuing at their feeder from the fall period
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:	5	2/5	SNWR, Sa	JDS - also noted in Hu
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	184	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
FIELD SPARROW:	1	1/17	Five Channels Dam, Io	DJP,JMS
SONG SPARROW:	2	1/4	SNWR, Sa	JDS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Tu
SWAMP SPARROW:	1	12/13	SNWR, Sa	JMS
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:	1	tp	Midland, Mi	JMS
	1	1/10	BCSRA, Ba	JMS
DARK-EYED JUNCO:	39	12/7	Jasper Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN CARDINAL:	35	12/25	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Ar,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	noted	1/04	Bay CBC, Ba	per JMS
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	40	12/28	Arkron area, Tu	JEV
COMMON GRACKLE:	2	12/1	TPSP, Io	RAE
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	30	12/28	Akron area, Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba
PURPLE FINCH:	27	12/20	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS,TS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
HOUSE FINCH:	13	12/3	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Mi,Sa,Tu
COMMON REDPOLL:	1	1/16	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS
PINE SISKIN:	13	2/23	Wilbur Twp., Io	SB
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:	60	2/2	Oil City area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
EVENING GROSBEAK:	2	12/22	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS,TS
HOUSE SPARROW:	80	12/13	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa,Tu

TOTAL: 112 Species

Peak/high counts and early/late dates are designated based upon records established in the publication *Birds and Bird Finding in the Saginaw Bay Area* by Ron Weeks, published in 1995, and subsequent updates to the data by the compilers of the Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area report. Comments on seasonal occurrences also relate to information found in this exhaustively researched book, as well as species notations on the Michigan Bird Survey Form.

* MBRC Review List species. Inclusion of this record does not signify that it has been verified, only that an encounter was reported. The observation will not be considered an official SBA record until it has been reviewed and accepted by the MBRC.

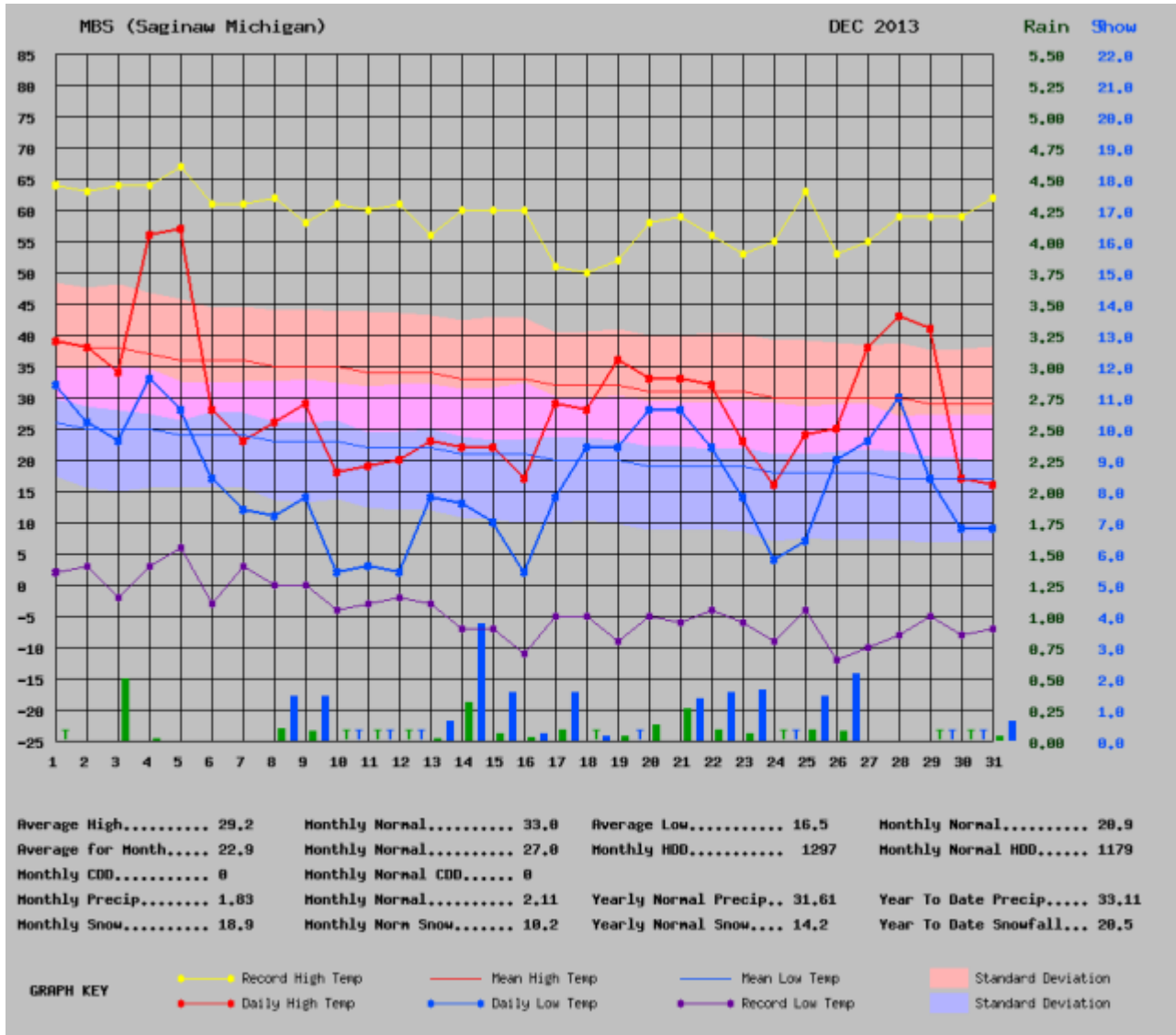
Observer Key:

LMA	Larry M. Abraham	DJP	David J. Peters
DB	David Boon	GSP	Glenn S. Peterson
SB	Sam Burkhardt	EMP	Ellen M. Peterson
AC	Allen Chartier	PR	Peggy Ridgeway
EC	Ed Cole	MR	Mary Rivett
DD	Dan Duso	HFS	Heinz F. Schwarm
RMD	Ryan M. Dziedzic	JAS	Jane A. Schwarm
RAE	Roger A. Eriksson	WWS	Wayne W. Shawl
MKE	Monica K. Essenmacher	JMS	Joseph M. Soehnel
MH	Matt Hegwood	JDS	Jeff D. Sommer
JHe	Jeanne Henderson	VT	Val Trabucchi
DLJ	Doug L. Jackson	JEV	Jim E. VanAllen
SFK	Steven F. Kahl	LV	Larry VanWagoner
SM	Sue Malski	MW	Myles Willard
		JZ	Jerry Ziarno

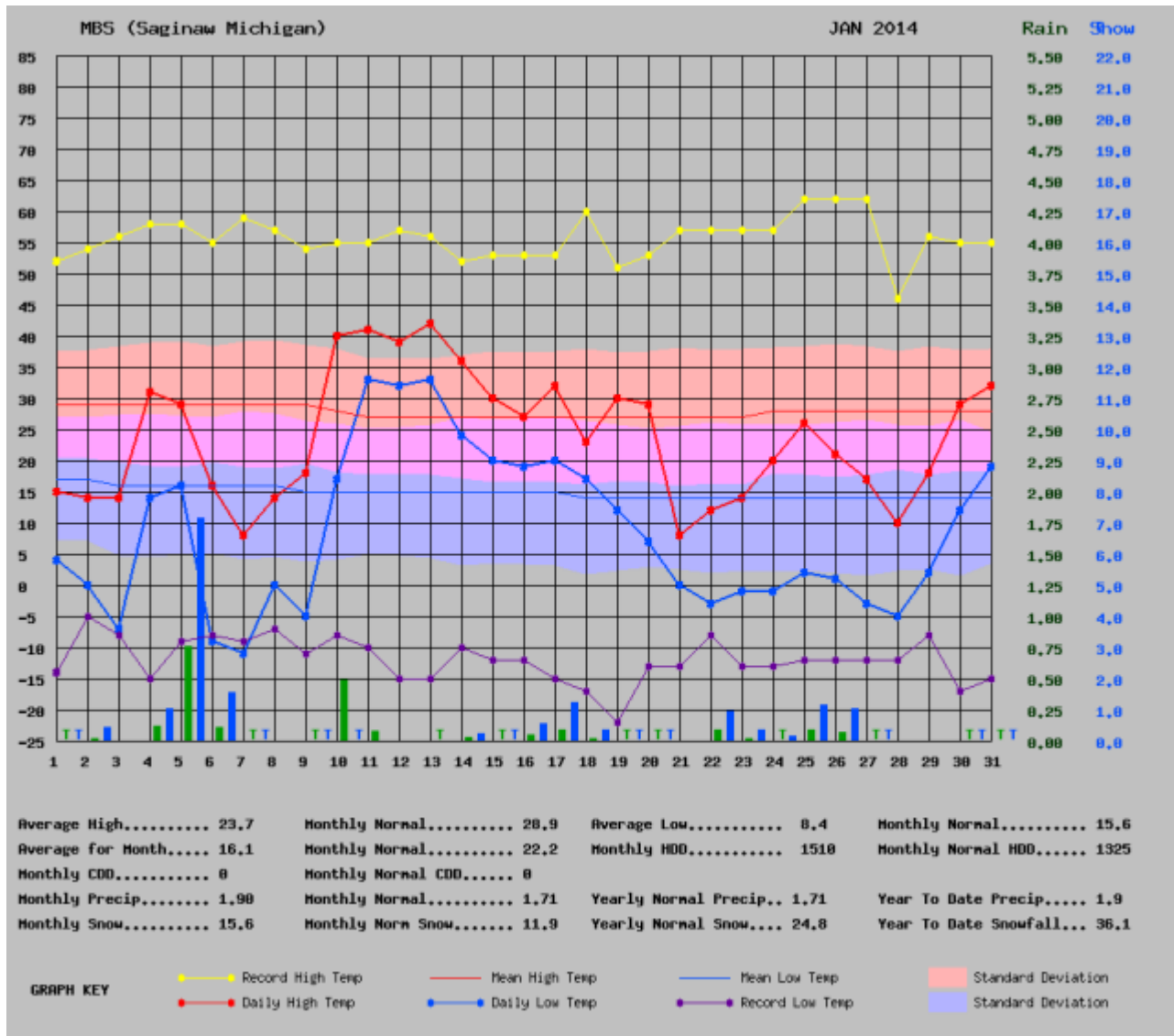
Abbreviations:

Ar	Arenac County	Sa	Saginaw County
Ba	Bay County	SBA	Saginaw Bay Area
CNC	Chippewa Nature Center	SBB.org	SaginawBayBirding.org
CBC	Christmas Bird Count	SNWR	Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge
FPSWA	Fish Point State Wildlife Area	TPSP	Tawas Point State Park
Hu	Huron County		
Io	Iosco County		
MBRC	Michigan Bird Records Committee	tp	throughout the entire, or entire remainder, of the period
Mi	Midland County	Tu	Tuscola County

December, 2013 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



January, 2014 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



February, 2014 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)

