

Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

Dec 1st, 2015 thru Feb 29th, 2016

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Summary: Mild climatic conditions prevailed in the SBA throughout the winter of 2015- 2016. As illustrated in the graphs at the end of this report, daily temperatures were above average for most of December. As a result, the majority of waters remained unfrozen into January. Temperatures in the middle month were a little closer to average, but in neither of the first two months did any significant snow events occur in the southern SBA. Temperatures returned to above average in February. The only two major storms of the winter were in this final month of the season. They occurred just a week apart, but due to some unseasonably high daytime temperatures in between, the snow accumulation from the first storm had to varying extents melted by the second storm event. There is little doubt that the mild climate contributed to a record number of species being tallied during the season, with a total of **128** species from the Michigan Bird List reported. This report lists all of the species reported, 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. Mild weather in the first and last month of the season lead to a good number of birds lingering late and arriving early. The mild climate and relative abundance of birds to be encountered likely contributed to the thorough observer coverage that prevailed, and an impressively lengthy list of observers. Speaking of observers, the number of active birders, and the ability nowadays for them to report sightings on readily accessible databases (SBB.org, eBird), must also be considered, alongside the effects of a changing climate, as contributing to the fact that the total species recorded this season was also the thirteenth consecutive winter of an above average total. This winter's record total was not only the result of lingering birds, but a fair amount of winter visitors were present as well, in decent numbers and quite widespread in distribution. Two new SBA peak counts were established, as well as three new fall late dates, and one existing fall late date was tied.

This report, as well as previous seasonal reports from 2000-2015, can be found at <http://www.saginawbaybirding.org>, along with updates on spring 2016 migration in the Saginaw Bay Area, as reported to Joe Soehnel at saginawbaybirding@gmail.com.

*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 support and input .*

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
GRTR WHITE-FRONTD GOOSE:	7	12/3	SNWR, Sa	JMS
	8	2/29	Hampton Twp., Ba	DD
SNOW GOOSE:	2	12/1	Williams Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Mi
	2	12/3	SNWR, Sa	JMS
CHEN SP:	3	12/22	SNWR, Sa	RAE
CAACKLING GOOSE:	6	12/12	Harbor Beach, Hu	MKE
CANADA GOOSE:	9598	12/3	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
MUTE SWAN:	52	1/6	Kawkawlin Twp., Ba	RAE - also noted in Ar,Hu,Mi,Tu
TRUMPETER SWAN:	11	12/3	SNWR, Sa	JMS
	7	12/4	Sanford Lake, Mi	RMD
	28	12/6	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS
	8	12/8	SNWR, Sa	JMS
	18	12/12	Tuttle Marsh, lo	WWS,TS
	7	12/15	Eagle Bay area, Hu	JMS,DJP
	4	12/16	Harbor Beach, Hu	MKE
	2	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD
	2	12/30	Tuttle Marsh, lo	SB
	6	1/2	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS
	54	1/5	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS,TS,MH
	27	1/6	Westgate, lo	SB
	182	1/6	largo Springs, lo	SB
	116	1/6	Foot Dam area, lo	SB
	31	1/8	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS
	11	1/9	Sanford Lake, Mi	RMD
	6	1/14	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS
	4	1/17	Edenville Twp., Mi	MKE
	127	1/20	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS,TS
	200	2/14	largo Springs, lo	PR,EC
53	2/18	largo Springs, lo	JMS	
6	2/23	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	JMS,RAE	
7	2/14	Prairie Farm, Sa	LMA	
TUNDRA SWAN:	876	12/22	SNWR, Sa	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Tu
WOOD DUCK:	2	12/8	FPSWA, Tu	JEV
	1	12/22	Sanford Lake, Mi	CBC - last date
GADWALL:	335	12/8	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Tu
AMERICAN WIGEON:	17	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Tu
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	818	12/22	SNWR, Sa	RAE - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Tu
MALLARD:	9438	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,lo,Mi,Tu
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	147	12/8	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Tu

NORTHERN PINTAIL:	96	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Ba,Mi,Tu
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	15	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Io,Mi,Tu
CANVASBACK:	163	12/16	Harbor Beach, Hu	MKE - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
REDHEAD:	19190	1/3	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
RING-NECKED DUCK:	185	12/16	FPSWA, Tu	AB - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
GREATER SCAUP:	2206	1/2	BCSRA, Ba	MKE - also noted in Hu,Io,Mi
LESSER SCAUP:	35	12/19	MCV Pond, Mi	JZ,SL - also noted in Ba,Hu,Sa,Tu
SCAUP SP:	1780	12/2	BCSRA, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,Io,Tu
HARLEQUIN DUCK:	1	1/4 - 1/6	AuSable River mouth, Io	MH,SB,WWS
SURF SCOTER:	1	12/4	BCSRA, Ba	JMS
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	14	12/2	BCSRA, Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Hu
BLACK SCOTER:	2	12/4	BCSRA, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu
LONG-TAILED DUCK:	400	2/4	TPSP, Io	RAE- also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu
BUFFLEHEAD:	304	12/1	Linwood, Ba	RAE - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	2350	2/13	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,CS - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
HOODED MERGANSER:	36	1/9	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
COMMON MERGANSER:	702	1/12	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	35	1/3	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu
RUDDY DUCK:	28	12/19	Dow Pond, Mi	JZ,SL - also noted in Ba,Tu
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	73	2/15	Portsmouth Twp., Ba	JMS - in one flock, walking in +/- single file across a corn stubble field, representing a new SBA peak count . Ron Week's SBA book lists a higher count, but indicates that it was across an area spanning more than 1 county, which exceeds the maximum area that should be considered as a single location. - also noted in Ar,Hu,Mi,Tu,Sa
RUFFED GROUSE:	5	12/6	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS - also noted in Hu,Mi,Tu
WILD TURKEY:	158	12/22	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
RED-THROATED LOON:	2	12/15	PCSP, Hu	TH
	1	2/29	TPSP, Io	PO

COMMON LOON:	1	12/15	Eagle Bay, Hu	DJP
PIED-BILLED GREBE:	4	2/13	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,CS - also noted in Sa,Tu
HORNED GREBE:	7	12/6	Harbor Beach, Hu	JZa - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi
DOUBLE-CRSTD CORMORANT:	9	1/17	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,lo,Mi,Sa
GREAT BLUE HERON:	25	12/3	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Mi
GREAT EGRET:	7	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - last date
*PLEGADIS SP:	1	12/22	SNWR, Sa	RAE - new SBA fall late date , photographed, probably the same individual encountered here by RAE on 11/10/15 - pending MBRC acceptance
TURKEY VULTURE:	1	2/14 - 2/18	Baldwin Twp., lo	JR,RAE,JMS - first year age, feeding on the meat scraps that JR provides for wintering BAEA
BALD EAGLE:	14	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
NORTHERN HARRIER:	12	12/16	Rush Lake, Hu	AB - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	2/6	Koylton, Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in lo,Sa
COOPER'S HAWK:	2	1/7	Jasper Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	2	1/9	Edenville Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,lo
RED-TAILED HAWK:	13	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	17	2/12	Au Gres Twp., Ar	RAE - numbers of this species increased notably in February - also noted in Hu,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
GOLDEN EAGLE:	1	1/29	Deford SGA, Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Hu,Sa
AMERICAN COOT:	162	12/8	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Tu
SANDHILL CRANE:	2285	12/8	SNWR, Sa	JMS - new SBA peak count - who would have thought 25 years ago that the SBA would see a single count of over 2000! DJP - last date - also noted in Hu
	9	12/31	SNWR, Sa	
DUNLIN:	1	12/22	SNWR, Sa	RAE - ties SBA fall late date
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	104	12/20	Tawas Bay, lo	RAE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Sa
	1	1/9	Sanford Lake, Mi	RMD - last date
RING-BILLED GULL:	694	2/28	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Hu,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
HERRING GULL:	1400	2/2	Sheridan Twp., Hu	AB - also noted in Ar,Ba,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu

THAYER'S GULL:	1	2/1	SNWR, Sa	JMS - first winter age, photographed
	1	2/2	Saginaw River, Ba	DD - adult age, photographed



***While overall gull numbers in the SBA were unspectacular this winter, diversity was quite good.
All species that occur more or less annually were present.
The rarest species observed was Thayer's Gull, with two reports.
Dan Duso was able to capture several images of the individual he encountered on the Saginaw River, Bay.
This example provides an excellent comparative study of the morphological and plumage differences between
adult Thayer's Gull, Herring Gull, and Iceland Gull .***

ICELAND GULL:	1	1/4	AuSable River mouth, Io	SB - also noted in Hu
LESSER BLCK-BACKED GULL:	1	12/11	Linwood, Ba	MKE - also noted in Hu
GLAUCOUS GULL:	11	2/2	Sheridan Twp., Hu	AB - also noted in Ba,Sa
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	8	2/29	Port Austin, Hu	MKE - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
ROCK PIGEON:	81	1/7	Saginaw, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
MOURNING DOVE:	68	1/7	Jasper Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	3	1/21	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
GREAT HORNED OWL:	2	12/8	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Io,Mi,Tu
SNOWY OWL:	3	2/5	Akron area, Tu	JP,DP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa

BARRED OWL:	1	1/8	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS - also noted in Ba
LONG-EARED OWL:	2	1/21	SNWR, Sa	SL
SHORT-EARED OWL:	8	12/22	SNWR, Sa	RAE - also noted in Hu,Tu
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL:	2	12/15	Colfax Twp., Hu	AB
	1	12/17	Ellington Twp, Tu	AB
BELTED KINGFISHER:	2	1/24	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE - also noted in Ba,Sa
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER:	18	2/13	Indian Lake area, lo	LV,SD
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	7	12/23	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
YLLW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:	1	12/2	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS
DOWNY WOODPECKER:	8	12/18	SNWR, Sa	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	4	1/4	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN FLICKER:	2	12/23	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
PILEATED WOODPECKER:	3	1/14	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN KESTREL:	3	1/24	Prairie Farm, Sa	LMA - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
MERLIN:	1	12/15	Hume Twp., Hu	VT,ML - also noted in Sa,Tu
PEREGRINE FALCON:	2	1/24	Bay City, Ba	JMS
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	2	12/12	Tuttle Marsh, lo	WWS,TS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
BLUE JAY:	37	2/15	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN CROW:	638	12/16	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	LMA - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
COMMON RAVEN:	8	1/8	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi



Doug Jackson continues to build a remarkable catalogue of images illustrating birds on the wing. An in-flight shot by Doug of either a Common Raven or a Rough-legged Hawk, with wing and tail feathers fully spread, is special in and of itself, but posed thus together beak to tail...spectacular.

HORNED LARK:	206	2/11	Prairie Farm, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:	63	1/9	Sanford area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
TUFTED TITMOUSE:	14	1/9	Vet's Memorial Park, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	11	2/12	Baldwin Twp., Io	IB - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Sa,Tu
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	13	1/24	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
BROWN CREEPER:	4	1/16	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi
CAROLINA WREN:	1	1/6	Midland, Mi	JZ - also noted in Sa
WINTER WREN:	1	12/15	PCSP, Hu	JB,TH
BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER:	1	12/17	Lighthouse Park, Hu	PO - new SBA fall late date , the previous being way back on October 23, 1966
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	3	1/9	Vet's Memorial Park, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	9	2/3	Fairgrove area, Tu	JMS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
HERMIT THRUSH:	1	12/15	Hume Twp., Hu	MKE
AMERICAN ROBIN:	141	2/15	1 st Ward, Saginaw, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu

GRAY CATBIRD:	1	1/29	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - photographed
EUROPEAN STARLING:	930	1/23	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	16	2/14	TPSP area, lo	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu
CEDAR WAXWING:	110	2/29	Port Austin, Hu	MKE - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	150	2/24	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	LMA - also noted in Hu,Mi,Tu
SNOW BUNTING:	1630	12/16	Lincoln Twp., Hu	MKE - all in one magical "snow" storm - also noted in Ar,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	338	1/20	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
CHIPPING SPARROW:	1	12/3	TPSP, lo	PO
FOX SPARROW:	1	12/20	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE
SONG SPARROW:	2	1/7	BCSRA, Ba	CS - also noted in Hu,Mi,Sa
SWAMP SPARROW:	1	12/30	Tuttle Marsh, lo	SB
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:	1	2/13	Monitor Twp., Ba	MN - also noted in Mi,Sa
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:	1	12/15	Au Gres area, Ar	JZ - at a feeder w/American Tree Sparrows
DARK-EYED JUNCO:	30	1/7	Jasper Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN CARDINAL:	27	12/23	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK:	1	12/6	Midland, Mi	MH
	1	2/12	Harbor Beach, Hu	JM - new SBA fall late date and first February SBA record
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	81	2/21	FPSWA, Tu	MKE - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Sa
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	67	2/21	FPSWA, Tu	MKE
COMMON GRACKLE:	15	1/22	FPSWA, Tu	JPo - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	1	2/25	Hampton Twp., Ba	CS
PURPLE FINCH:	25	1/12	TPSP, lo	RAE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa
HOUSE FINCH:	52	12/19	Tittabawassee Twp., Sa	JZ - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:	2	1/8	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS
COMMON REDPOLL:	63	1/16	Baldwin Twp., lo	JR - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Tu
HOARY REDPOLL:	1	1/15	TPSP, lo	PO

PINE SISKIN:

500

1/30

Baldwin Twp., Io

RAE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu



Pine Siskins occurred in all seven SBA counties this winter, and many a bird feeder was graced by these finches. Then again, "graced" may be an inappropriate description of life among Pine Siskins at a bird feeder. This image taken by Doug Jackson offers a glimpse of chaos and aggression.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:

400+

2/14

Verona SGA, Hu

JB - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu

EVENING GROSBEAK:

8

2/18

Plainfield Twp., Io

JMS

HOUSE SPARROW:

30

1/8

FPSWA, Tu

MKE - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa

TOTAL: 128 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.

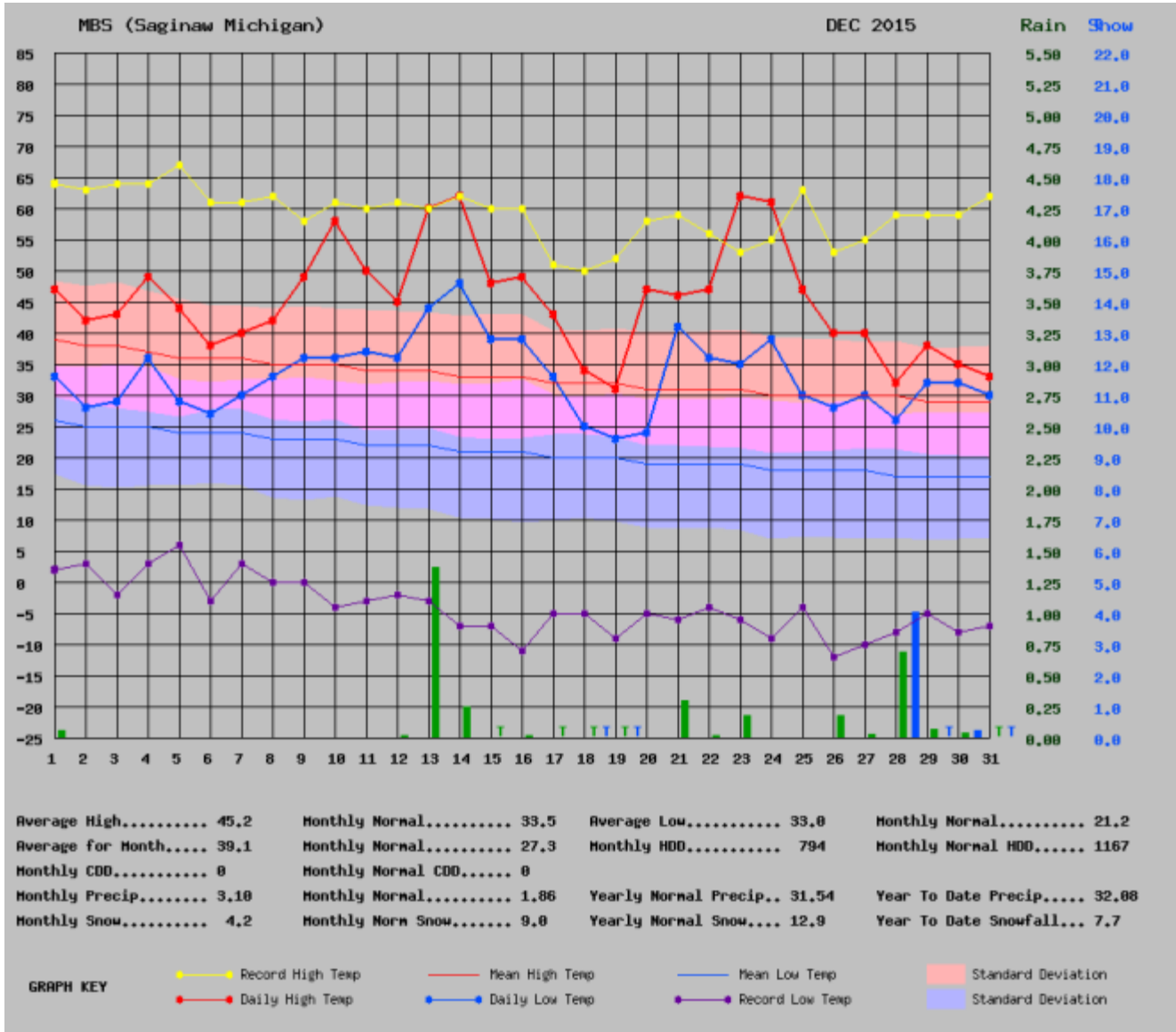
Observer Key:

LMA	Larry M. Abraham	MN	Mike Nelson
IB	Irene Besancon	PO	Phil Odum
JB	Jeff Buecking	DP	Debbie Parker
SB	Sam Burkhardt	JP	Joe Parker
AB	Aaron Boone	DJP	David J. Peters
EC	Ed Cole	JPo	John Porath
SD	Sue Duncan	PR	Peggy Ridgeway
DD	Dan Duso	JR	Jane Ruster
RMD	Ryan M. Dziedzic	CS	Craig Schafer
RAE	Roger A. Eriksson	TS	Toni Shawl
MKE	Monica K. Essenmacher	WWS	Wayne W. Shawl
MH	Matt Hegwood	JMS	Joseph M. Soehnel
TH	Tom Hince	VT	Val Trabucchi
DLJ	Doug L. Jackson	JEV	Jim E. VanAllen
ML	Mike Ladenburger	LV	Larry VanWagoner
SL	Stan Lilley	JZa	Jared Zaporski
JM	John McCoy	JZ	Jerry Ziarno

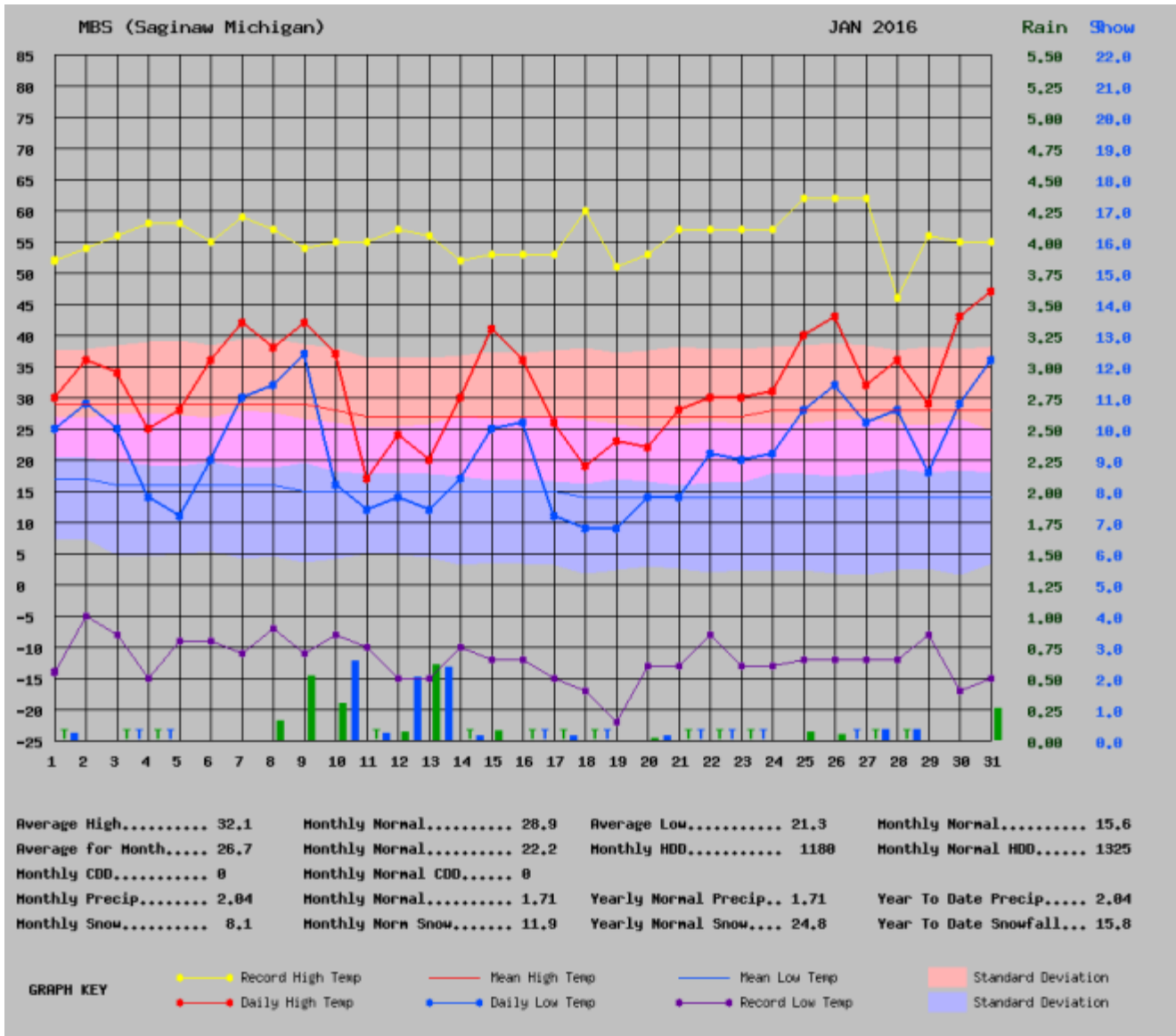
Abbreviations:

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

December, 2015 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



January, 2016 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



February, 2016 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)

