

## BIRDS IN THE SAGINAW BAY AREA

**Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 thru Feb 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

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**Summary:** A total of **121** species from the Michigan Bird List were reported this winter. While below last winter's all time record, this number is still above the long-term average, the fourteenth consecutive year that this has occurred. 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. The species order of listing has changed this period, so as to remain consistent with the MBRC Michigan Checklist, which was updated 26 Nov 2016, based upon the AOU *Check-list of North American Birds* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.) and its supplements. Overall, observer coverage could be rated as average, and sufficient in terms of county and species representation. Winter may be the season with prevailing bird life most routinely influenced by weather. Overall, winter 2016-2017 temperatures were much above average in Michigan (7<sup>th</sup> warmest out of 122 years). As the National Weather Service daily plots for Saginaw at the tail end of this report illustrate, December started out above average before dropping to below mid-month, then rebounded to middle / middle high. January's temps went through several of the radical bounces to the extreme. February's average temperature was much above normal, (it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest average February for the U.S. as a whole, at 41.16F, eclipsed only by February 1930, at 41.41F, (but note that 2017 was only 5 degrees above trend, whereas 1930 was 7.5 degrees above trend). While above average February temperatures didn't noticeably influence all species, it did account for widespread early arrival of waterfowl and blackbirds to the SBA, as well as two new SBA spring early arrival dates. Seasonal snowfall totals for Saginaw were below average, but the precipitation story doesn't end there, because there was an above average amount of rain, (indeed more days of rain than of snow).

*This report, as well as previous seasonal reports from 2000-2016, can be found at <http://www.saginawbaybirding.org>, along with updates on spring 2017 migration in the Saginaw Bay Area, as reported to Joe Soehnel at [saginawbaybirding@gmail.com](mailto: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.*

<b>Species</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Observers / Comment</b>
GRTR WHITE-FRONTD GOOSE:	5	2/26	FPSWA, Tu	CS - also noted in Sa
SNOW GOOSE:	44	2/26	FPSWA, Tu	MN - also note in Ba,Mi,Sa
ROSS'S GOOSE:	1	2/27 - 2/28	FPSWA, Tu	JMS,MKE
CAACKLING GOOSE:	8	12/9	Linwood, Ba	MKE - also noted in Hu,Tu
CANADA GOOSE:	10046	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi
MUTE SWAN:	82	1/14	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,JP - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
TRUMPETER SWAN:	49	12/14	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
TUNDRA SWAN:	534	12/8	Pinconning Park, Ba	MKE - also noted in Hu,Sa,Tu
WOOD DUCK:	1	1/7	Middlegrounds, Ba	JMS,CS - also noted in Sa
GADWALL:	314	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
AMERICAN WIGEON:	46	2/27	FPSWA, Tu	JMS - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	162	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
MALLARD:	10413	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	193	12/2	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Tu
NORTHERN PINTAIL:	318	2/22	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	408	12/2	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Mi,Tu
CANVASBACK:	5	2/22	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba
REDHEAD:	3500	12/12	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
RING-NECKED DUCK:	236	2/22	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Mi
GREATER SCAUP:	1400	12/9	BCSRA, Ba	MKE - also noted in Io,Mi
LESSER SCAUP:	13	1/2	MCV pond, Mi	JZ,SL - also noted in Mi,Sa
SCAUP SP:	70	12/16	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,MW - also noted in Io
HARLEQUIN DUCK:	1	thru 12/14	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE,SB
SURF SCOTER:	1	12/9	BCSRA, Ba	MKE
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	41	12/9	BCSRA, Ba	MKE - also noted in Io
BLACK SCOTER:	1	12/9	BCSRA, Ba	MKE - also noted in

LONG-TAILED DUCK:	150+	2/19	TPSP, lo	JB - also noted in Ba
BUFFLEHEAD:	40	12/22	Tawas Bay, lo	SB - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	1400	1/14	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,JP - also noted in Ar,Hu,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
HOODED MERGANSER:	98	12/10	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
COMMON MERGANSER:	2762	12/16	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,MW - also noted in Hu,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	167	12/22	Tawas Bay, lo	SB - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi
RUDDY DUCK:	85	12/5	Dow Ponds, Mi	JZ - also noted in Ba
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	6	1/1	Warren Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
RUFFED GROUSE:	5	1/1	Geneva Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,lo,Tu
WILD TURKEY:	131	1/30	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Tu
PIED-BILLED GREBE:	9	1/1	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,MW - also noted in lo,Mi,Sa
RED-NECKED GREBE:	1	12/29	Port Austin, Hu	MKE
ROCK PIGEON:	58	1/30	Spaulding Twp., Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
MOURNING DOVE:	112	1/14	Au Gres Twp., Ar	CS - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN COOT:	24	12/31	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in lo,Mi,Tu
SANDHILL CRANE:	1516	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
KILLDEER:	1	<b>2/19</b>	TPSP, lo	JB - first date - <b>new SBA spring early date</b>
	4	2/21	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Tu
AMERICAN WOODCOCK:	2	<b>2/21</b>	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - first date, here and in Mi (ME) - <b>new SBA spring early date</b>
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	628	12/10	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in lo,Sa,Tu
	3	1/2	MCV pond, Mi	JZ,SL - last date
RING-BILLED GULL:	4806	12/2	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
HERRING GULL:	1632	12/14	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
THAYER'S GULL:	1	12/22	Tawas Bay, lo	SB
ICELAND GULL:	1	12/14	Tawas Bay, lo	SB - also noted in Ba
LESSER BLCK-BACKED GULL:	3	12/12	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba
GLAUCOUS GULL:	6	1/14	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,JP - also noted in Ar,Hu,lo,Sa
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	24	1/27	Linwood, Ba	MKE - also noted in Ar,Hu,lo,Sa

DOUBLE-CRSTD CORMORANT:	27	12/16	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - also noted in Mi
GREAT BLUE HERON:	44	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ba,Mi
BLK-CROWND NIGHT-HERON:	2	2/19	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS - first date
TURKEY VULTURE:	1	1/10	Monitor Twp., Ba	DJP - also noted in Tu
BALD EAGLE:	84	1/14	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,JP - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN HARRIER:	6	112/2	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	12/3	Beaver Twp., Ba	MKE - also noted in Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
COOPER'S HAWK:	2	12/16	Kochville Twp., Sa	CS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	2	12/17	Greendale Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Sa,Tu



***Doug Jackson photo shoots were fewer this winter, but he still managed to produce some stunning images of birds on the wing, such as the Red-shouldered Hawk, at Forest Lake in Arenac County .***

RED-TAILED HAWK:	8	1/1	Geneva Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Sa,Tu
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	7	1/15	Au Gres Twp., Ar	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
GOLDEN EAGLE:	1	12/23	Kawkawlin Twp., Ba	MKE - also noted in Mi,Sa,Tu

EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	2	1/1	Geneva Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Tu
GREAT HORNED OWL:	2	1/1	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Sa
SNOWY OWL:	5	1/13	Gilford Twp., Tu	JMS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Sa
BARRED OWL:	1	12/29	Beaver Twp., Ba	MKE - also noted in Io,Tu



***It doesn't get much better than this.  
The unexpected encounter is birdwatching at its best,  
and Roger Eriksson's image of that encounter, in Baldwin Twp., Iosco Co., is bird photography at its best.***

LONG-EARED OWL:	5	12/10	SNWR, Sa	CS - also note in Io
SHORT-EARED OWL:	2	12/9	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Mi
BELTED KINGFISHER:	2	12/16	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,MW - also noted in Mi,Sa
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER:	1	1/31	PCSP, Hu	MKE
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	15	1/2	Midland area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
DOWNY WOODPECKER:	20	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	11	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu



NORTHERN FLICKER:	6	12/6	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Tu
PILEATED WOODPECKER:	3	1/2	Midland area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Sa
AMERICAN KESTREL:	4	12/9	Beaver Twp., Ba	MKE - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
MERLIN:	1	12/20	Meade Twp., Hu	MKE - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
PEREGRINE FALCON:	1	12/12	Bay City, Ba	CS - also noted in Tu
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	2	1/31	FPSWA, Tu	MKE - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa
BLUE JAY:	10	12/15	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
AMERICAN CROW:	2442	12/28	Saginaw, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
COMMON RAVEN:	2	1/1	Cooke Dam area, Io	WWS - also noted in Ar,Mi
HORNED LARK:	62	2/19	TPSP, Io	JB - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:	205	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
TUFTED TITMOUSE:	38	1/2	Midland area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	5	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	WWS - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	23	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
BROWN CREEPER:	4	2/11	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi
CAROLINA WREN:	1	12/11 - 1/13	Midland, Mi	JZ
WINTER WREN:	1	2/27	FPSWA, Tu	JMS
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	4	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	10	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Io,Sa,Tu
HERMIT THRUSH:	1	12/20	Port Austin Twp., Hu	JMS,RMD
AMERICAN ROBIN:	112	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Tu
GRAY CATBIRD:	1	12/20	Hume Twp., Hu	TH
EUROPEAN STARLING:	482	12/20	Port Austin Twp., Hu	JMS,RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	60+	2/5	Alabaster Twp., Io	JRC - also noted in
CEDAR WAXWING:	233	1/19	TPSP, Io	JB - also noted in Hu,Mi
HOUSE SPARROW:	72	12/20	Port Austin Twp., Hu	JMS,RMD - also noted in Ba,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN PIPIT:	1	12/17	TPSP, Io	MM

HOUSE FINCH:	55	12/11	Kochville Twp., Sa	CS - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
PURPLE FINCH:	8	1/18	Tawas City area, lo	JB - also noted in Mi
COMMON REDPOLL:	45	12/20	Chandler/Meade Twp., Hu	MKE - also noted in Ba
PINE SISKIN:	5	12/10	Cooke Dam are, lo	WWS - also noted in
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:	150	12/2	Columbia Twp., Tu	AC - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Sa
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	8	1/5	Jasper Twp., Mi	RMD - also noted in Hu,lo,Tu
SNOW BUNTING:	2040	12/10	Columbia Twp., Tu	AC - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Mi,Sa
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:	1	1/10	Midland, Mi	MH
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	108	12/2	SNWR, Sa	JMS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,lo,Tu
CHIPPING SPARROW:	1	12/20	Port Austin Twp., Hu	JMS,RMD
SONG SPARROW:	5	2/28	FPSWA, Tu	MKE - also noted in Ba,lo,Sa
SWAMP SPARROW:	1	2/8	AuGres River mouth, Ar	MKE
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:	1	1/28	Monitor Twp., Ba	MN - also noted in Hu,Sa
DARK-EYED JUNCO:	62	12/22	Au Sable SF area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN CARDINAL:	54	1/2	Midland area, Mi	RMD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
*BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK:	1	12/17 - 12/20	Harbor Beach, Hu	JM - <b>1<sup>st</sup> SBA record - 1<sup>st</sup> Hu Record</b> - photographed - pending MBRC acceptance. In his book <i>Birds and Bird Finding in the Saginaw Bay Area</i> , Ron Weeks cites a Black-headed Grosbeak record from East Tawas on May 23, 1982 (Mouw, AB 36, JPW60). He indicates that no details are known. Lacking any known documentation, this record has not been reviewed by MBRC, and so does not meet the criteria required for SBA records of review species.



***John McCoy had a very rare visitor to his feeders in Harbor Beach, Huron Co. this winter. If accepted by The MBRC, this will be the first officially recognized Black-headed Grosbeak record for the SBA, and only the second for Michigan.***

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	500+	2/26	FPSWA, Tu	MN - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	1	2/17	Hampton Twp., Ba	JMS - first date
	100+	2/26	FPSWA, Tu	MN - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa
COMMON GRACKLE:	89	2/28	FPSWA, Ba	MKE - also noted in Hu,Sa
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	68	12/11	Kochville Twp., Sa	CS - also noted in Ba,Io,Tu

**TOTAL: 121 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.



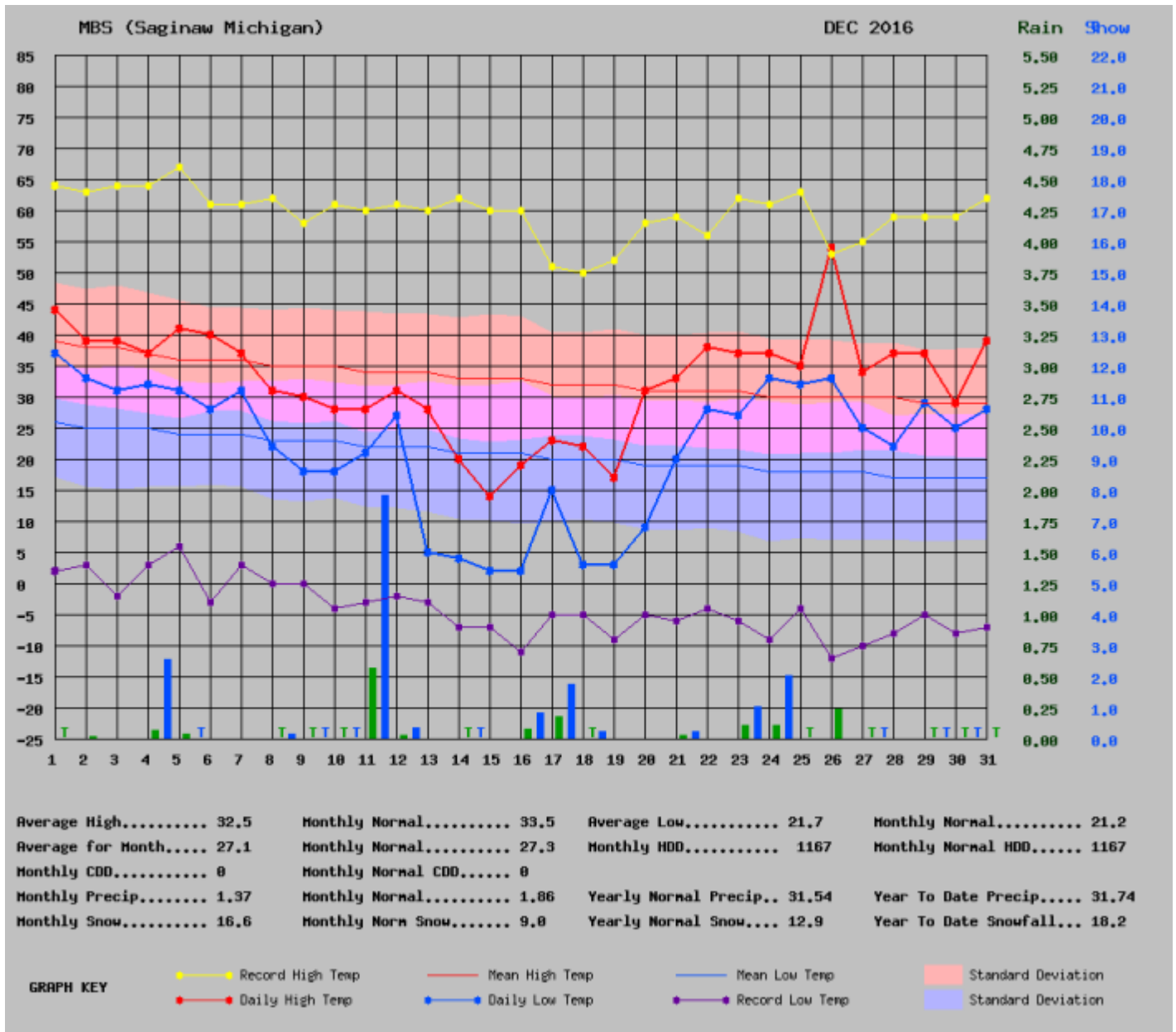
**Observer Key:**

JB	Jason Bojczck	MM	Moria Maus
SB	Sam Burkhardt	JM	John McCoy
AC	Allen Chartier	MN	Mike Nelson
JRC	James R. Clark	DJP	David J. Peters
RMD	Ryan M. Dziedzic	JP	John Porath
ME	Melissa Eddy	CS	Craig Schafer
RAE	Roger A. Eriksson	WWS	Wayne W. Shawl
MKE	Monica K. Essenmacher	JMS	Joseph M. Soehnel
MH	Mic Hamas	JEV	Jim E. VanAllen
TH	Tom Hince	MW	Myles Willard
SL	Stan Lilley	JZ	Jerry Ziarno

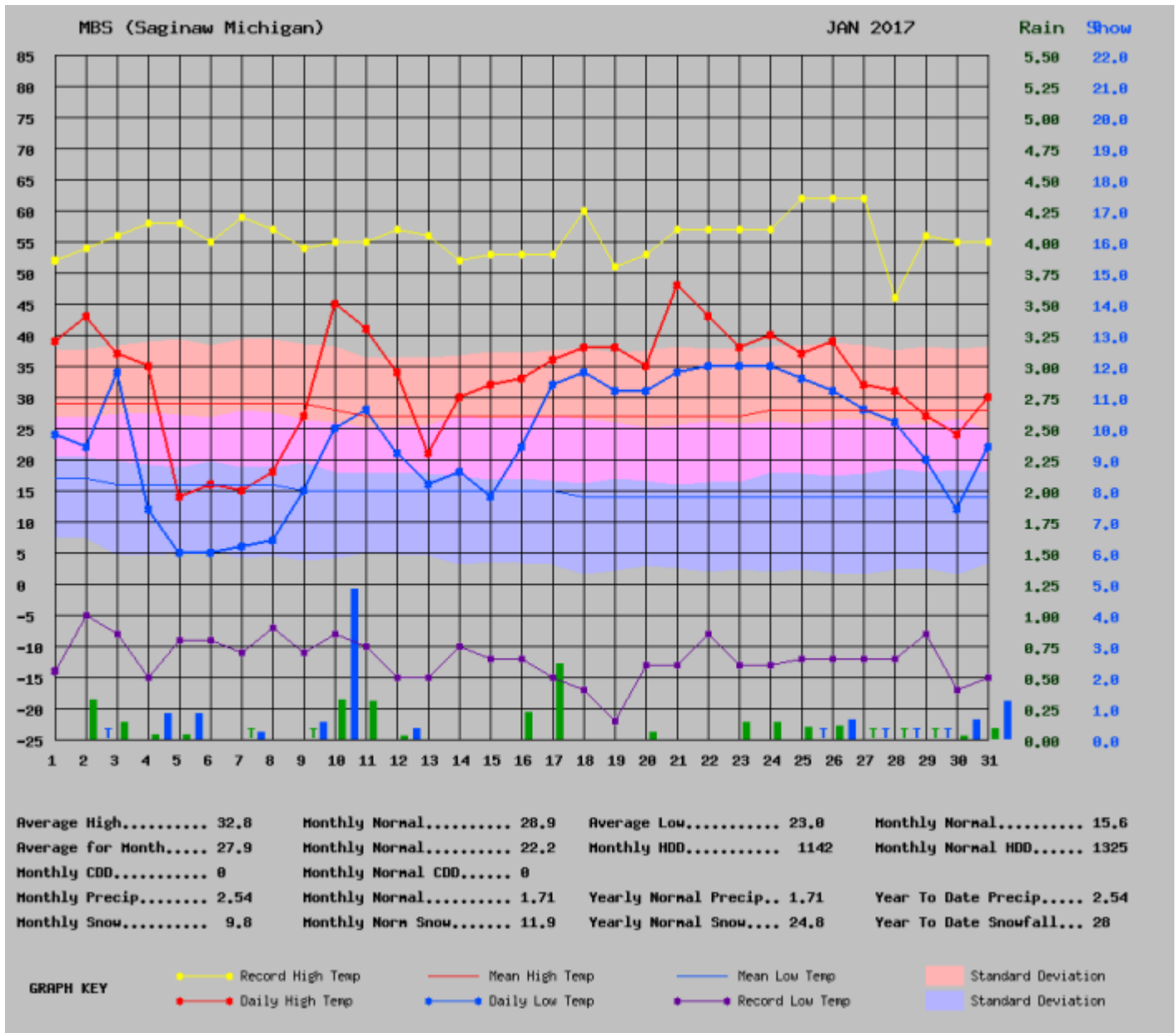
**Abbreviations:**

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
FPSWA	Fish Point State Wildlife Area	SBB.org	SaginawBayBirding.org
		SNWR	Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge
Hu	Huron County	SF	State Forest
Io	Iosco County	TPSP	Tawas Point State Park
MBRC	Michigan Bird Records Committee	tp	throughout the entire, or entire remainder, of the period
MCV	Midland Cogeneration Venture	Tu	Tuscola County

## December, 2016 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



## January, 2017 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



## February, 2017 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)

