

BIRDS IN THE SAGINAW BAY AREA

Dec 1, 1990 through Feb 28, 1991

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Summary: The "bird of the year" may have already appeared! A fine male, gray-crowned **Rosy Finch** appeared at Tom Beachy's feeder in Huron County, but only stayed for 4 days. However, it appeared regularly during this time and was seen by many local birders. This is only the 2nd Michigan record. Huron County also scored with an immature male **King Elder** which was observed closely and photographed at Port Austin, but was only seen on one day. This is the 4th SBA record. The Saginaw River again attracted gulls and gull-watchers in the New Year; this year's haul included 2 **Thayer's** and 3 **Iceland Gulls**, all magnificently photographed by Rod Planck. **Glaucous** numbers seemed lower however. Last fall's **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was seen at the beginning of December but did not linger. Raptors were few in numbers with reports of **Snowy Owls** down for the 2nd year and **Rough-legs** also being fewer. **Bald Eagles** however were seen frequently - there are probably 20 - 30 wintering in the SBA.

Best duck numbers were 1,943 **Black Ducks** at Shiawassee. Single records of **Short-eared Owl**, **Bohemian Waxwings** and **Carolina Wren** added to a good winter. A few unusual birds lingered into December; **Red-necked Grebe**, **Surf Scoter**, **Black-bellied Plover**, **Brown Thrasher**, **Swamp Sparrow**. These boosted the seasonal total to a record 102 species.

Note: complete CBC data can be obtained from Gene Kenaga (Midland) or Ron Weeks (Bay City). I have included some of the highlights.

REPORTS

COMMON LOON:				
1	12/2	Tawas Pt., Io	RW	
HORNED GREBE:				
2	12/2	Tawas Bay, Io	RW	
RED-NECKED GREBE:				
1	12/2	Tawas Pt., Io	RW	A late record.
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:				
5 max.	tp	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, RW, MW et al	
GREAT BLUE HERON:				
37	12/13	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	Noted thru 1/23
9	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba	MO	
1	12/28	Lake Twp., Hu	CBC	
BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON:				
6	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba		2 noted through 1/5 at Karn Plant.
TUNDRA SWAN:				
18	2/12	Pinconning, Ba	G&EP	
50	12/5	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS	
25	12/22	Quannocasssee, Tu	MV	
1	12/27	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	
MUTE SWAN:				
2	1/19 tp	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW	
SNOW GOOSE:				
1	12/9	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW	Blue phase.
CANADA GOOSE:				
10,309	12/13	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	7-8,000 thru Feb
118	1/5-19	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, MW	The small Richardson's race
419	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi		
WOOD DUCK:				
1	2/22	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:				
1	12/15	Tobico, Ba	BCCBC	
1	1/5	Karn Plant, Ba	R&MP	
BLACK DUCK:				
1,943	12/13	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	~200 present tp.
Common tp at Midland, Mi and Karn Plant, Ba (25 max).				
MALLARD:				
4,043	12/13	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	~100 present tp.
NORTHERN PINTAIL:				
1	12/25-1/1	Saginaw R., Ba	R&MP	
3	2/22	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	
NORTHERN SHOVELER:				
1	12/13	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	
2	12/29	MCV, Mi	Midland CBC	
1	2/25	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW, EK	
GADWALL:				
4	12/6	Karn Plant, Ba	R&MP, LD, RW	
CANVASBACK:				
1	12/25-1/5	Saginaw R., Ba	R&MP, RW	
1	1/19	Karn Plant, Ba	JS	
REDHEAD:				
1	12/25-1/5	Saginaw R., Ba	R&MP, RW, JS	
RING-NECKED DUCK:				
2	12/26	Saginaw R., Ba	JS	
1	12/9	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW	
2	12/29 tp	Dow Ponds, Mi	Midland CBC, RW	
GREATER SCAUP:				
1	1/5	Saginaw R., Ba	R&MP, RW	
LESSER SCAUP:				
2-3	12/5-9	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW	
1	1/5-7	Saginaw R., Ba	R&MP, RW	
1	1/19	Karn Plant, Ba	JS	

SCAUP SP.:

1	2/21	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW
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KING EIDER:

1	12/9	Port Austin, Hu	ME	photographed; closely observed.
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This brief visit by an immature male is only the 4th SBA record (the last was in Jan 89).

OLDSQUAW:

5	12/2	Tawas Pt., Io	RW
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2	12/2	Au Gres, Ar	RW
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15	1/19	Oak Beach, Hu	ME	A high number for mid-winter.
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SURF SCOTER:

1	12/9	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW	Presumably last fall's lingering bird.
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COMMON GOLDENEYE:

150 max	tp	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW
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200 max	Jan	Saginaw R., Ba	TW
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150	2/17	Iargo Springs, Io	TW, RW
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BUFFLEHEAD:

35	12/2	Tawas Pt., Io	RW
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1-2 noted in Sa, Ba, Mi, Hu and Io; only one Jan record (Ba).

HOODED MERGANSER:

4	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba	
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7	12/13	Grindstone City, Hu	ME
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1-3	12/25-1/7	Saginaw R., Ba	R&MP, JS
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COMMON MERGANSER:

3003	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba	
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464	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi	
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Low count.

High count, wintering in MCV.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:

10	12/26	Karn Plant, Ba	JS
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1	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi	
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10	1/12	Saginaw R., Ba	TW, RW
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1	2/17	Oscoda, Io	RW, TW
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New bird for count.

RUDDY DUCK:

1	12/5	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW
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1	12/5	Karn Plant, Ba	
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BALD EAGLE:

13 max	tp	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP, BG	Maximum of 13 seen on 12/27
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2-3	tp	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, SM, MW, JL
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2 ad.	1/12	Saginaw R., Ba	RW, TW
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3 (2 ad.)	2/2	MCV, Mi	RW, VT
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2 ad.	2/17	Tawas City, Io	TW, RW
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1	1/1	Chippewa NC, Mi	JS
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Pair attempting to nest again in Bay Co. The same pair attempted last year but were unsuccessful.

Dave Best of the USF&WS had the single addled egg analyzed. PCBs were 12 times over the level that would allow successful embryo development and the level of ppDDE 8.5 times higher and Dieldrin 4.5 times higher.

NORTHERN HARRIER:

1-2 noted in Io, Hu, Mi, Tu

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK

1	1/7	Bay City, Ba	R&MP
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1	1/19	Saginaw, Sa	DP
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COOPER'S HAWK:

Regular sightings tp in Mi, Ba, Hu, Tu.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK

1	12/13	Chippewa NC, Mi	CF
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1	2/28	Midland Co.	JL
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RED-TAILED HAWK:

Regular sightings tp in Io, Mi, Ba, Tu, Sa, Hu.

12	1/10	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
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15	2/9	Bay Co.	JL
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ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:

1-2	12/4,27;2/8	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP, BG
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1	12/1	Port Crescent SP, Hu	ME
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1	12/22	Karn Plant, Ba	MW
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1	2/17	S. of Hale, Io	TW, RW
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1	2/24	Quanicassee, Tu	JS
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3 tp Tuscola Co. MW

AMERICAN KESTREL:

Good numbers on CBCs; (35, Bay City CBC; 36, Midland); numbers also up in Hu and Tu.

RING-NECKED PHEASANT:

12 2/25 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP
13 1/27 Kingston, Tu MW Also in Ba.

RUFFED GROUSE:

1-2 noted in Mi, lo, Tu.

WILD TURKEY:

Noted in Mi, lo

BOBWHITE:

1 12/29 Midland CBC, Mi Coming to a suburban feeder!
1 12/14 Caro, Tu MW
2 2/21 Fish Point, Tu MW

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER:

1 12/1 Hampton Park, Ba JS Quite late.

DUNLIN:

2 12/2 Hampton Park, Ba

KILLDEER:

1 12/8-13 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

BONAPARTE'S GULL:

1000 12/3 Pt. Austin, Hu MW
468 12/15 Bay City CBC, Ba
6 12/25 Saginaw R., Ba R&MP Last date.

RING-BILLED GULL:

Numbers dwindled to a handful on the Saginaw R. in Jan. First returns around 2/8.

HERRING GULL:

1,698 12/27 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP
Common (1-3,000) on Saginaw R. until freezeup during the second week of January. At least 2, perhaps 3, hybrid gulls were on the river in Jan; 1 ad and 1 1w Glaucous x Herring types and a strange pale 1w bird of uncertain parentage with pale wings and striking head pattern.

THAYER'S GULL:

1 1w 1/4-6 Saginaw R., Ba R&MP, RW, MW
1 2w 1/5-7 Saginaw R., Ba R&MP

Both birds were well photographed by Rod Planck in "classic" plumages (cf. hybrids above).

ICELAND GULL:

1-3 ad 1/2-6 Saginaw R., Ba R&MP, JS, RW, MW, TW

All birds seen this year were adult (no first winters, usually the predominant age). One of these birds had almost pure white primaries approaching *L.g. glaucoides*, rather than typical *kumlieni*.

GLAUCOUS GULL:

7 max. 12/25-1/13 Saginaw R., Ba R&MP, MO Lower numbers than in recent years.
5 max. 12/15-2/9 Huron Co. ME
1 12/9 Dow Ponds, Mi RW Rare inland.
2 2/25 Harbor Beach, Hu RW, EK

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:

1 12/1 Bay City SP, Ba R&MP, MW Last fall's bird lingering on.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:

15 12/2 Tawas Pt., lo RW
11 12/15 Bay City CBC, Ba
10 12/1 Saginaw R., Ba MW
3 max Dec-Jan Saginaw R., Ba MO
6 2/25 Harbor Beach, Hu RW, EK

ROCK DOVE:

Common through period.

MOURNING DOVE:

Common through period.

EASTERN SCREECH OWL:

1 12/28 Port Austin, Hu MW
3 20/2 Mayville, Tu MW
1 12/20, 1/15 Midland, Mi RA

Reported from Midland and Bay City CBCs.

GREAT HORNED OWL:

Noted in Mi, Ba, Tu, Hu, Sa. Nesting at traditional locations by I-675 in Saginaw and US-10 near Auburn.

SNOWY OWL:

1	12/2	Au Gres, Ar	RW
3	Dec-Feb	Tuscola Co.	MW, JS
1	Dec-Jan	Owendale, Hu	per ME

Scarce again this winter, none at Karn Plant.

BARRED OWL:

Heard in Midland (KK).

SHORT-EARED OWL:

1	12/7	nr. Fillion, Hu	per ME	Injured bird with broken wing.
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BELTED KINGFISHER:

Noted at Karn Plant and on Saginaw R., Ba in Dec and Jan.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:

Scattered sightings through period in Sa, Mi, Tu.

DOWNY WOODPECKER:

Common through period.

HAIRY WOODPECKER:

Scattered sightings through period in Mi, Tu, Sa, Io, Ba.

NORTHERN FLICKER:

1	Jan	Midland, Mi	EK
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PILEATED WOODPECKER:

1	12/2	Chippewa NC, Mi	CF
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HORNED LARK:

100+	2/24	Pinnebog, Hu	ME
200	2/26	Fish Pt, Tu	JS

Usual Feb influx

BLUE JAY:

Common through period.

AMERICAN CROW:

Common through period.

COMMON RAVEN:

1	12/28	Lumberman's Monument, Tu	JS
2	2/17	W. of Wilber, Io	RW, TW

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:

Common through period.

TUFTED TITMOUSE:

Common through period in Mi, Ba, Tu, Hu, Sa.

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:

Scattered sightings through period, Tu, Hu, Sa.

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:

Common through period.

BROWN CREEPER:

7	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba	
10	2/23	Oak Grove, Ba	JS

New high for count.

CAROLINA WREN:

1	12/26-1/14	Pt. Austin, Hu	per ME
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GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:

6	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba	
10	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi	

New high for count.

AMERICAN ROBIN:

Recorded on both CBCs; scattered sightings in Dec.

2	2/8-19	Saginaw, Sa	ME
1	2/25	Whiskey Harbor, Hu	RW, EK

BROWN THRASHER:

1	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi	
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BOHEMIAN WAXWING:

30	12/28	Tawas Pt, Io	JS
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CEDAR WAXWING:

Scattered sightings through period.

NORTHERN SHRIKE:

8	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi	
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Scattered sightings through period in Mi, Ba, Tu, Hu, Io, Sa (7 in N Huron Co., ME).

EUROPEAN STARLING:

Common through period.

NORTHERN CARDINAL:

Common through period.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:

Scattered sightings through period; numbers still down.

SONG SPARROW:

2	12/8	Bay City SP, Ba	RP, LD	
4	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba		
1-4	Dec-Jan	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP	
1	2/24	Quanicassee, Tu	JS	Singing.

SWAMP SPARROW:

1	12/1	Bay City SP, Ba	RP, LD
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WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:

1	12/29	Midland CBC, Mi	
1	tp	Chippewa NC, Mi	JL
1	1/19	Vassar, Tu	MH

DARK-EYED JUNCO:

Common through period, perhaps fewer than usual.

SNOW BUNTING:

Common early in period, but scarcer in January and February; flocks of up to 300 noted.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR:

1	2/16	Quanicassee, Tu	MH
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RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:

1	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba	
1	2/25	Fish Pt, Tu	JS, RW, EK
1	2/28	Sebawaing, Hu	TB

COMMON GRACKLE:

1	12/1	Karn Plant, Ba	RW, MW
10	tp	Hampton Twp, , Ba	JS

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:

1000+	12/13	Essexville, Ba	JS	
171	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba		New high for count.
4	2/25	Fish Point, Tu	RW, EK	
25	tp	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS	

ROSY FINCH*:

1	2/24-27	Pigeon, Hu	TB, MW, MO
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A male Gray-crowned. This is only the 2nd Michigan record and the 1st for the SBA.

PURPLE FINCH:

Scattered sightings through period; generally low numbers.

HOUSE FINCH:

Common through period; lo, Hu, Mi, Ba, Sa.

PINE SISKIN:

Only records were a few noted in Hu (ME, MW).

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:

Common through period.

EVENING GROSBEAK:

21 max	12/1-28	Oak Beach, Hu	ME
5	1/4	Saginaw, Sa	DP

HOUSE SPARROW:

Common through period.

TOTAL: 102 species

[I received a few verbal confirmations of Nighthawk sightings for Fall 90, therefore this species should be added to the seasonal total]

OTHER RECORDS OUTSIDE THE SBA:

COMMON LOON:

1	Sault Ste. Marie	RP
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GLAUCOUS GULL:

4	12/19	Dafter Landfill, Chippewa	RP
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GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:

2	2/9	Squaw Bay, Alpena	RP
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MERLIN:

1	12/19	Sault Ste. Marie	RP
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GYR FALCON:

1 gray ad	12/19	Sault Ste. Marie	RP	
1 gray imm	12/20	M-28/I-75, Chippewa	RP	
1 gray imm	12/22	Sault Ste. Marie	RP	
1 dark ad	1/31	Sault Ste. Marie	RP	
2	1/26	Sault Ste. Marie	RP	1 dark ad, other unknown
1	2/10	Sault Ste. Marie	MW	

SNOWY OWL

3	1/21	Hubbard Lake, Alpena	RP
2	1/24	Squaw Bay, Alpena	RP

BARRED OWL:

1	2/16-18	Sault Ste. Marie	RP
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GREAT GRAY OWL:

1		Sault Ste. Marie	RP
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NORTHERN HAWK OWL:

1	1/13	Sault Ste. Marie	RP
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GRAY JAY:

1	1/13	Highway 123, N of Eckerman	RP
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SNOW BUNTING:

2000	12/20	M-28, W of I-75	RP
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LAPLAND LONGSPUR:

25	12/20	M-28, W of I-75	RP
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RED CROSSBILL:

75	1/13	Whitefish Pt	RP
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OBSERVERS:

RA	Ron Annelin
LD	Louis Dombrowski
TB	Tom Beachy
ME	Monica Essenmacher
CF	Chip Francke
BG	Bob Grefe
MH	Mark & Joanne Hubinger
EK	Eugene Kenaga
JL	Janea Little
SM	Stan Madziar
MO	Many Observers
DP	David Peters
G&EP	Glenn & Ellen Peterson
R&MP	Rod & Marlene Planck
JS	Joe Soehnel
VT	Val Trabucchi
TW	Terry Walsh
RW	Ron Weeks
MW	Myles Willard

ABBREVIATIONS

•	Pending acceptance by the Michigan Bird Records Committee
Ba	Bay County
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
Hu	Huron County
Io	Iosco County
MCV Pond	Midland Cogeneration Venture Pond (formerly Consumer's Pond)
Mi	Midland County
NC	Nature Center
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
Sa	Saginaw County
SBA	Saginaw Bay Area
SL	Sewage Lagoons
SP	State Park
Tu	Tuscola County