

BIRDS IN THE SAGINAW BAY AREA

December 1, 1991 thru February 29, 1992

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Summary: The spotlight this season was on the Saginaw River. Record numbers and exceptional diversity highlighted a spectacular winter for gulls in Bay City. The most impressive find of the season was a **Mew Gull** seen and photographed by Myles Willard. This would represent only the third state record if accepted by the Michigan Bird Records Committee. Also impressive was the presence of two **Black-legged Kittiwakes**, two adult **Lesser Black-backed Gulls**, six **Thayer's Gulls**, and at least five **Iceland (Kumlien's) Gulls**. Single day counts of up to 15,000 **Herring Gulls**, 1,000 **Bonaparte's Gulls**, 38 **Great Black-backed Gulls**, and an amazing 75 **Glaucous Gulls** added to the excitement.

Other notable birds seen during the period included an immature **Golden Eagle**, **Bohemian Waxwings**, and a **Yellow-rumped Warbler**. Notable counts of some of the more common species included 113 **Great Blue Herons** and 22 **Bald Eagles** at Shiawassee, 40 **Great Black-backed Gulls** at Au Gres, and an even dozen **Ravens** at Loud Dam Pond in Iosco County.

Waterfowl were well represented with **American Wigeon**, **Northern Shoveler**, and **Ruddy Duck** among the more interesting of the lingerers. Good numbers of **Snowy Owls** and **Rough-legged Hawks** were seen at times with raptor numbers in general lower than average. Winter finches were represented by only a handful of sightings until February when a few **Redpolls** started to show up at feeders.

The species total for the period was 99. Absent during the period were **Black-crowned Night Heron** and **Red-shouldered Hawk**.

REPORTS

HORNED GREBE:

1 12/1 Harbor Beach, Hu RW

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:

6 thru 1/25 Karn Plant, Ba mo Noted on Bay City CBC.

GREAT BLUE HERON:

113 12/2 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP Impressive winter count.
5 12/14 Bay City CBC One on Midland CBC.

6 1/8 Karn Plant, Ba JS

Seen through period at Shiawassee NWR, Sa.

[BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON: no reports]

TUNDRA SWAN:

1650 12/1 Wildfowl Bay, Hu RW

22 12/2 Shiawassee NWR, Sa BG

1 12/4 Karn Plant, Ba JS

12 1/22 Eagle Bay, Hu ME

MUTE SWAN:

2 1/12 Au Gres, Ar MW, RW

10 1/25 Karn Plant, Ba RW, MW Three lingered until 2/12.

SNOW GOOSE:

1 12/1 Eagle Bay, Hu RW

3 12/1 Filion Rd, Hu RW

5 2/27 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

Greater Snow Goose still at SNWR, Sa into January. Species present through period there.

CANADA GOOSE:

Common through period.

2003 12/21 Midland CBC

3200 1/28 MCV Pond, Mi RW

15818 12/2 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP Peak count.

GREEN-WINGED TEAL:

1 12/20 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:

Common through period at usual locations. Peak of 1,961 on 12/2 at Shiawassee NWR, Sa (DP).

MALLARD:

Common through period at usual locations. Peak of 11,595 on 12/2 at Shiawassee NWR, Sa (DP).

NORTHERN PINTAIL:

1 thru 12/21 Dow Ponds, Mi RW Seen on Midland CBC.

1, 3 12/26, 3/21 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

33 2/27 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

NORTHERN SHOVELER:

2 12/27 tp Dow Ponds, Mi RW

GADWALL:

Noted through period at Karn Plant, Ba. Maximum of 12 on 2/12 (RW).

AMERICAN WIGEON:

1 12/1-7 Harbor Beach, Hu RW, MW

CANVASBACK:

7 12/14 Bay City CBC, Ba

1 12/28-1/26 Middle Grounds, Ba RW et al

1 1/1 Karn Plant, Ba RW

REDHEAD:

1 1/19-26 Middle Grounds, Ba KT, RW

RING-NECKED DUCK:

1 12/27-tp Dow Ponds, Mi RW

GREATER SCAUP:

1 1/19 Karn Plant, Ba JS

3 2/27 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

LESSER SCAUP:

1 1/4 Karn Plant, Ba RW, KK

4 2/27 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP

SCAUP SP.:

1 12/7 Karn Plant, Ba RW

20 1/4 Karn Plant, Ba RW, KK High total for January.

OLDSQUAW:			
1	12/1	Harbor Beach, Hu	RW
1	1/4	Grindstone City, Hu	ME
COMMON GOLDENEYE:			
Less common than usual this winter. Noted on both CBCs.			
250	1/20	Karn Plant, Ba	JS
210	2/21	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW
BUFFLEHEAD:			
4	12/2	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
8	12/21	N. Huron Co	ME
1	12/27-31	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW
HOODED MERGANSER:			
1	12/2	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
4	1/11	Karn Plant, Ba	RW, MW
Noted on Bay City CBC.			
COMMON MERGANSER:			
10857	12/2	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
5000+	1/1	Karn Plant, Ba	RW, KK
20000	1/18	Karn Plant, Ba	MW
Noted through period.			
RED-BREADED MERGANSER:			
2	1p	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, RW
Noted on Bay City CBC.			
RUDDY DUCK:			
1-2	thru 1/11	Dow Ponds, Mi	RW
Noted on Midland CBC.			
BALD EAGLE:			
2 imm	1/12	Loud Dam Pond, Io	RW, MW
5 (2 ad)	1/29	MCV Pond, Mi	RW
7 (2 ad)	2/9	Karn Plant, Ba	JS
22	2/21	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
All but one of the Shiawassee birds were within a single field of view!			
NORTHERN HARRIER:			
1	12/14	Bay City CBC	
Up to 3 present through period at Shiawassee NWR, Sa.			
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:			
2	12/21	Midland CBC	
Unusual in winter.			
COOPER'S HAWK:			
Scattered sightings through period.			
GOSHAWK:			
1	1/12	Port Crescent SP, Hu	ME
RED-TAILED HAWK:			
Scattered sightings through period.			
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:			
Noted on both Midland CBC (3) and Bay City CBC (2). One to three noted at Shiawassee NWR, Sa through period.			
GOLDEN EAGLE:			
1 imm	12/17	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
1 imm	2/5	Shiawassee NWR, Sa	DP
AMERICAN KESTREL:			
Common through period.			
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:			
Scattered sightings through period.			
RUFFED GROUSE:			
Scattered sightings through period in Tuscola Co.			
WILD TURKEY:			
Scattered sightings through period. Noted on Midland CBC.			
BOBWHITE:			
1	thru Feb	Mayville, Tu	MW
AMERICAN COOT:			
7	12/21	Midland CBC, Mi	
BONAPARTE'S GULL:			
1000	12/4	Middle Grounds, Ba	RW
421	12/14	Bay City CBC	
3	1/4	Saginaw River, Ba	RW, KK
5	1/5	Saginaw River, Ba	MW
New SBA late date.			
RING-BILLED GULL:			
519	12/14	Bay City CBC, Ba	
High count.			

15	1/11	Saginaw River, Ba	RW, RP	
2	1/15	Saginaw River, Ba	RW	
6	2/20	Saginaw River, Ba	JS	First returns.

Returned 2/21 to Shiawassee NWR, Sa (DP).

MEW GULL:

1 ad	1/18	Saginaw River, Ba	MW	
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Record pending review by Michigan Bird Records Committee. If accepted, this would be the 2nd SBA and 3rd state record.

HERRING GULL:

16528	12/15	Bay City CBC, Ba		New record high for count.
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Abundant through early January. Estimates from ten to fifteen thousand on the river.

THAYER'S GULL:

1 1st w	1/2	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
1 ad	1/11	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
2 1w&2w	1/15	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
4 3ad&1w	1/16	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP, JF, RW, JS	
1 ad	1/19	Saginaw River, Ba	MW, KT, JS, RW	

At least six individuals this winter.

ICELAND GULL:

3 2ad&2w	12/24	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
2 1ad&2w	12/26	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
1 1w	1/2	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
1 ad.	1/10	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
3 2ad&1w	1/11	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
1 ad	1/25-26	Saginaw River, Ba	MW, RW	

At least 3 adults, 1 second winter, and probably 2 first winter birds for the period.

GLAUCOUS GULL:

43	1/1	Saginaw River, Ba	RW	
7 5	1/4	Saginaw River, Ba	RW, KK	Sixty-two from Windy Pt!
6	1/12	Au Gres, Ar	RW, MW	
15	1/16	Saginaw River, Ba	RP	
5	1/25-26	Saginaw River, Ba	MW, RW	

A couple of Glaucous x Herring Gulls were also noted this winter.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:

1 ad.	thru 12/14	Bay City SP, Ba	RA, RW	
1 ad.	1/2	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
1 ad.	1/15	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	
1 ad.	1/16	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP, JF, RW, JS	

Apparently two different adults. One had a very heavy hood of streaking and a dusky bill (Lester), while the other had a clean yellow with lighter head streaking. The two birds were seen on consecutive days in January, but were never seen together.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:

Common through period. Six noted on Bay City CBC.

12	1/1	Saginaw River, Ba	RW	
4 0	1/12	Au Gres, Ar	MW, RW	
3 8	1/8	Karn Plant, Ba	JS	

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:

1 1st w	1/2	Saginaw River, Ba	R&MP	Sixth SBA record!
1 2nd w	1/5	Saginaw River, Ba	MW	Seventh SBA record!

ROCK DOVE:

Common through period.

MOURNING DOVE:

Common through period.

EASTERN SCREECH OWL:

Not reported on either CBC. Noted in three Tuscola Co locations (MW).

GREAT HORNED OWL:

Scattered sightings through period. Noted on Both CBCs. Also noted in Saginaw and Tuscola counties.

SNOWY OWL:

3	12/14	Bay City CBC, Ba		
6	1/26	Karn Plant, Ba	JS	High count.

Also noted in Midland, Saginaw, Tuscola, and Huron counties. Good numbers this winter.

BARRED OWL:

Noted on Midland CBC. Also noted in Tuscola County.

SAW-WHET OWL:
 heard 2/24 Murphy Lake SGA, Tu MW
 BELTED KINGFISHER:
 Scattered sightings through period. Noted on both CBCs.
 RED-HEADED WOODPECKER:
 1 12/11 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP
 1 12/18 Midland, Mi TW
 RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:
 Scattered sightings through period.
 DOWNY WOODPECKER:
 Common through period.
 HAIRY WOODPECKER:
 Scattered sightings through period.
 NORTHERN FLICKER:
 1 12/21 Midland CBC
 PILEATED WOODPECKER:
 1 12/21 Midland CBC
 1 1/12 M-65, lo MW, RW Thru period at CNC (JL).
 Also seen in Baldwin Twp, lo (fide RW).
 HORNED LARK:
 Not reported from either CBC. Common as usual in February.
 BLUE JAY:
 Common through period.
 AMERICAN CROW:
 Common through period.
 COMMON RAVEN:
 1 2 1/12 Loud Dam Pond, lo MW, RW Pecking at Bald Eagles!
 2 1/12 M-65, lo MW, RW
 BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:
 Common through period.
 TUFTED TITMOUSE:
 Common through period. Peak of 9 on 1/5 at Shiawassee NWR, Sa (DP).
 RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:
 Scattered sightings through period.
 WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:
 Common through period.
 BROWN CREEPER:
 2 12/21 Midland CBC
 5 2/1 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP
 CAROLINA WREN:
 1 12/14 Midland, Mi VT
 Seen at two other Midland feeders.
 GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:
 1 1/29 MCV Pond, Mi RW
 4 1/5 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP
 Noted on both CBCs.
 AMERICAN ROBIN:
 1 12/27, 1/7 Bay City SP, Ba JG, G&EP
 1 2/27 Shiawassee NWR, Sa DP
 Several noted in Saginaw Twp (MH).
 BOHEMIAN WAXWING:
 35 1/18 Baldwin Twp, lo RW
 CEDAR WAXWING:
 Scattered sightings through period.
 NORTHERN SHRIKE:
 Scattered sightings through period. Fewer than in recent years.
 EUROPEAN STARLING:
 Trash bird through period.
 YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:
 1 12/15 Midland, Mi VT Late date.
 NORTHERN CARDINAL:
 Common through period.
 AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:
 Scattered sightings through period.

SONG SPARROW:

Scattered sightings through period. Noted from both CBCs.

SWAMP SPARROW:

1 12/14 Bay City CBC, Ba

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:

1 12/14 Bay City CBC, Ba

Unusual for count.

DARK-EYED JUNCO:

Common through period.

SNOW BUNTING:

Common early in period, but scarce in January and February.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:

2 1/17 Essexville, Ba JS

Returned to Essexville, Ba on 2/25 and Shiawassee NWR, Sa on 2/26.

COMMON GRACKLE:

32 12/14 Bay City CBC

Six on Midland CBC.

1 2/24 Saginaw, Sa BG

50 2/25 Essexville, Ba JS

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:

129 12/14 Bay City CBC

250 12/30 Essexville, Ba JS

PURPLE FINCH:

Missed on both CBCs! Reported from Midland in December (TW).

HOUSE FINCH:

Common through period.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:

Common through period.

COMMON REDPOLL:

2 12/14 Bay City CBC, Sa

3 2/16 Midland, Mi

GV

up to 30 late Feb

Midland, Mi

TW

PINE SISKIN:

1 12/21

Midland CBC

Uncommon again this winter.

2 1/12

Loud Dam Road, Io

RW, MW

EVENING GROSBEAK:

Flock heard

1/12

Loud Dam Road, Io

RW, MW

HOUSE SPARROW:

Common through period.

TOTAL: 99 species**RECORDS OUTSIDE SBA**

EARED GREBE

1 2/22

Port Huron

MW

NORTHERN HAWK OWL

1 2/23

Seney, Schoolcraft Co

MW

GREAT GRAY OWL

15 2/1

Sugar Island

MW

ICELAND GULL

11w 2/23

Charlevoix

MW

OBSERVERS:

ME	Monica Essenmacher	G&EP	Glenn & Ellen Peterson
JF	Jan Fairchild	R&MP	Rod & Marlene Planck
JG	Jack Gillespie	JS	Joe Soehnel
BG	Bob Grefe	KT	Kevin Thomas
MH	Mark Hubinger	VT	Val Trabucchi
EK	Eugene Kenaga	TW	Terry Walsh
JL	Janea Little	RW	Ron Weeks
MO	Many Observers	MW	Myles Willard
DP	David Peters	GV	George Vogel

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
tp	through period
Tu	Tuscola County