

BIRDS IN THE SAGINAW BAY AREA

December 1st, 1998 - February 28th, 1999

Compiled by: Joe Soehnel
1255 Jodie Lynn Lane
Essexville, MI 48732

Weather: Winter '99 wasn't quite as mild as the previous winter but came close with the exception of cold weather and heavy snow the first half of January. The average high temperature in December, 1998 was 40.1 degrees which was a full eight degrees above normal. Grant and I birded along the Saginaw Bay shoreline on the first weekend of December in short-sleeved shirts! January reversed that trend for the first half of the month with day & night-time temperatures staying below normal. As the attached chart dramatically indicates, the second half of January and all of February pretty much remained above normal temperatures.

December and February precipitation was below normal but the first half of January more than made up for it. The Saginaw area witnessed its third snowiest January ever and its fourth snowiest month this century. The recorded snowfall at MBS Airport on January 2nd & 3rd measured 13.2" and a total of 29.0" fell for the entire month. That was a whopping 18.7" above normal! The reason why we saw so much snow during that time period was due to a rather active storm track (which is quite common during la ninas) and much below normal temperatures which persisted across the area through mid January. (See attached charts for complete weather stats for the period from MBS Airport.)

Summary: Mild weather for the last two winters has made a definite impact on our feathered friends. Overwintering Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, and Hermit Thrush, not only in the SBA but throughout much of the state, are a testimony to how weather affects avian migratory patterns. Other testaments to the mild weather's impact on birds include the following winter records: the first Feb. record for *Ross' Goose*; the third Feb. record for *Turkey Vulture*; the fourth Feb. record for *Sandhill Crane*; four Dec. records and the first Jan. record for *Killdeer*; a new SBA late date for *Dunlin*; a new SBA late date for *Franklin's Gull*, and a first Jan. *Fox Sparrow* record.

On the other end of the migratory spectrum, there were no SBA *Snowy Owl* reports this winter and very limited *Snow Bunting* records. The 1990 winter season was the last time there were no SBA reports for *Snowy Owl*. Finches in the SBA were all but non-existent.

The stand-out bird of the winter season was a very cooperative, male **King Eider** which remained at the Karn Power Plant for over two weeks which was first reported on the Bay City CBC. It was well documented by Jerry Ziarno and photographed by many. (Karn Plant policy now allows cameras on site to photograph wildlife.) This was just the fifth SBA record for **King Eider**.

Other highlights for Winter '99 included the following: *Black Scoter* at Tawas Pte; *Golden Eagle* sightings at SNWR and Iosco County; *Merlin* at Tawas City Airport; an immature *Iceland Gull* at Karn Power Plant; 8 *Short-eared Owls* at SNWR; *Carolina Wren* sightings in Midland and Huron counties; 30 *Bohemian Waxwings* in Oscoda; *Loggerhead Shrike* at Fish Pte., and an *Eastern Meadowlark* in western Bay County.

REPORTS

COMMON LOON:

2	12/04	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
1	12/09	Port Austin, Hu	GZ

PIED-BILLED GREBE:

2	CT Jan.	Karn Plant, Ba	JS,GS
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HORNED GREBE:

None to report.

RED-NECKED GREBE:

None to report.

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:

Present through period at Karn Plant, Ba. Also noted in Sa.

GREAT BLUE HERON:

Present thru period - Karn Plant, Ba. Peak count of 24 on 12/16 @ SNWR, Sa. DP
Also noted in Io

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON:

None to report.

TUNDRA SWAN:

9	12/02	AuGres River Mouth, Ar	GZ
29	12/09	Fillion Rd., Hu	GZ
1	02/11-15	Tawas Bay, Io	G&TN

MUTE SWAN:

16	12/27	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, SM
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Also noted in Mi

TRUMPETER SWAN:

1	01/20	Karn Plant, Ba	JS
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Unbanded adult found dead at the mouth of the mouth of the discharge channel. The bird was taken to DNR Wildlife Biologist, Doug Reeves. This bird had been observed earlier in the month in the same location by other observers.

GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:

14	02/09	SNWR, Sa	MW
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SNOW GOOSE:

12	12/20	Oak Park, Tu	MW
1	02/09	SNWR, Sa	MW

ROSS' GOOSE:

1	02/10	SNWR, Sa	MW	First Feb SBA records.
3	02/16	SNWR, Sa	DP, BG	Detailed report sent to state compiler.

CANADA GOOSE:

Present thru period SNWR, Sa. Also noted in Ba, Tu, Io, Mi Peak count of 8830 on 12/09 @ SNWR, Sa.

RM

WOOD DUCK:

1	12/27	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, SM	Female.
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GREEN-WINGED TEAL:

41	12/09	SNWR, Sa	RM	Peak count.
15	12/20	Huron Co.	TB	
2	12/23	Karn Plant, Ba	JS,GS	

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:

Peak count of 237 on 12/09 @ SNWR, Sa. RM Also noted in Ba, Io, Mi in small numbers.

MALLARD:

Present thru period Karn, Ba. Also noted in Tu, Mi, Io - Peak count of 7551 on 12/09 @ SNWR, Sa. RM

NORTHERN PINTAIL:

7	12/23	Karn Plant, Ba	JS,GS	All males.
3	02/16	SNWR, Sa	DP	

BLUE-WINGED TEAL:

None to report.

NORTHERN SHOVELER:

68	12/16	SNWR, Sa	DP
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GADWALL:					
2	12/01	Dow Ponds, Mi	GZ		
AMERICAN WIGEON:					
2	02/19	SNWR, Sa	DP		
CANVASBACK:					
320	12/03	Saginaw Bay, Hu	TB		Peak count.
2	01/18	Middlegounds, Ba	JS		
REDHEAD:					
500	12/03	Saginaw Bay, Hu	TB		Peak count.
3	02/15	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		First Returns.
RING-NECKED DUCK:					
1	12/05	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		
GREATER SCAUP:					
1	12/05	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		
12	12/26	Tawas Pte, Io	BB		
1	02/10	Port Austin, Hu	GZ		
LESSER SCAUP:					
1	01/10	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		
14	02/15	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		First Returns.
KING EIDER:					
1	01/02 thru 01/18	Karn Plant, Ba	GZ, GK, RA, et.al.		Fine looking young male. Description by GZ, GK, & RA.
OLDSQUAW:					
6300	12/26	Tawas Pte, Io	BB		New SBA high count!
Gary Nelkie wrote an interesting bit of information: . . . In January, a crewman (the wheelman) from a freighter that was docked at Port Alabaster, came into my store. When I questioned him about Oldsquaws he told me that "they always see two huge flocks of Oldsquaws . . . each flock numbering thousands . . . at two locations in Lake Huron." Those locations are in the shipping lane off Tawas Pointe and near the wreck of the <i>Nordmeer</i> , which is three miles off-shore of Middle Island, or six miles off-shore of Rockport Harbor north of Alpena.					
BLACK SCOTER:					
1	12/05	Tawas Pte, Io	BB		
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:					
3	12/04	Tawas Pte, Io	BB		
COMMON GOLDENEYE:					
750	01/18	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		Peak count.
		Also noted in Hu, Mi, Io			
BUFFLEHEAD:					
75	12/04	Tawas Pte, Io	BB		
1	01/01	Karn Plant, Ba	MW		
3	02/16	Tawas River, Io	TN		
HOODED MERGANSER:					
3	12/04	Iargo Springs, Io	BB		
28	12/19	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, GS, RH		Peak count.
1	02/18	Tawas River, Io	GN		
1	02/25	SNWR, Sa	DP		First returns.
COMMON MERGANSER:					
		Present through Period, Karn, Ba	SNWR, Sa	Peak count of 3000 on 12/01 @ MCV Pond, Mi.	GZ
		Also present in Io			
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:					
129	12/26	Tawas Pte, Io	BB		Peak count.
10	CT 01/15	Karn Plant, Ba	JS		
RUDDY DUCK:					
8	12/19	Midland, Mi			Midland CBC.
TURKEY VULTURE:					
1	02/10	Oak Beach Rd, Hu	GZ		Third SBA Feb record! Feeding on carrion on road.

BALD EAGLE:

Present through period, SNWR, Sa. & Karn Plant, Ba. Also noted in Frankenmuth, Sa & Tu, Mi, Io
15 **01/18** Karn Plant, Ba JS New Bay Co high count! 8 adults.

NORTHERN HARRIER:

22 **12/03** SNWR, Sa DP, MW New SBA peak count!
 Gathering @ sunset to roost.

Also noted in Ba, Mi, Io

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:

1 **12/24** Frankenmuth, Sa H&JS
1 **01/18** Midland, Mi RA
1 **02/25** Tawas City, Io GN

Present through period in Huron Co. TB

COOPER'S HAWK:

Scattered sitings thru period. Ba, Sa, Tu, Mi

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:

1 **01/15** Huron Co. TB
1 **02/16** Murphy Lake, Tu MW

NORTHERN GOSHAWK:

None to report.

RED-TAILED HAWK:

Present through Period, Ba, Sa, Tu, Mi. Peak of 24 on 01/08 @ SNWR, Sa. DP

Also noted in Io

1 **01/31** Maville, Tu MW Dark morph!

ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:

2 **12/25** Towerline Rd. Io BB
11 **01/08** SNWR, Sa DP Nice total!
1 **01/20** Karn Plant, Ba JS, GS Stunning dark morph!

Also noted in Mi, Hu

GOLDEN EAGLE:

1 **12/25** Towerline Rd. Io BB Second Iosco Co. record!
2 **12/31** SNWR, Sa DP Imm.
1 **01/01 & 01/20** SNWR, Sa BG Yearly occurrence @ SNWR

AMERICAN KESTREL:

Present through period, Hampton Twp, Ba. Also noted in Sa, Mi, Io

MERLIN:

1 **12/02** Iosco City Airport, Io GZ

RING-NECKED PHEASANT:

Noted in Tu.

RUFFED GROUSE:

5 **01/30** Caro area, Tu MW

Also noted in Hu, Mi

WILD TURKEY:

Noted in Tu, Sa, Mi. Peak count of 71 @Tawas City, Io. GN

Eating way too much corn according to Gary!

NORTHERN BOBWHITE:

1 **01/21** Midland, Mi RA

AMERICAN COOT:

25 **12/03** SNWR, Sa DP

Also noted in Ba,

SANDHILL CRANE:

2 **12/09** SNWR, Sa DP
2 **02/09** SNWR, Sa MW

Only the fourth SBA Feb record!

KILLDEER:

19 **12/21** Quanicasee, Tu MW
2 **01/04** Middlegrounds, Ba AB

First SBA January record
 & New SBA late date!!!

Also noted in Sa, Io

DUNLIN:

4 **12/22** Karn Plant, Ba MW

New SBA late date!!!

COMMON SNIFE:

None to report.

FRANKLIN'S GULL:

1	12/09	SNWR, Sa	DP	New SBA late date! Likely a carry-over from Nov
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invasion.

BONAPARTE'S GULL:

150	12/18	Karn Plant, Ba	JS	Peak count.
4	12/27	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, SM	Last date.

Also noted in lo

RING-BILLED GULL:

Present through Period, Karn Plant, Ba. Also noted in Sa, lo, Mi

HERRING GULL:

Present through Period, Karn Plant, Ba. Also noted in lo, Mi

THAYER'S GULL:

None to report.

ICELAND GULL:

1	12/17 thru 01/15	Karn Plant, Ba	GZ, JS, et.al.	Imm.
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GLAUCOUS GULL:

4	12/20	Caseville, Hu	MW	
3	12/23	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, GS	One adult.

Also noted in lo

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:

1	12/22	Karn Plant, Ba	MW	1st winter. Photographed.
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GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:

35	12/23	Karn Plant, Ba	JS, GS	Second highest SBA total!
10	01/10	Karn Plant, Ba	JS	

Also noted in lo, Hu

BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:

None to report.

ROCK DOVE:

Present through period. Ba, Tu, Mi, lo

MOURNING DOVE:

Present through period. Sa, Ba, Tu, Mi, lo. Peak count of 208 on 02/18 @ SNWR, Sa. DP

EASTERN SCREECH OWL:

2	12/26	Oakley, Sa	JS, GS
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Also noted in Tu, Mi

GREAT HORNED OWL:

Noted in Sa, Ba, Tu

SNOWY OWL:

None to report. When will they return?

BARRED OWL:

1	02-99	Midland, Mi	SR	Heard in Feb outside Steve's window
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but no specific date given.

SHORT-EARED OWL:

8	02/16	SNWR, Sa	BG, DP
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BELTED KINGFISHER:

1	12/28	SNWR, Sa	DP
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Also noted in Mi

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER:

1	01/13 to 02/03	St. Charles, Sa	fide DP
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RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:

1	CTP	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS, GS
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Also noted in Sa, Tu, Mi

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:

None to report.

DOWNY WOODPECKER:

Present through Period, Ba, Tu, Sa, Mi. Peak count of 9 on 01/02 @ SNWR, Sa. DP

Also noted in lo

HAIRY WOODPECKER:

Present through period, Ba, Tu, Sa, Mi

Also noted in Io

NORTHERN FLICKER:

Present through period @ SNWR, Sa. DP. Also noted in Mi, Ba

PILEATED WOODPECKER:

Present through period. SNWR, Sa. DP Also noted in Io, Mi

HORNED LARK:

98	01/05	Prairie Farm, Sa	DP	South of SNWR, Sa.
		Also noted in Tu, Ba, Io		

BLUE JAY:

Present through period, Ba, Tu, Mi, Io

AMERICAN CROW:

Present through period. Ba, Sa, Tu, Mi, Io

COMMON RAVEN:

2	12/04	largo Springs, Io	BB
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BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:

Present through period, Ba, Sa, Tu, Mi, Io

TUFTED TITMOUSE:

Present through period, Ba, Tu, Sa, Mi

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:

2	12/25	Curtisville Rd, Io	BB
1	01/25	Bangor Twp, Ba	JS

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:

Present through period, Ba, Tu, Sa, Mi, Io

BROWN CREEPER:

1	12/06	Vanderbilt Pk, Tu	JS,GS	Temp in the low 60's! Peak count.
8	01/02	SNWR, Sa	DP	
1	02/17-28	Tawas City, Io	G&TN	
1	2/20	Midland, Mi	BR	

CAROLINA WREN:

1	Jan thru Feb	Midland, Mi	fide GK
1	02/05	Huron Co.	TB

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:

2	12/04	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
4	12/26	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
3	01/25	Bangor Twp, Ba	JS

EASTERN BLUEBIRD:

12	12/28	Curtis Rd, Sa	DP	Peak count.
2	12/21	Tittabawasee River, Mi	GZ	
2	01/04	Eagle Run, Io	BK	
7	01/21	Mayville, Tu	MW	Through period in the Mayville area.
1	01/23 thru 02/19	Midland Co.	GK	

Gene writes, "Unusual in that it lit on the feeder, only having seeds, not fruit."

HERMIT THRUSH:

1	12/05, 12/30 & 1/1	Midland, Mi	RA	Few winter records.
1	01/09	Midland, Mi	fide GK	At Duane & Joann Kenaga's feeder.

AMERICAN ROBIN:

~200	12/05	Midland, Mi	RA	Sizeable count!
166	01/25	Bay Co.	RA	Another sizeable count!

Present thru period, Huron Co, Frankenmuth, Sa. & Mayville area, Tu Also noted in Io. Many records this season!

VARIED THRUSH:

None to report.

BOHEMIAN WAXWING:

30	01/14	Oscoda, Io	PR
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CEDAR WAXWING:

100	01/26	Frankenmuth, Sa	H&JS
		Also noted in Ba, Tu, Io, Mi	

NORTHERN SHRIKE:

1 01/09 Karn Plant, Ba JS
Also noted in Tu, Hu. Present through period @ Taw Pte, lo. BB, G&TN

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE:

1 01/30 Fish Pte, Tu DD No details given.

EUROPEAN STARLING:

Present through period, Ba, Tu, Mi, lo

NORTHERN CARDINAL:

Present through period, Ba, Tu, Sa, Mi. Peak of 21 on 12/25 @ SNWR, Sa. DP

EASTERN TOWHEE:

1 01/13 NW of Sanford, Mi GZ Male at the feeder of Linda Alexander's for several weeks.

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:

Present through period, Ba, Tu. Peak count of 181 on 01/20, SNWR, Sa. BG
Also noted in Hu, Mi, lo

FOX SPARROW:

1 01/10 Midland Co. fide GK First January record!

SONG SPARROW:

Present through period. Huron Co. TB

1 01/08 Frankenmuth, Sa MW

SWAMP SPARROW:

None to report.

WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:

1 CTP Frankenmuth, Sa H&JS
Also noted in Sa, Mi

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:

1 CTP Monitor Twp, Ba L&MB

DARK-EYED JUNCO:

Present through Period. Ba, Sa, Tu, Mi, lo

LAPLAND LONGSPUR:

1 01/14 Mayville, Tu MW Near Myles' home.

SNOW BUNTING:

120 02/10 Oak Beach Rd., Hu GZ Limited sitings this winter.
Also noted in Ba, Tu, lo, Sa

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:

12 12/05 Karn Plant, Ba JS
8 01/31 SNWR, Sa MW Hearty stragglers!
2 02/20 Essexville, Ba DD First returns.
Also noted in Tu

EASTERN MEADOWLARK:

1 02/09 Dow Corning, Ba RA Singing! (I was singing too with Feb's weather.)

RUSTY BLACKBIRD:

1 12/01 Karn Plant, Ba JS A loneiy straggler.

COMMON GRACKLE:

20 12/05 Karn Plant, Ba JS
75 02/12 Hampton Twp, Ba JS First returns.
Also noted in Sa.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:

2 01/02 Essexville, Ba JS, GS
10 02/22 Essexville, Ba JS, GS First returns.

PINE GROSBEAK:

None to report.

PURPLE FINCH:

2 01/12 Monitor Twp, Ba L&MB 1 male / 1 fem
2 01/31 Midland, Mi BR
2 (fem) 01/22 Midland Co. GK 3 on 2/1, 1 male

HOUSE FINCH:

Common through period, Ba, Tu, Mi, lo

RED CROSSBILL:

None to report.

WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:

None to report.

COMMON REDPOLL:

1	12/22	Midland, Mi	GZ	At Jerry's feeder.
1	12/30	Frankenmuth, Sa	H&JS	

PINE SISKIN:

100	02/05	Iargo Springs, Io	BB
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AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:

Present through Period, Ba, Tu, Mi. Peak count of 40 on 12/04 @ Taw Pte, Io. BB

EVENING GROSBEAK:

None to report.

HOUSE SPARROW:

Present through period. Ba, Tu, Mi, Io

TOTAL: 114**Sitings outside SBA:**

RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:

1	01/23	Grand Traverse Co.	RA
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GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:

1	01/23	Grand Traverse Co.	RA
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OMISSIONS from previous reports

42	10/15	SNWR, Sa	DP	New SBA high count!
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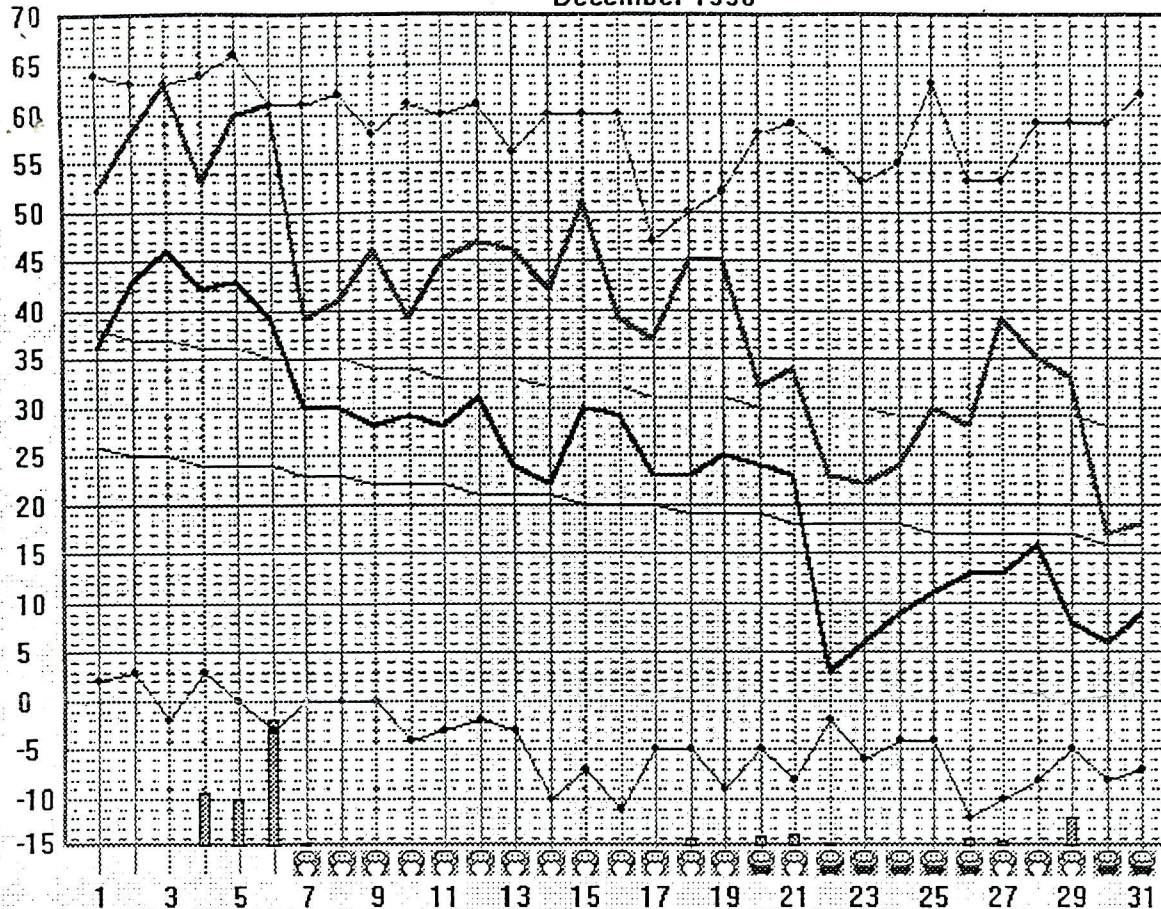
OBSERVER KEY:

CA	Cherrie Allen	SM	Stan Madziar
RA	Ron Annelin	RM	Rick McAvinchey
MB	MaryAnn Barrowman	GN	Gary Nelkie
JB	Jeff Bowen	TN	Tess Nelkie
TB	Tom Beachy	DP	David Peters
BB	Bob Bell	G&EP	Glenn & Ellen Peterson
L&MB	Lloyd & Mary Buzzard	BR	Betty Rainwater
AB	Adam Byrne	PR	Peg Ridgeway
DD	Dan Duso	SR	Steve Rosenberg
JG	Jack Gillespie	H&JS	Heinz & Jane Schwarm
BG	Bob Grefe	GS	Grant Soehnel
JH	Jeanne Henderson	JS	Joe Soehnel
LH	Larry Hyman	RW	Ron Weeks
EK	Gene Kenaga	MW	Myles Willard
BK	Bob Kennedy	GZ	Gerald Ziarno
JL	Janea Little		

ABBREVIATIONS

Ar	Arenac County
Ba	Bay County
CNC	Chippewa Nature Center
Hu	Huron County
Io	Iosco County
MCV Pond	Midland Cogeneration Venture Pond
Mi	Midland County
Sa	Saginaw County
SBA	Saginaw Bay Area
SBSRA	Saginaw Bay State Recreation Area (Formerly Bay City State Park)
SNWR	Shiawasee National Wildlife Refuge
Tu	Tuscola County

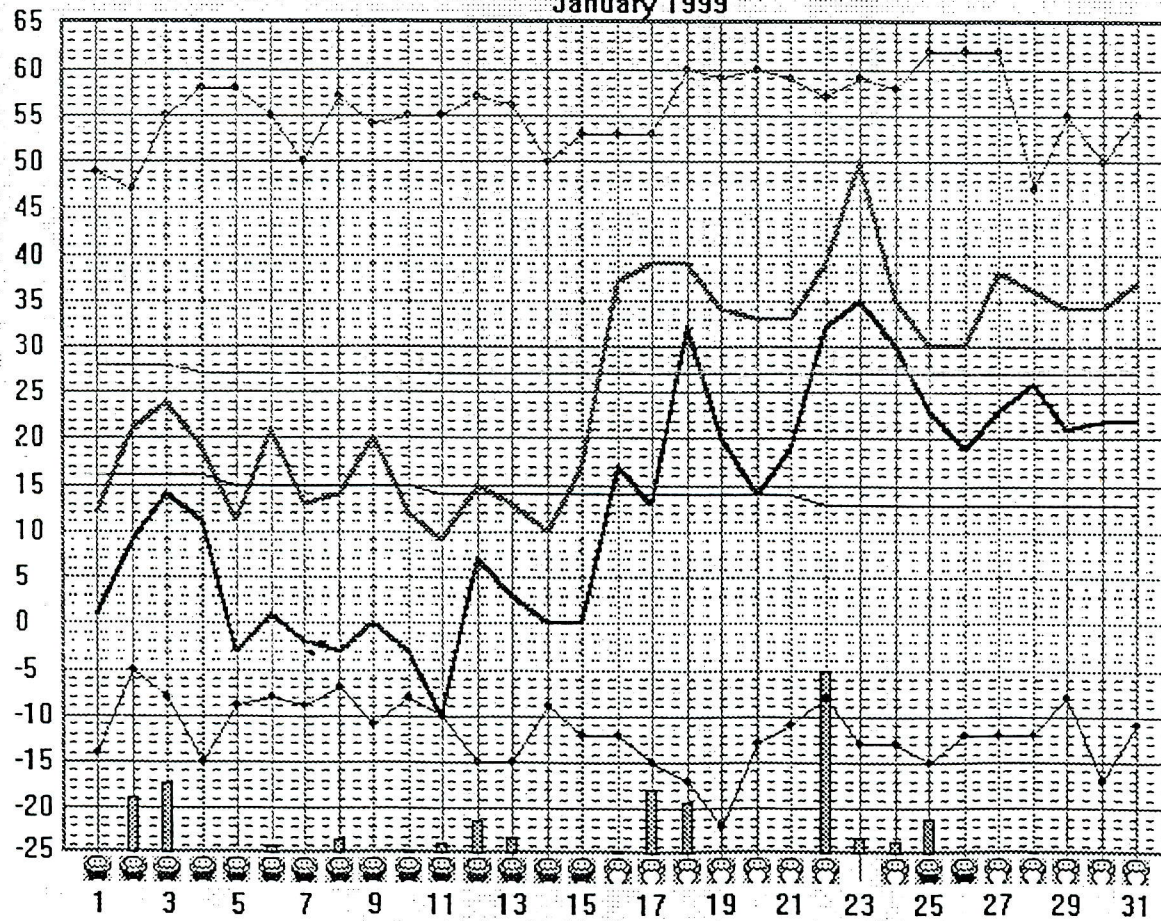
December 1998



4.25"	Precip:
4.00	4...0.27"
3.75	5...0.24"
3.50	6...0.64"
3.25	7...0.02"
3.00	18...0.04"
2.75	20...0.05"
2.50	21...0.06"
2.25	22...0.02"
2.00	26...0.04"
1.75	27...0.03"
1.50	29...0.14"
1.25	1.55"
1.00	Monthly normal:
0.75	2.37"
0.50	Yearly total:
0.25	29.56"
0.00	Normal:
	30.41"

Avg high..40.1 (Monthly normal..32.1), Avg low..23.9 (Monthly normal..20.3)
 Avg temp this month..32.0 Normal monthly temp..26.2 HDD..1014 CDD..0

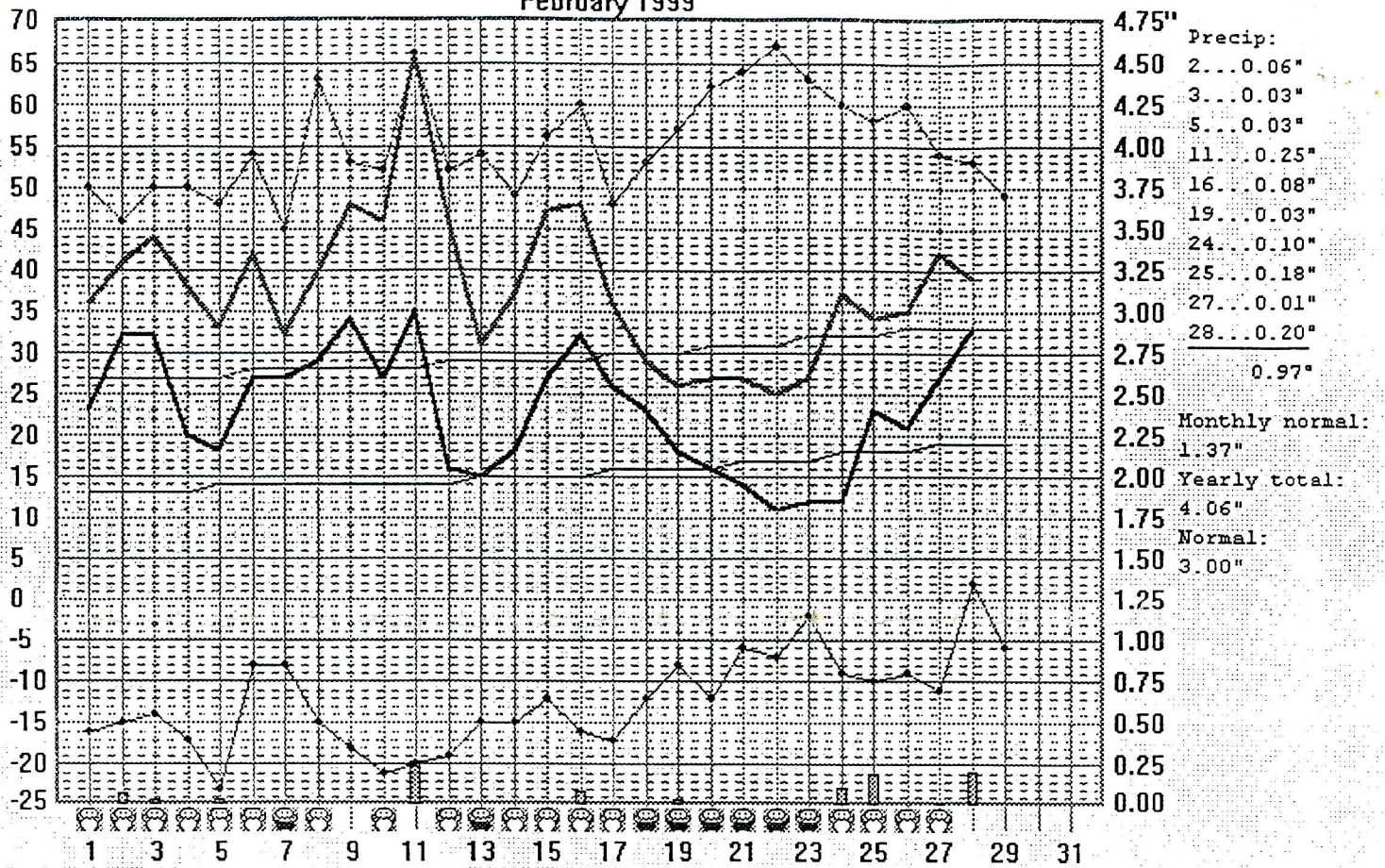
January 1999



4.50"	Precip:
4.25	2...0.30"
4.00	3...0.38"
3.75	6...0.04"
3.50	8...0.07"
3.25	10...0.02"
3.00	11...0.05"
2.75	12...0.17"
2.50	13...0.09"
2.25	16...0.02"
2.00	17...0.34"
1.75	18...0.28"
1.50	22...0.99"
1.25	23...0.08"
1.00	24...0.06"
0.75	25...0.19"
0.50	28...0.01"
0.25	3.09"
0.00	Monthly normal:
	1.63"
	Yearly total:
	3.09"
	Normal:
	1.63"

Avg high..26.1 (Monthly normal..27.1), Avg low..12.7 (Monthly normal..14.1)
 Avg temp this month..19.4 Normal monthly temp..29.6 HDD..1406 CDD..0

February 1999



Avg high..37.8 (Monthly normal..29.5), Avg low..23.1 (Monthly normal..15.4)
 Avg temp this month..30.5 Normal monthly temp..22.5 HDD..959 CDD..0