

Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

December 1, 1999 through February 29, 2000

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Weather: The SBA winter weather and the rest of the nation has been unseasonably warm for yet a third year in a row. The first nine days of December were eight degrees above normal. Colder weather settled in for a period of time but the overall monthly normal highs for both December and February were noticeably above normal. (See table below for Saginaw stats.)

Month	Average High	Normal Average High	Departure from Normal
December	36.4	32.1	+4.3
January	28.8	27.1	+1.7
February	36.8	29.5	+7.3

This winter has been the warmest since the government began keeping weather statistics 105 years ago, according to scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. That is not surprising as the only real winter-like conditions occurred from roughly mid-January to mid-February.

Summary: The moderate, winter weather has once again produced overwintering birds that would otherwise be uncommon in harsher winters. The winter lingerer's included: **Carolina Wren** in Freeland; **Winter Wren** in both Huron & Iosco counties; **Hermit Thrush** mixed in with a sizeable flock of Robins in Saginaw in late January; **Eastern Bluebird** sightings in numerous locations in the SBA, and a **White-crowned Sparrow** in Hampton Twp, Ba.

In a similar manner, early returning migrants included: **Turkey Vulture** in Vassar (2/29); fifteen species of waterfowl by the end of Feb on the Saginaw Bay or at Shiawasee NWR; **Sandhill Crane** at Shiawasee NWR (2/29); **Killdeer** in southern Bay County (2/25), and 3 **American Woodcock** in Hampton Twp and one in Mayville (2/26).

Notable birds for the period included: **Red-necked Grebe** @ Tawas Pte; **Greater White-fronted Goose** @ Shiawasee NWR; **Ross' Goose** @ Shiawasee NWR; two **Northern Goshawk** reports from Vassar and Hampton Twp; **Merlin** @ Tawas Pte; **Carolina Wren** @ a Freeland bird feeder; **Northern Mockingbird** in Saginaw that apparently overwintered; three **Bohemian Waxwing** reports from Vassar, Saginaw and Caro area; **White-crowned Sparrow** @ Hampton Twp, and finally, three **Hoary Redpoll** records from Myles Willard which is my nemesis bird. Noticeably **absent** for the period was any 'good gulls' such as Iceland's, Kittiwake, and even Glaucous.

New SBA Peak counts included: 96 Mute Swans on 1/24 @ the Karn Plant; 7 Great-horned Owls on 1/2 in five separate woodlots in Hampton Twp; 11 Short-eared Owls on 12/21 @ Shiawasee NWR, and a remarkable 110 House Finch on 12/29 at a single feeder near Fish Pte.

New SBA Spring Early Date included: 3 American Woodcock on 2/26 in Hampton Twp and one on the same date in Mayville.

What's New: You can now find SBA seasonal surveys along with weekly, Michigan Rare Bird reports at <http://www.saginawbaybirding.org>. Also included is a link for Saginaw Bay Area spring migration updates. This is a supplement to the weekly rare bird alerts and will not replace the seasonal surveys. Send me an e-mail with your spring birding updates to soehnelj@hotmail.com or call me at 517-892-3687.

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
COMMON LOON:	1	12/09	Sanford Lake, Mi	JD
PIED-BILLED GREBE:	None			
HORNED GREBE:	2	12/11	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
RED-NECKED GREBE:	1	01/07	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:	8	Present through period Karn Plant, Ba - Also noted in Mi		
GREAT BLUE HERON:	2	Present thru period, Karn Plant, Ba - Also noted in Io, Mi Peak count of 60 @ SNWR, Sa on 12/04 - BG, CS		
TURKEY VULTURE:	1	02/29	Vassar, Tu	MW- First return.
GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:	2	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM, MW
SNOW GOOSE:	3	01/01	SNWR, Sa	BG
	3	01/10	Tawas Bay, Io	G&TN - Also seen again on 1/11 & 1/13
	10	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First returns
ROSS' GOOSE	1	02/29	SNWR, Sa	MW
CANADA GOOSE:	18259	12/01	SNWR, Sa	RM - Peak count! Also noted in Ba, Io, Mi
MUTE SWAN:	96	01/24	Karn Plant, Ba	JS - New SBA Peak Count! Also noted in Mi
TUNDRA SWAN:	1	12/16	Krabbe Rd. Sag Co.	JS
	1	02/23	SNWR, Sa	BG
WOOD DUCK:	1	12/23	Middlegrounds, Ba	JZ
	15	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First return.
GADWALL:	3	02/26	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - First returns. Also noted in Mi
AMERICAN WIGEON:	1	12/01	SNWR, Sa	RM - Last Date
	12	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First Return
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	1578	12/01	SNWR, Sa	RM - Peak count.
	14	02/26	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - First migrants. Also noted in Sa, Io, Mi
MALLARD:	29439	12/01	SNWR, Sa	RM - Peak count. Also noted in Ba, Mi, Io
BLUE-WINGED TEAL:	None			
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	13	12/08	SNWR, Sa	RM - Last Date.
	6	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First return.
NORTHERN PINTAIL:	36	12/01	SNWR, Sa	RM
	4	02/26	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - First returns.
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	30	12/15	SNWR, Sa	RM - Last Date
	2	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First Return.

CANVASBACK:	1	02/17	Middlegrounds, Ba	JS
REDHEAD:	43	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First Return - Also noted in Ba
RING-NECKED DUCK:	3	02/17	Middlegrounds, Ba	JS - First returns
GREATER SCAUP:	None			
LESSER SCAUP:	27	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First return - Also noted in Ba, Mi
SCAUP SP.	18	12/17	Karn Plant, Ba	JS
SURF SCOTER:	None			
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	None			
BLACK SCOTER:	None			
OLDSQUAW:	6000	12/11	Tawas Pte, lo	BB - Peak count. Dates in Jan & Feb
BUFFLEHEAD:	40	12/11	Tawas Pte, lo	BB - Peak count. - Also noted in Mi
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	1681	12/30	Three Mile Park, lo	DP, MW - Also noted in Ba, Mi
HOODED MERGANSER:	1	12/17	Karn Plant, Ba	JS - Also noted in Sa, Mi
	6	12/23	Middlegrounds, Ba	JZ
COMMON MERGANSER:	100+	Present through period, Karn Plant, Ba - Also noted in lo, Mi, Sa		
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	2	12/09	Karn Plant, Ba	JS - Also noted in lo
RUDDY DUCK:	18	12/18	MCV Pond, Mi	JZ – MCBC
	7	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM, MW - First return
BALD EAGLE:	2	Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Peak of 16 on 01/11 @ SNWR, Sag – DP. Also noted in Mi, lo. (7 reported on the Cass River east of Bridgeport - LA		
		<i>Gary Nelkie wrote the following from 1/18, "Early morning, four Eagles, two adult and two immature, attacked a formation of Canada Geese in flight at Tawas Pte. They singled out one goose, injuring it and forcing it to land on the ice. The four Eagles patiently stood next to the goose until it died . . . the eagles ripped it apart and consumed it." Quite an interesting observation!</i>		
NORTHERN HARRIER:	1	12/11	Tawas Pte, lo	BB
	8	01/08	SNWR, Sa	BG, CS
	1	02/26	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - Also noted in Mi
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	01/05	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS, GS - Also noted in Mi
	1	02/10	Bangor Twp, Ba	G&EP
	1	02/29	SNWR, Sa	MW - H&JS reported 1 through period
COOPER'S HAWK:	1	Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, lo		
NORTHERN GOSHAWK:	1	01/02	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - BCCBC – Report filed with CBC compiler.
	1	01/12	Vassar, Tu	MW
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	1	01/25	Midland, Mi	RA
RED-TAILED HAWK:	2	Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in lo, Sa, Mi		
	1	MW noted, "Dark phase Red-tail at my house 4th year in a row."		
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	17	12/04	SNWR, Sa	BG, CS - Peak count. Also noted in Ba, lo, Mi

AMERICAN KESTREL:	1	Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, Io, Ar, Mi		
MERLIN:	1	12/11	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	1	02/26	Oak Grove, Ba	JS
RUFFED GROUSE:	5	02/04	Iargo Springs, Io	BB
	1	02/26	Caro Area, Tu	MW
WILD TURKEY:	140	01/08	Midland, Mi	GK - All in one flock. Also noted in Sa, Ba. DP stated that populations in Sa are expanding.
AMERICAN COOT:	1	12/17	Saginaw River, Ba	JS - Also noted in Mi
	6	02/29	SNWR, Sa	RM - First Return.
SANDHILL CRANE:	1	02/26	SNWR, Sa	M&JH - First return. Few Feb records.
KILLDEER:	1	02/25	Begick's Nursery, Ba	G&EP - First return.
COMMON SNIBE:	9	12/08	SNWR, Sa	DP
AMERICAN WOODCOCK:	3	02/26	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS, GS - New SBA spring early date! Myles had 1 south of Caro on the same day!
LITTLE GULL:	None			
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	708	12/17	Saginaw River, Ba	JS - Peak Count - Also noted in Io, Mi
RING-BILLED GULL:	2	Remained present through period Middlegrounds, Ba - Also noted in Sa, Io, Mi Returned to Saginaw Bay & CDF in profusion on 02/26!		
HERRING GULL:	4	Remained present through period Karn Plant, Ba - Also noted in Sa, Io, Mi Returned to Saginaw Bay & CDF in profusion on 02/26!		
THAYER'S GULL:	None			
ICELAND GULL:	None			
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:	None			
GLAUCOUS GULL:	None			
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	22	12/17	Karn Plant, Ba	JS - Peak Count. Last (1) @ Karn on 1/2 - JS, GS Also noted in Io
BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:	None			
ROCK DOVE:	100	Present through period, Bay City, Ba - Also noted in Mi		
MOURNING DOVE:	12	Present through period Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Io, Mi, Sa		
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	2	12/23	Oakley, Sa	JS, GS - Also noted in Mi
	1	01/26	Bangor Twp, Ba	G&EP - Red morph.
GREAT HORNED OWL:	7	01/02	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - New SBA peak count! (BCCBC) Also noted in Io, Mi
SNOWY OWL:	1	12/15	S.W. Midland Co	RA
	1	12/29	Fish Pt, Tu	MW
BARRED OWL:	1	12/18	Midland Co.	MCBC

LONG-EARED OWL:	None			
SHORT-EARED OWL:	11 1	12/21 01/16	SNWR, Sa Mayville, Tu	BG, CS, LA - New SBA peak count! MW
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL:	None			
BELTED KINGFISHER:	1	01/09	Tittabawasee River, Mi	JZ
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	1		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, lo, Mi Glenn wrote, "Amazingly, the male started to excavate a nesting hole on Feb 29!"	
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:	1	12/23	Saginaw Twp, Sa	M&JH
DOWNY WOODPECKER:	2		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, lo, Mi	
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	1		Noted in Sa, Ba, Mi	
NORTHERN FLICKER:	1		Present through period. SNWR, Sa - DP - Also noted in Mi	
PILEATED WOODPECKER:	1	02/28	CNC, Mi	GK
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	1 1 1	12/12 02/26	Nay Pte, Ba Oak Grove, Ba SNWR, Sa	RA JS - Also noted in lo, Mi DP, BG, CS - Present through period.
BLUE JAY:	4		Present through period, Hampton Twp, Bay - Also noted in Sa, lo, Mi	
AMERICAN CROW:	4		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, lo, Mi	
COMMON RAVEN:	2		Present through period. Corsair Ski Trails, lo. GN	
HORNED LARK:	1+	01/20	SNWR, Sa	DP - Peak of 140 on 2/4 @ SNWR, Sa - DP Also noted in Ba
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:	4		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, lo, Mi	
CAROLINA WREN:	1	02/10	Hemlock, Sa	VW - Came to feeder a number of times.
WINTER WREN:	2 1	02/04 12/21	Iargo Springs, lo Eagle Bay, Hu	BB - Hearty winter stragglers represent only the second Feb SBA record! MW - Only the second Dec SBA record!
TUFTED TITMOUSE:	6		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, Mi	
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	1		Present thru Period, Hampton Twp & Bangor Twp, Ba - Also noted in Sa, Mi	
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	2		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba. Also noted in Sa, Mi	
BROWN CREEPER:	1		Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba. Also noted in Sa, Mi	
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	2	12/24	Iargo Springs, lo	BB
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	7		Coleman, Mi	R&RS Present through period. Also noted in Sa, Ba, Tu
HERMIT THRUSH:	1	01/29	James Twp, Sa	M&JH - Mixed in with a flock of 12 Robins.
AMERICAN ROBIN:	3		First returns on 02/22 Center Rd, Sa - BG Present through period in Mi - GK Also noted in lo & Ba. Peak count of 50 on 01/30 in James Twp, Sa. M&JH	

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD:	1	01/01	Saginaw, Sa	M&JH - Apparently over-wintered.
EUROPEAN STARLING:	10	Present through period. Hampton Twp, Ba. - Also noted in Io, Mi		
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	1	12/22	Vassar, Tu	MW
	5	01/30	James Twp, Sa	M&JH - Mixed in with Cedar Waxwings.
	~24	02/23	Caro Area, Tu	MW
CEDAR WAXWING:	~150	02/23	Caro Area, Tu	MW - Also noted in Io, Mi, Sa
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	288	12/29	SNWR, Sa	DP - Peak count. Also, present through period. Also noted in Ba, Io, Mi
SAVANNAH SPARROW:	1	12/21	SNWR, Sa	BG, CS, LA - Last date and quite late!
SONG SPARROW:	1	12/23	Oakley, Sa	JS, GS - Also noted in Mi
	1	02/13	Freeland, Sa	BW
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:	1	01/29	Midland, Mi	GK - Also noted in Sa
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:	1	02/26	Oak Grove, Ba	JS - Generous look at close range of an adult. This bird likely over-wintered as it was way outside its spring migration window.
DARK-EYED JUNCO:	6	Present through period, Hampton Twp, Ba - Also noted in Mi, Io Oregon race noted on 01/26 @ SNWR, Sa - DP		
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	None			
SNOW BUNTING:	200	12/12	Frankenmuth, Sa	H&JS - Peak count. - Also noted in Ba, Io, Mi
NORTHERN CARDINAL:	2	Present thru period, Hampton Twp, Ba. Also noted in Sa, Io, Mi		
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	200	02/22	Center Rd. Sa	BG - First returns. Also noted in Ba
EASTERN MEADOWLARK:	1	02/27	Tawas Pte, Io	GN - First return.
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	25	02/26	Oak Grove, Ba	JS - Further testimony to spring's early arrival!
COMMON GRACKLE:	300	02/22	Center Rd. Sa	BG - First returns - Also noted in Ba
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	50	02/22	Center Rd. Sa	BG - First returns - Also noted in Ba
PINE GROSBEAK:	None			
PURPLE FINCH:	None			
HOUSE FINCH:	10	Present through period, Hampton Twp, Ba. - Also noted in Mi Peak count of 110 @ a feeder at Fish Pte Tu on 12/29 (MW) New SBA peak count!		
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:	8	12/27	Carrolton, Sa	BG, MW - Five males and three females
	1	01/02	Sanford, Mi	GL - Per GK - Also seen on 1/2 & 1/5.
COMMON REDPOLL:	18	12/11	Tawas Pte, Io	BB
	1	12/15	GPNC, Sa	DP
	1	12/24	Midland, Mi	JZ
	1	01/20	Bangor Twp, Ba	G&EP
	3	02/27	Tawas Pte, Io	G&TN
HOARY REDPOLL:	1	12/01	Mayville, Tu	MW - Photographed at Myles' home.
	1	12/21	Grindstone City, Hu	MW

	1	12/30	Tawas Pte, Io	MW
PINE SISKIN:	None			
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:	4	Present through period in Hampton Twp, Ba. - Also noted in Sa, Io, Mi		
EVENING GROSBEAK:	None			
HOUSE SPARROW:	100	12/28	Frankenmuth, Sa	H&JS - Also noted in Ba, Io, Mi
TOTAL: 107 Species				

Observer Key:

LA	Larry Abraham	JL	Janea Little
RA	Ron Annelin	GL	Gary Loebrich
DA	Don Avers	SM	Stan Madziar
TB	Tom Beachy	RM	Rick McAvinchey
BB	Bob Bell	G&TN	Gary & Tess Nelkie
JD	Jan Dennett	TP	Tom Pavlik
ED	Ed DeVries	DP	David Peters
MD	Marcia Dilling	G&EP	Glen & Ellen Peterson
JDi	Janie Dinsmore	BR	Betty Rainwater
BG	Bob Grefe	H&JS	Heinz & Jane Schwarm
JH	Jeanne Henderson	R&RS	Ralph & Rena Shady
M&JH	Mark & Joanie Hubinger	GS	Grant Soehnel
PH	Pat Hubinger	JS	Joe Soehnel
BI	Bob Irwin	CS	Carolyn Szaroletta
PK	Pat Keeler	KT	Kevin Thomas
ML	Mike Ladenberger	TW	Tex Wells
SL	Sara Ladenberger	BW	Bruce Winchell
		WW	Wayne Winchell

Abbreviations:

Ar	Arenac County	MCBC	Midland Christmas Bird Count
Ba	Bay County	MCV	Midland Cogeneration Venture (Pond)
BCCBC	Bay City Christmas Bird Count	Mi	Midland County
BCSRA	Bay City State Recreation Area	Sa	Saginaw County
CNC	Chippewa Nature Center	SBA	Saginaw Bay Area
GPNC	Green Point Nature Center	SNWR	Shiawasee National Wildlife Refuge
Hu	Huron County	SRSGA	Shiawasee River State Game Area
Io	Iosco County	Tu	Tuscola County