

Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

December 1, 2003 through February 29, 2004

Compiled by: Joe Soehnel, Essexville, MI

Weather: The weather for the winter period (MBS weather statistics) produced some unusual weather patterns, including a mild December, an uncommon winter thunderstorm on January 2nd, and higher than average snow totals for each of the three months.

Month	Average Snowfall	Actual Snowfall	Above Average
Dec	10.2"	12.4"	2.2"
Jan	11.8"	24.4"	12.6"
Feb	8.3"	10.5"	2.2"
Total	30.3"	47.3"	17"

December's average high for the month was 36.1, which was 4.1 degrees above the normal high. There were twenty days during the month where the average high & low remained above the average. There were three days with snows exceeding two inches but that snow melted shortly afterward due to moderate temps that followed. The Saginaw River remained open for the entire month.

January 2nd & 3rd matched record highs for the date but then the temps dropped to below normal for the remainder of the month. The Saginaw River didn't completely freeze over until January 8th compared to December 3rd for the previous winter. Nighttime lows reached zero degrees or below on twelve days in January including one stretch of seven consecutive days of zero or below. The coldest temp for the month was on January 25th at -12. Impressive snowstorms also highlighted January on the 14th (7"), the 17th (4"), and the 27th (5").

February's daytime highs remained fairly consistent with the average high for the month but the nighttime lows crept below the average low on sixteen days. Appreciable snows occurred in February on the 3rd (2"), the 6th (3"), and on the 23rd (4").

Summary: 110 species were reported for the winter period, which is the highest total since the winter of '98-'99. There was an unprecedented number of shorebird species that lingered into December due, in large part, to the milder weather that held for the first half of the month. No less than six (6) shorebird species were reported, which far outnumbers past winter reports for the SBA. Additionally, nine (9) gull species were reported, which matches the highest ever winter number from '97-'98, including an SBA first ever **Slaty-back Gull** (pending MBRC acceptance). The SBA's second record of a **Rock Wren** (Same one from October @ Nayanquing Pt?) was another great SBA find. Winter finches, once again, were lacking in the SBA.

Notable birds for the period included: All three **Scoter** species including two December **Black Scoter** reports; **Golden Eagle** at the usual SNWR, SA but also one adult reported at Fish Pt, TU; **Gyr Falcon** at Fish Pt, TU; **Peregrine Falcon** at Carrollton, SA; **Purple Sandpiper** at the AuSable River Mouth, IO; **Iceland Gull** at SNWR, SA and Zilwaukee Bridge, SA; an SBA first record of **Slaty-backed Gull** on the Saginaw River, BA; **Short-eared Owl** reports in three different counties; a cooperative **Rock Wren** at the AuSable River Mouth, IO; **Bohemian Waxwing** at Grindstone City, HU; **Chipping Sparrow** in Bangor Twp, BA; **Eastern Meadowlark** in Garfield Twp, BA, and **Evening Grosbeak** at Cook Dam, IO.

New SBA Peak counts included: 246 Wild Turkeys on 02/15 on Five Mile Rd, near Gordonville, MI.

New SBA Fall Late Date included: **Killdeer** on 01/09 @ Karn Plant, Ba; – **Dunlin** on 12/21 @ AuSable River Mouth, IO, and **Pectoral Sandpiper** on 12/19 @ Finn Rd Pk, BA

What's New: Once again, you can find this and other 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. Send me an e-mail with your spring birding updates to soehnelj@hotmail.com or call me at 989-892-3687.



*Red-necked Grebe Photo by: Bob Bell
Taken 12/20/03-AuSable River Mouth, IO*



*Pectoral Sandpiper Photo by: Dan Duso
Taken 12/19/03 at Finn Road Park, BA*



*Purple Sandpiper Photo by: Bob Bell
Taken 12/20/03-AuSable River Mouth, IO*



*Iceland Gull Photo by: Myles Willard
Taken 12/31/03 on Saginaw River, BA*



*Slaty-backed Gull Photo by: Myles Willard
Taken 12/04/03 on Saginaw River, BA*



*Rock Wren Photo by: Bob Bell
Taken 12/20/03-AuSable River Mouth, IO*



*Chipping Sparrow Photo by: Glenn Peterson
Taken 02/28/04 Bangor Twp, BA*

Species	#	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
COMMON LOON:	1	12/06	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	BB
	2	12/10	Tawas Bay, IO	JS
RED-THROATED LOON		No Reports		
PIED-BILLED GREBE:		No Reports		
HORNED GREBE:	1	12/13	Harbor Beach, HU	MW, MH
RED-NECKED GREBE:	1	12/10	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	JS – There till 12/28 – RE
	1	12/13	Harbor Beach, HU	MW, MH
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:	Up to 8	Noted at Karn Plant, BA - Also noted in IO, MI		
GREAT BLUE HERON:		Peak count of 12 on 01/07 @ SNWR, SA – DP, RM - Also noted in BA, IO		
SNOW GOOSE:	1	01/03	MCV Ponds, MI	JZ – MCBC
	2	12/13	Grindstone City, HU	MW, MH
	9	12/31	SNWR, SA	DP – 2 remained there until 01/03 - BG
ROSS' GOOSE:		No Reports		
CANADA GOOSE:	10559	01/07	SNWR, SA	Peak count. Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI
MUTE SWAN:	168	01/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JS - Peak count - Also noted in AR, HU, IO, MI
BLACK SWAN:	1	01/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JS – Obviously an escape but nonetheless noteworthy. Observed several times there and even saw it fly.
TRUMPETER SWAN:	56	12/22	Loud Dam, IO	WM
	16	02/27	Iargo Springs, IO	JS, RS
TUNDRA SWAN:	1900	12/26	Bayport, HU	TB – Peak count
	18	01/09	Karn Plant, BA	JS, MW, M&JH – Few Jan SBA records. 22 on the same date @ SNWR, SA – BG Also noted in AR
WOOD DUCK:		No Reports		
GADWALL:	12	12/31	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ – 2 still there on 01/29
AMERICAN WIGEON:		No Reports		
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	30	01/29	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ - Also noted in AR, BA, IO, SA
MALLARD:		Peak count of 3099 on 01/07 @ SNWR, SA – RM – Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO		
NORTHERN PINTAIL:	1	12/27	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	RE – Still there on 02/19 – JZ Also noted in HU, SA
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:		No Reports		
CANVASBACK:	1	02/05	Karn Plant, Ba	JS – Also noted in IO, MI
REDHEAD:	1280 200+	12/29	Tawas River Mth, IO	RE – Very large raft!
		01/09	Karn Plant, BA	JS, MW, M&JH – Also noted in IO, MI
RING-NECKED DUCK:	20	01/12	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ – Also noted in BA, TU
GREATER SCAUP:	27	02/18	Karn Plant, BA	JS – Sizeable group resting in the channel. Also noted in MI

LESSER SCAUP:	1 4	12/10 02/26	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO Dow Ponds, MI	JS JZ - Also noted in BA
SCAUP SP:	200+	01/09	Karn Plant, BA	JS, MW, M&JH
SURF SCOTER:	1	01/03	MCV Pond, MI	JZ – MCBC
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	4 3 1 5	12/09 12/13 12/13 12/19	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO Bayport, HU Harbor Beach, HU Finn Rd Pk, BA	CP, JD TB MW, MH DD
BLACK SCOTER:	4 2	12/01 12/12	Bay City, BA Karn Plant, BA	MW JS
LONG-TAILED DUCK:	1210 7	12/20 02/29	Tawas Pte., IO Grindstone City, HU	BB TB
BUFFLEHEAD:	12	01/09	Karn Plant, BA	JS, MW, M&JH – Also noted in AR, IO, MI
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	1200	12/20	Karn Plant, BA	JZ - BCCBC - Also noted in AR, HU, IO, MI
HOODED MERGANSER:	20	12/06	VanEtan Lake, IO	BB – Peak count. Also noted in BA, MI
COMMON MERGANSER:	2000	12/11	Wildfowl Bay, HU	TB – Peak Count - Also noted in AR, BA, IO, MI, SA
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	350	12/05	Tawas Point SP, IO	BB – Peak count. Also noted in AR, BA, HU
RUDDY DUCK:			No Reports	
BALD EAGLE:			Peak count of 15 (9 ad, 6 imm) @ SNWR, SA – DP, RM Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU	
NORTHERN HARRIER:	3	01/10	Fish Pt, TU	JD - Also noted in BA, HU, IO, SA
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	4	12/05	Bayport, HU	TB – Also noted in BA, MI, TU
COOPER'S HAWK:			Noted in AR, BA, HU, MI	
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	1	02/12	Midland Twp, MI	Per Janea Little – a dead immature bird was brought into CNC
NORTHERN GOSHAWK:			No Reports	
RED-TAILED HAWK:			Peak of 6 @ SNWR, SA - BG – Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU	
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	8	12/13	Port Hope Area, HU	MW - Also noted in AR, BA, IO, SA, TU
GOLDEN EAGLE:	1 ad. 1 imm.	12/13 01/07	Fish Pt, TU SNWR, SA	MW, MH DP, RM
AMERICAN KESTREL:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU	
MERLIN:	1	12/13	Bayport, HU	TB
GYRFALCON:	1	12/26	Fish Pt, TU	MW – “Bird heading out to Bay after ducks. I <u>didn't</u> see it close.”
PEREGRINE FALCON:	1	12/20	Carrolton, SA	MW, MH
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	28	01/09	SNWR, SA	BG, CS – Peak count. Also noted in AR, BA, MI, TU

RUFFED GROUSE:	2	12/12	Rogers Rd, BA	MW – Also noted in AR, HU, IO, SA, TU
WILD TURKEY:	246	02/15	Five Mile Rd, MI	SS - New SBA peak count! Also noted in AR, BA, TU
NORTHERN BOBWHITE:	2	02/02	Fish Pt, TU	MW, MH
AMERICAN COOT:	1 34	01/09 01/03	Karn Plant, BA MCV Pond, MI	JS, MW, M&JH – Remained through period. JZ
SANDHILL CRANE:	1	02/29	Saginaw, SA	JS
KILLDEER:	2 1	01/09 02/29	Karn Plant, BA Tawas Point SP, IO	JS, MW, M&JH – New SBA late date! Per NMB – First return.
SANDERLING:	1	12/01	Karn Plant, BA	JS
PECTORAL SANDPIPER:	1 1	12/04 12/19	Finn Rd Pk, BA Finn Rd Pk, BA	MW, MH DD - New SBA late date! Photographed.
PURPLE SANDPIPER:	12/19	1	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	BB - Last seen there on 12/24 – AC
DUNLIN:	20 1	12/01 12/21	Karn Plant, BA AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	JS – Peak count. 1 still there till 12/20. GN – New SBA late date!
COMMON SNIBE:	1	12/01	Finn Rd Pk, BA	MW
LITTLE GULL:	1	12/27	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	RE – Adult, dark underwings very visible. Flying with 6 Bonaparte's Gulls
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	932 139	12/20 01/05	Saginaw River, BA Karn Plant, BA	JS – BCCBC – Peak count. JS – Sizeable Jan. count. Also noted in AR, IO, SA
RING-BILLED GULL:				Peak count of 2278 on 12/18 @ SNWR, SA – DP Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU
HERRING GULL:				Peak count of 7484 on 12/18 @ SNWR, SA – DP Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU
ICELAND GULL:	1 1	12/15 12/31	SNWR, SA Zilwaukee Bridge, SA	DP – Also one noted there on 12/31 – DP MW – Photographed
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:	2 2 3 1 1 ad 1	12/04 12/15 12/18 12/24 01/06 01/11	SNWR, SA SNWR, SA SNWR, SA SNWR, SA Karn Plant, Ba Saginaw River, SA	DP – 1 – 2 nd winter & 1- 3 rd winter DP – 1 – 3 rd winter & 1 adult DP – All of the above at one time. BG JS M&JH
SLATY-BACKED GULL:	1	12/04	Saginaw River, Bay City, BA	MW – Documentation sent to MBRC for review along with photograph.
GLAUCOUS GULL:	1 2 4	12/01 12/05 12/15	Bay City, BA Tawas Pt, IO SNWR, SA	MW BB DP – 2 – 1 st winter & 2 - 2 nd winter Also noted in BA, HU
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	4 1 ad. 6	12/28 12/15 12/19	Tawas Rvr Mth, IO SNWR, SA Karn Plant, Ba	JS DP – a 1 st winter bird there on 12/18 JS – Peak count. Also noted in HU, TU
ROCK DOVE:				Noted in BA, HU, IO, SA, TU

MOURNING DOVE:			Peak of 352 on 01/03 @ SNWR, SA – BG – Also noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, TU	
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU	
GREAT HORNED OWL:			Noted in BA, HU, TU	
SNOWY OWL:	1	12/05	Tawas Point SP, IO	BB
	1	12/12	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	RE
	1	01/18	Hampton Twp, BA	SM, CM
	1	02/16	Owendale, HU	JD
	2	02/15	Kilmanagh, HU	TB – There for the remainder of Feb.
BARRED OWL:	1	02/28	Mayville, TU	MW, M&JH, VT, GC – First yard sighting in 30 years for Myles!
SHORT-EARED OWL:	2	12/01	Bayport, HU	TB
	7	01/09	SNWR, SA	BG, CS
	1	01/16	Nayanquing Pte., BA	K&SH
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL:			No Reports	
BELTED KINGFISHER:	1	01/11	Karn Plant, Ba	JS
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	1	12/06	Bissonnette Rd, IO	BB
	3	12/22	Caseville Area, HU	TB
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI	
DOWNY WOODPECKER:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU	
HAIRY WOODPECKER:			Noted in BA, IO, MI, TU	
NORTHERN FLICKER:	2	12/08	Midland, MI	JZ - Also noted in SA, TU
PILEATED WOODPECKER:			Noted in IO	
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	3	02/16	Nayanquing Pt, BA	JD - Also noted in HU, IO, MI, SA, TU
BLUE JAY:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, TU	
AMERICAN CROW:			Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU	
COMMON RAVEN:	1	12/06	Bissonnette Rd, IO	BB
	1	02/27	Loud Dam, IO	WS
HORNED LARK:	136	01/28	SNWR, SA	DP – Peak count. Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, TU
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU	
TUFTED TITMOUSE:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU	
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:			Peak count of 4 on 02/27 @ Iargo Springs, IO – JS, RS Also noted in BA, HU, SA	
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU	
BROWN CREEPER:			Noted in BA, IO, MI, TU	
ROCK WREN:	1	12/07	AuSable Rvr Mth, IO	Bob Holdreigh per Adam Byrne - MOB – Photographed. Last observed there on 12/21 – RE, GN
CAROLINA WREN:	1	01/28	Bridgeport Twp, SA	Jso

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	1 2	01/19 02/27	Corsair, IO Iargo Springs, IO	SM, CM – Also noted in BA on the BCCBC JS, RS
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	1 20 2 5	12/13 01/08 01/16 01/25	Bayport, HU CNC, MI Seven Mile Rd, BA Mayville, TU	TB – Also noted in SA CA K&SH MW – Present through period.
AMERICAN ROBIN:	1	12/05	Tawas Point SP, IO	Also noted in BA, SA, TU
EUROPEAN STARLING:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, TU Peak count of	
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	31	02/28	Grindstone City, HU	M&MW, M&JH, VT, GC
CEDAR WAXWING:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU	
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	61	01/03	SNWR, SA	BG – Peak count Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU
CHIPPING SPARROW:	1	02/27	Bangor Twp, BA	G&EP – Also observed/photographed on 2/28 Only the 2 nd SBA Feb record!
SONG SPARROW:	2 2	CTP 02/28	Albee Twp, SA Caro, TU	Jso M&MW, M&JH, VT, GC – Also noted in BA, HU
SWAMP SPARROW:			No Reports	
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:			No Reports	
FOX SPARROW:			No Reports	
DARK-EYED JUNCO:			Peak count of 23 on 12-01 in Bangor Twp, BA – G&EP Also noted in HU, MI, SA, TU	
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:			No Reports	
SNOW BUNTING:	345	12/10	SNWR, SA	DP – Peak count. Also noted in BA, HU, IO, TU
NORTHERN CARDINAL:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU	
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	2 8	01/03 02/28	SNWR, SA Nayanquing Pt, BA	BG – Last date. JZ – First returns. Also noted in TU
EASTERN MEADOWLARK:	1	01/16	Garfield Twp, BA	K&SH – Few Jan records.
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:			No Reports	
COMMON GRACKLE:	1	02/28	Fish Pt, TU	M&MW, M&JH, VT, GC Also noted in BA, SA
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	1	12/30	Mayville, TU	MW - Also noted in BA
HOUSE FINCH:			Peak of 40 in Hampton Twp, BA – RS -	Also noted in HU, IO, MI, SA, TU
PURPLE FINCH:	1	12/15	Huron County	Huron County CBC
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:			No Reports	
COMMON REDPOLL:	30	01/07	Arenac County	JG – Peak count. Also noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU
HOARY REDPOLL:			No Reports	

PINE SISKIN:	1	12/03	Bangor Twp, BA	G&EP
	2	01/14	Midland, MI	JZ
PINE GROSBEAK:			No Reports	
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU	
EVENING GROSBEAK:	56	01/11	Cook Dam, IO	WS – There until mid February
HOUSE SPARROW:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU	
TOTAL: 110				

Observer Key:

CA	Charlotte Ackerman	RM	Rick McAvinchey
TB	Tom Beachy	BM	Bill McKenzie
BB	Bob Bell	DM	Doug McWhirter
AC	Allen Chartier	G&TN	Gary & Tess Nelkie
GC	Ginny Crandall	DP	David Peters
JD	Jim Dawe	G&EP	Glen & Ellen Peterson
DD	Dan Duso	CP	Caleb Putnam
RE	Roger Eriksson	SS	Steve Santner
JG	Jack Gillespie	WS	Wayne Shawl
BG	Bob Grefe	JS	Joe Soehnel
JH	Jeanne Henderson	RS	Reed Soehnel
K&SH	Ken & Sandy Hoover	JSo	Jeff Sommer
M&JH	Mark & Joanie Hubinger	CS	Carolyn Szaroletta
CM	Chris Madziar	VT	Val Trabucchi
SM	Stan Madziar	M&MW	Myles & Marilyn Willard
		JZ	Jerry Ziarno

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	NMB	Northern Michigan Birding
CNC	Chippewa Nature Center	SA	Saginaw County
CTP	Common through Period	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
