

Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

December 1, 2001 through February 28, 2002

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Weather: The beginning of December seemed to set the tone for the entire winter period as daytime highs at MBS averaged a whopping 52.6 degrees for the first seven days. Record highs were tied for December 5th and 6th at 65 and 61, respectively. Daytime highs for the month remained above freezing (32F) until December 24th when the high dipped to 27F. The Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay froze over the next two weeks but thawed with January's above average temps. Both the river and bay remained open for the rest of the winter period as temperatures moderated. (See table below for MBS Airport stats.)

Month	Average High	Normal Average High	Departure from Normal
December	38.9	32.1	+6.8
January	34.9	27.9	+7.0
February	36.6	29.5	+5.1

Precipitation was below normal for December and January while February's precipitation was slightly above normal. The greatest daily precipitation total for the winter period came in the form of rain as six tenths of an inch fell on February 20th. Earth worms actually surfaced and were stranded on our street as I ran the following morning!

Summary: Passerines, particularly the 'winter finches', headed the list of notable birds for the winter period. Topping the list was a **Varied Thrush** that graced the yard of Ron Annelin in early December. This represents only the tenth SBA record for this species. Passerines that seemed to take advantage of the milder winter included: a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** discovered at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge on Feb 14th, which represents the only Feb SBA record; a **Common Yellowthroat** at Crow Island on Dec 2nd; a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** at Tawas Point on Dec 29th; a **Fox Sparrow** that lingered until Jan 1st; and a number of overwintering Blackbird species.

Notable birds for the period included: **Common Loon** on Foote Pond in Iosco County; **Greater White-fronted Goose** at SNWR; **White-winged Scoter** on the Saginaw Bay in Arenac County; **Northern Goshawk** from both Iosco & Tuscola Counties; **Golden Eagle** (another of my MI nemesis birds) at SNWR; **Peregrine Falcon** at Tawas Point; **Killdeer** on the BCCBC; **Bohemian Waxwing, White-winged Crossbill and Pine Grosbeak** in Iosco County, and two **Hoary Redpoll** sightings in Saginaw County.

New SBA Peak counts included: 27 Trumpeter Swans at Iargo Springs, Iosco County (now a countable Michigan bird species according to MBRC)

New SBA Fall Late Date included: One **Fox Sparrow** at the Peterson's bird feeder till Jan 1st!

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. This is an SBA 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 989-892-3687.

Thanks to all who take the time to send in your birding records. The SBA seasonal survey goes back to the middle 1980's (as far as I know) in the days of Kenaga, Grefe, Francke, Walsh, and Weeks. Some are still here and some have moved to other places but the tradition of the SBA survey lives on, thanks to those who contribute . . . Good birding!!!

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
COMMON LOON:	2	12/16	Foote Pond, IO	FM
PIED-BILLED GREBE:	3	12/11	SNWR, SA	RM
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:	Up to 4	Noted at Karn Plant, BA - Also noted in MI, SA		
GREAT BLUE HERON:		Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI – Peak count of 11 on 12/02 @ SNWR, SA – BG, CS		
GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE:	2	12/21	SNWR, SA	DP
	3	01/18	SNWR, SA	DP
SNOW GOOSE:	34	12/21	SNWR, SA	DP – Peak Count – 1 remained on 01/11 BG, CS – First returns
	3	02/22	SNWR, SA	
CANADA GOOSE:	15,593	01/23	SNWR, SA	RM - Peak count. Also noted in BA, HU, IO
MUTE SWAN:	25	12/05	BCSRA, BA	G&EP - Also noted in IO, MI
TRUMPETER SWAN:	27	01/21	Iargo Springs, IO	JS – 22 ad/5 juv – 3 juv remained on 02/25
TUNDRA SWAN:	450	12/13	Huron Co.	TB - Also noted in BA, IO, SA
WOOD DUCK:	2	12/02	Huron Co.	TB
	1	01/05	Karn Plant, BA	M&JH, M&MW
GADWALL:	50	01/09	SNWR, SA	RM - Also noted in MI
AMERICAN WIGEON:	12	02/28	SNWR, SA	RM
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	87	12/11	SNWR, SA	RM – Also noted in BA, IO, MI
MALLARD:	2113	Peak count on 12/11 @ SNWR, SA – RM - Also noted in BA, HU, IO, MI		
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	161	12/11	SNWR, SA	RM
	19	02/28	SNWR, SA	RM
BLUE-WINGED TEAL	1	12/06	SNWR, SA	DP – Last Date
NORTHERN PINTAIL:	1	01/13	SNWR, SA	DP
	1	02/06	Huron Co.	TB
	3	02/24	SSGA, SA	M&JH, M&MW
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	80	12/11	SNWR, SA	RM - Also on 12/11 @ Dow Ponds, MI - JZ RM
	2	01/09	SNWR, SA	
CANVASBACK:	33	02/28	SNWR, SA	RM - Also noted in BA
REDHEAD:	1,250	02/25	Tawas Bay, IO	JS - Also noted in HU
RING-NECKED DUCK:	150	12/28	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ
	4	02/06	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ - Also noted in BA, SA
GREATER SCAUP:	6	12/11	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ

	3	02/25	Tawas Bay, IO	JS – First Return
LESSER SCAUP:	1	01/26	Hampton Twp, BA	JS - Also noted in IO, MI
SCAUP SP.	12	12/29	Karn Plant, BA	JZ, RA
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	2	01/12	Arenac Co.	DM, KO
SCOTER SP.:	1	12/15	Harbor Beach, HU	M&MW, M&JH
LONG-TAILED DUCK:	2,000+	02/19	Tawas Pte., IO	GN – Impressive winter total!
BUFFLEHEAD:	13	02/25	Tawas Bay, IO	JS - Also noted in BA, HU, MI, SA
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	750	01/21	Oscoda, IO	JS – Peak Count – Also noted in BA, HU, MI
HOODED MERGANSER:	54	12/02	BCSRA, BA	G&EP – Also noted in BA, HU, MI
	10	02/22	SNWR, SA	BG, CS – First Return
COMMON MERGANSER:	400	12/15	MCV Pond, MI	JZ (MCBC) - Also noted in BA, HU, SA
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	175	01/05	Tawas Bay, IO	JS – Peak count - Also noted in BA, HU, MI
RUDDY DUCK:	69	12/11	SNWR, SA	RM
	2	01/04	SNWR, SA	DP – Last date. Also noted in MI
BALD EAGLE:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI – Peak count of 17 on 02/14 @ SNWR, SA – BG, CS	
NORTHERN HARRIER:	6	01/27	SNWR, SA	BG, CS - Also noted in BA, HU, IO
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	12/07	SNWR, SA	BG, CS
	1	01/26	Hampton Twp, BA	JS – New yard bird!
	1	CTP	Pigeon, HU	TB - Also CTP in TU – MW - Noted in MI
COOPER'S HAWK:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
NORTHERN GOSHAWK:	1	01/06	Buck Creek, IO	G&TN
	1	02/02	Caro Area, TU	MW
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	1	01/11	Huron Co.	TB
RED-TAILED HAWK:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA 1 “very white Krider’ s” noted on 1/20 @ SSRGA, SA - M&JH, M&MW	
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	3	01/21	Hale, IO	JS - Also noted in BA, HU, SA
GOLDEN EAGLE:	1	02/28	SNWR, SA	BG, CS & DP
AMERICAN KESTREL:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
MERLIN:	1	01/03	Crow Island, SA	SM
PEREGRINE FALCON:	1	12/27	Tawas Pte., IO	FM
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	7	01/27	SNWR, SA	BG, CS - Also noited in HU
RUFFED GROUSE:	1	01/01	Albee Twp, SA	Jso

	1	01/18	Mayville, TU	MW
WILD TURKEY:	180	12/28	Tittabawassee Rv, MI	JZ - Also noted in AR, BA, IO
AMERICAN COOT:	46	12/15	MCV Pond, MI	JZ (MCBC) - Also noted in BA, SA
SANDHILL CRANE:	No reports			
KILLDEER:	1	12/29	Karn Plant, BA	JZ, RA (BCCBC)
	1	02/27	Huron Co.	TB – First return
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	12	12/07	Tawas Pte., IO	BB
	45	12/11	Vanderbilt Pk, TU	JZ
	4	12/29	Karn Plant, BA	JZ, RA (BCCBC) – Last date. Also noted in MI
RING-BILLED GULL:	Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA			
HERRING GULL:	62	Peak count on 01/27 @ SNWR, SA – BG, CS – Also noted in BA, HU, IO, MI		
GLAUCOUS GULL:	1	01/13	Saginaw River, SA	Jso
	1	02/23	Huron Co.	M&JH, M&MW
	1 imm	02/25	Tawas Pte., IO	JS
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	10	12/29	Karn Plant, BA	JZ, RA (BCCBC)
	4 –ad	02/16	Hampton Twp, BA	JS – Also noted in IO
	6	02/23	Huron Co.	M&JH, M&MW
ROCK DOVE:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI – Peak count of 275 on 02/25 @ Gypsum Dock, IO – JS			
MOURNING DOVE:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI – Peak count of 138 on 01/02 @ SNWR, SA – BG, CS			
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	8	01/27	SNWR, SA	BG, CS - Also noted in BA, MI
GREAT HORNED OWL:	Noted in BA, HU, SA, TU			
SNOWY OWL:	1	12/02	Tawas Pte., IO	G&TN
	1	12/05	Hampton Twp, BA	JS
	1	01/05	Karn Plant, BA	M&JH, M&MW
	2-3	CTP	Huron Co.	
BARRED OWL:	1	02/14	Iosco Co	BM
SHORT-EARED OWL:	3	01/27	SNWR, SA	BG, CS
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL:	1	12/12	Caro, TU	MW
BELTED KINGFISHER:	1	01/02	SNWR, SA	BG, CS - Also noted in HU, IO, MI
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	1		St Charles, SA	Observed by NWR staff in Dec & Jan
	1	02/13	Midland, MI	JZ – Observed from beginning of period.
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA			
DOWNY WOODPECKER:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA			
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI			

NORTHERN FLICKER:	1	CTP	SNWR, SA	DP
	1	02/22	SSRGA, SA	M&JH, M&MW - Also noted in BA, TU
PILEATED WOODPECKER:	1	12/23	Tittabawasee Rd, MI	JZ
	1	01-02	SNWR, SA	BG, CS
	1	02/25	Pinconning Twp, BA	JS
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	1	01/05	Karn Plant, BA	JS
	1	01/07	SNWR, SA	DP
	1	02/16	Tawas City, IO	G&TN
	1	02/24	Crow Island, SA	M&JH, M&MW Also noted in TU
	1	02/25	Huron Co.	TB
BLUE JAY:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
AMERICAN CROW:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
COMMON RAVEN:	6	12/08	Tuttle Marsh, IO	BB
HORNED LARK:	180	02/27	Huron Co.	TB - Peak count - Also noted in BA, IO, MI, SA
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
TUFTED TITMOUSE:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	2	12/15	Hampton Twp, BA	JS – Through period. Also noted in IO, MI, SA
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
BROWN CREEPER:	2	12/07	SNWR, SA	BG, CS - Also noted in BA, HU, MI
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET:	1	02/14	SNWR, SA	BG, CS – Came within ten ft. from Bob' s car as it responded to an owl tape. There have been no previous SBA Jan, Feb, or March records for this species!
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	2	01/05	Tuscola Co.	M&JH, M&MW - CTP in Tuscola Co.
	5	01/05	Birch Run Twp, SA	JSo
	3	02/25	SNWR, SA	RM
	4	CTP	Midland, MI	RA
AMERICAN ROBIN:	Up to 15	CTP	Midland, MI	RA – Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, SA
VARIED THRUSH:	1	12/07	Midland, MI	RA, JZ, et.al. – Remained again on 12/08. This represents the 10 th SBA record of this western species!
EUROPEAN STARLING:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA	
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	25	01/05	Tawas High Sch, IO	JS
CEDAR WAXWING:	40	12/31	Huron Co.	TB – Also noted in BA, MI
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:	1	12/29	Tawas Pte., IO	BB
COMMON YELLOWTHROAT:	1	12/02	Crow Island, SA	RH - Only 2 previous Dec records for SBA!

AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	172	12/07	SNWR, SA	BG, CS Also noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, TU
SONG SPARROW:	2	12/11	SNWR, SA	RM - Also noted in BA, HU, MI
SWAMP SPARROW:	2	02/10	Hampton Twp, BA	DD
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:	1	02/03	Bangor Twp, BA	M&JH, G&EP - Also noted in MI
FOX SPARROW:	1	01/01	Bangor Twp, BA	G&EP, M&MW – New SBA fall late date!
DARK-EYED JUNCO:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA	
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	No reports			
SNOW BUNTING:	900	02/03	Huron Co.	TB – Peak count – Also noted in BA, IO, SA
NORTHERN CARDINAL:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA - One noted <i>singing</i> on 1/10 in Hampton Twp, BA – JS	
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	1	02/22	Saginaw Twp, SA	BG – Also noted in BA, HU
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	1	02/24	SSRGA, SA	MH&MW - Also noted in BA
COMMON GRACKLE:	1 3	01/30 02/22	SSRGA, SA Saginaw Twp, SA	BG, CS – overwintered? BG – First returns Also noted in BA, AR, HU, IO
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	3 5	01/05 02/28	Crow Island, SA Hampton Twp, BA	M&JH, M&MW JS - Also noted in SA
HOUSE FINCH:			Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA - Peak count of 82 @ SNWR, SA – DP	
PURPLE FINCH:	1	12/18	Huron Co.	TB
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:	1 imm 21	12/15 01/01	Baldwin Twp, IO Baldwin Twp, IO	JR – Remained through 12/25 BW – Remained through end of Jan
COMMON REDPOLL:	250	02/25	Huron Co.	TB - Also noted in AR, BA, MI, SA, TU
HOARY REDPOLL:	1 1	01/05 01/20	Saginaw Co. SSRGA, SA	M&JH, M&MW M&JH, M&MW - No details provided.
PINE SISKIN:	4	12/09	Albee Twp, SA	JSo – Up to 11 through remainder of period. Also noted in BA, TU
PINE GROSBEAK:	1 9	12/15 01/21	Grindstone City, HU Oscoda Twp, IO	M&MW, M&JH JS
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:			Noted in HU, IO, MI, SA – Peak count of 23 @ Hampton Twp, BA - JS	
HOUSE SPARROW:			Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA	
TOTAL: 109 Species (Compared with only 89 species for the previous winter report)				

Observer Key:

LA	Larry Abraham	DM	Doug McWhirter
RA	Ron Annelin	G&TN	Gary & Tess Nelkie
TB	Tom Beachy	KO	Karl Ott
BB	Bob Bell	DP	David Peters
JDi	Janie Dinsmore	G&EP	Glen & Ellen Peterson
DD	Dan Duso	JR	Jane Ruster
BG	Bob Grefe	JSo	Jeff Sommer
JH	Jeanne Henderson	GS	Grant Soehnel
RH	Roger Hill	JS	Joe Soehnel
M&JH	Mark & Joanie Hubinger	CS	Carolyn Szaroletta
SM	Stan Madziar	BW	Barbara White
RM	Rick McAvinchey	M&MW	Myles & Marilyn Willard
FM	Fred McDonald	JZ	Jerry Ziarno
BM	Bill McKenzie		

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
CTP	Common through Period	SNWR	Shiawasee National Wildlife Refuge
GPNC	Green Point Nature Center	SRSGA	Shiawasee River State Game Area
HU	Huron County	TU	Tuscola County
IO	Iosco County		
