

Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

Dec 1st, 2004 thru Feb 31st, 2005

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Weather: The past few winters have provided the Saginaw Bay Area with unique weather patterns and this period was no exception. The area was dealt above normal precipitation in the form of snow and/or rain only to have three successive thaws that completely melted the snow pack away. December received 16.7" of snow, which is 6.5" above normal. It lost it all by the end of the month when temperatures climbed to 56F on 12/31. A seven-inch snow fell on Jan 6th only to be melted away with heavy rains (.55" on 01/12 & 1.25" on 01/13) and temps above 50F. The remainder of January stayed at or below 30F and another big snow event of six inches fell on Jan 22nd.

Ten of the first sixteen days in early February reached daytime highs above 35F so a third thaw took place. The roller coaster snow events continued with a major snowstorm, which dumped 12" of snow on Feb 21st. This snow remained for the rest of Feb as temps remained below freezing. See chart below for the impressive snow totals for each of the three months.

Month	Actual Snowfall	Average Snowfall	Departure from Normal
December	16.7"	10.2"	+6.5"
January	15.9"	11.8"	+4.1"
February	18.0"	8.3"	+9.7"
Totals:	50.6"	30.3"	+20.3"

Summary: 109 bird species were observed in the SBA for this winter period, which was one less than last year's count. An impressive twenty-nine species of waterfowl included: the now countable **Cackling Goose** at SNWR, SA and Huron County's CBC; **Harlequin Duck**, also on the Huron CBC, and a single report of one **White-winged Scoter** in Hampton Twp, BA. There was a complete absence of shorebird species compared to last winter's six species, which may never be matched again. Gull species included: **Thayer's Gull** at the Middlegrounds, BA along with peak counts of **57 Glaucous Gulls** and **45 Great Black-backed Gulls** at the "Hot Ponds" of Hampton Twp, BA.

There were numerous reports of **Snowy Owls** in Tuscola County, which arguably could be the best area in the state for spotting them. Other Snowy Owl reports came from Huron County and a first record at Chippewa Nature Center, MI. Snowy Owls were once regular winter visitors to the Karn Plant property and "Hot Ponds" but this author hasn't seen one there in a number of winters. (The SBA peak count for Snowy Owls was six at the "Hot Ponds" in January, 1992.) Mark Hubinger and I speculated that the increase in Bald Eagles to that area from the mid 1990's onward could have displaced the Snowy Owls. That could also be the reason why there are so few reports of Snowy Owls at SNWR, SA, as there is always a good supply of Bald Eagles at that location as well.

Notable passerines for the period included: **Carolina Wren** in Midland County; a hearty **Gray Catbird** that overwintered at Chippewa Nature Center, MI; a reliable **Harris's Sparrow** that came to a feeder on VanEttan Lake, IO in Dec & Jan, and two reports of **Lapland Longspur**, one in Iosco and the other in Huron County. Other overwintering/lingering passerines included Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, and Rusty Blackbird. Winter finches were lacking, once again, for the most part.

New SBA peak count: 63 Trumpeter Swans @ Iargo Springs on 01/17, IO; 131 Mute Swans @ Karn Plant, BA on 12/20

Look for this report (graphs/photos in color) at <http://www.saginawbaybirding.org> along with a “heads up” on spring records in the Saginaw Bay Area as they are reported to me at sohnelj@hotmail.com or by calling at 989-892-3687.

Good birding and, as always, thanks for sending in your seasonal reports!!!



*Red-shouldered Hawk photo by: Glenn Peterson
Taken 12/12/04 in Bangor Twp., BA*



*Pileated Woodpecker photo by: Tess Nelkie
Taken 01/08/05 in Tawas City, IO*



*Harris's Sparrow photo by: Sue Malski
Taken January, 2005 at VanEtten Lake, IO*

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
SNOW GOOSE:	24 3	12/16 02/21	SNWR, SA SNWR, SA	DP - Peak count. DP, JS
ROSS' GOOSE	None to report			
CAKCLING GOOSE:	7 8	12/02 12/15	SNWR, SA Huron CBC	DP – A distinctive flock. Per JHa
CANADA GOOSE:	2350	12/18	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ, JU – Dow Ponds & MCV Pond, MI Also noted in BA, HU, SA, TU
MUTE SWAN:	131	12/20	Karn Plant, Ba	JS & GS – New SBA Peak Count. Also noted in AR, HU, IO, MI, SA
TUNDRA SWAN:	1000 5 1	12/12 01/30 02/04	Pinc. Pk., BA Cooke Dam, IO Hampton Twp, BA	M&JH – Peak count - Also noted in HU M&JH, M&MW, VT, JC KB
TRUMPETER SWAN:	3 63 2	12/16 01/17 02/12	SNWR, SA Iargo Springs, IO Fish Point, TU	DP JS, RS – New SBA peak count! DH
WOOD DUCK:	1	12/22	Karn Plant, Ba	JS & MH
GADWALL:	27 2	12/18 12/22	Dow Ponds, MI Karn Plant, Ba	JZ, JU – MCBC JS & MH
AMERICAN WIGEON:	25	12/09	Pinc. Pk., BA	JS
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	Noted in BA, IO, MI - Peak count of 96 @ SNWR, SA on 12/09 – DP			
MALLARD:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	13	12/09	SNWR, SA	DP – Also noted in BA
NORTHERN PINTAIL:	1 2	02/14 02/25	Oscoda, IO Dow Ponds, MI	JD RD, LM
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	59 1 fem	12/02 02/25	SNWR, SA Dow Ponds, MI	DP – Peak count. Last (10) on 12/09 RD, LM
CANVASBACK:	2	12/22	Karn Plant, Ba	JS & MH – Also noted in MI
REDHEAD:	3 8 50	02/02 02/24 02/27	Hampton Twp, BA Dow Ponds, MI Harbor Beach, HU	MH & MW JZ KO
RING-NECKED DUCK:	10 Many	12/18 02/25	Dow Ponds, MI Dow Ponds, MI	JZ, JU – MCBC RD, LM
GREATER SCAUP:	10 8	12/12 02/05	Pinc. Pk., BA Karn Plant, BA	M&JH JS - Also noted in MI
LESSER SCAUP:	2 2	01/02 02/25	Karn Plant, BA Dow Ponds, MI	JZ, JU – BCCBC RD, LM
SCAUP SP:	4000+	12/11	Hampton Twp, BA	DD
HARLEQUIN DUCK:	3	12/15	Grindstone City, HU	MH, DD, MW, et. al.
SURF SCOTER:	None to report.			
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	1	02/02	Hampton Twp, BA	MH & MW
BLACK SCOTER:	None to report.			

LONG-TAILED DUCK:	1 138	12/17 01/04	Karn Plant, Ba Tawas Bay, IO	JS & MH – There till 02/05 JS – 50 still noted there on 02/11 - BB
BUFFLEHEAD:	9	01/04	Oscoda, IO	JS – Also noted in BA, HU
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	1500+	12/11	Hampton Twp, BA	DD – Also noted in HU, IO, MI
HOODED MERGANSER:	31	12/01	Karn Plant, BA	JS – Peak Count – Also noted in HU, MI, SA
COMMON MERGANSER:	2000	12/12	Pinc. Pk., BA	M&JH – Peak count – Also noted in HU, IO, MI, SA
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	3	12/17	Karn Plant, Ba	JS & MH – Also noted in HU, IO, MI
RUDDY DUCK:	20	12/02	SNWR, SA	DP – Peak count.
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	Noted in BA, HU, SA, TU			
RUFFED GROUSE:	2	CTP	Cooke Dam, IO	WS – Also noted in MI, TU
WILD TURKEY:	Noted in BA, IO, MI, TU			
NORTHERN BOBWHITE:	None to report.			
PIED-BILLED GREBE:	1	12/20	Karn Plant, Ba	JS & GS
HORNED GREBE:	1 1	12/09 01/02	Pinc. Pk., BA Saginaw River, BA	JS JS & DD – BCCBC
RED-NECKED GREBE:	None to report.			
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT:	1	CTP	Karn Plant, Ba	JS – Also noted in MI, SA
GREAT BLUE HERON:	Noted in BA, SA – Peak of 20 on 12/02 @ SNWR, SA – DP			
TURKEY VULTURE:	1	02/19	Midland, MI	JZ – Very early!
BALD EAGLE:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, TU – Peak count of 13 on 02/15 @ SNWR, SA – BG, CS			
NORTHERN HARRIER:	2	02/21	SNWR, SA	DP, JS – Also noted in BA, IO, TU
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	02/02	Fish Point, TU	MH & MW – Also noted in HU
COOPER'S HAWK:	Noted in BA, IO, MI, SA, TU			
NORTHERN GOSHAWK:	1 1 1 1	12/02 01/07 01/17 02/04	SNWR, SA Karn Plant, BA VanEttan Lake, IO Nayanquing Pt, BA	DP JS & MH JS KB
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	1 1 1 1 1	12/12 01/05 01/29 02/05 02/08	Bangor Twp, BA Homer Twp, MI SNWR-S, SA Mayville, TU Ashby Rd, MI	G&EP – New yard bird! PS & JL M&JH MW JZ
RED-TAILED HAWK:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, MI, SA, TU – Peak of 12 on 01/21 @ SNWR, SA – DP			
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	1 1 1 6	12/27 01/04 01/05 02/05	Tuscola County AuGres, AR Tuttle Marsh, IO Wahl/Prior Rd, SA	K&SH JS SMa M&JH
GOLDEN EAGLE:	1 imm	02/12	SNWR, SA	M&JH – There also on 02/13 & 17
AMERICAN KESTREL:	Noted in BA, MI, TU			

MERLIN:	1	12/27	Hampton Twp, BA	K&SH
	1	02/13	SNWR, SA	SJ
PEREGRINE FALCON:	1	01/05	Karn Plant, BA	JS
	1	01/07	Gilford Rd, TU	LA
	1	01/08	Richville, TU	M&JH et.al.
	1	01/30	SNWR, SA	Per DP
	1	02/12	Sebawaing, HU	SJ
AMERICAN COOT:	23	12/18	Dow Ponds, MI	JZ, JU - Also noted in SA
	1	12/22	Karn Plant, Ba	JS & MH
SANDHILL CRANE:	1	02/25	Freeland, SA	GW – Quite early for the conditions!
KILLDEER:	None to report.			
AMERICAN WOODCOCK:	None to report.			
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	140	12/01	Karn Plant, BA	JS – Peak Count - Also noted in SA
	4	12/16	BCSRA, BA	JZ – Last date.
RING-BILLED GULL:	Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA			
HERRING GULL:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
THAYER'S GULL:	1	01/03	Middlegrounds, BA	M&JH, MW – 1 st winter bird observed for 30 min.
GLAUCOUS GULL:	2	12/16	SNWR, SA	DP – 1 st winter birds.
	57	01/04	Hampton Twp, BA	DD – Incredible numbers!
	15	02/11	Hampton Twp, BA	MH
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	45	01/04	Hampton Twp, BA	DD Also noted in HU
	30	02/11	Hampton Twp, BA	MH
	1 imm	02/14	Oscoda, IO	JD
ROCK PIGEON:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
MOURNING DOVE:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU – Peak of 80 on 02/03 @ SNWR, SA – BG, RM			
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	8	12/16	SNWR, SA	BG, CS, LA
	1	01/27	SNWR-S, SA	MH – Also noted in BA, TU
GREAT HORNED OWL:	Noted in BA, SA, TU			
SNOWY OWL:	1	12/10	Pinc. Rd., BA	JF
	1	12/11	Sebawaing Rd, HU	CS – Also noted in TU on a regular basis – MO
	1	01/15	CNC, MI	MB – First Chippewa NC record!
BARRED OWL:	1	01/02	Bangor Twp, BA	S&CM – BCCBC
	1	02/22	Corsair Ski Trail, IO	TN
SHORT-EARED OWL:	None to report.			
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL:	None to report.			
BELTED KINGFISHER:	2	CTP	Karn Plant, Ba	JS – Also noted in IO, SA
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER:	2	01/20	Sidtown, IO	DM – Per Gary Nelkie
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
DOWNY WOODPECKER:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
NORTHERN FLICKER:	1	12/08	Nayanquing Pt, BA	MH, DD - Also noted in SA, TU

PILEATED WOODPECKER:	1	CTP	Cooke Dam, IO	WS
	1	CTP	Tawas City, IO	G&TN
	1	01/27	SNWR-S, SA	MH
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	1	12/03	Cooke Dam, IO	WS – Also noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU
BLUE JAY:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU – Peak count of 42 at Cooke Dam, IO - WS			
AMERICAN CROW:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
COMMON RAVEN:	11	CTP	Corsair Ski Trail, IO	G&TN
HORNED LARK:	95	02/21	SNWR, SA	DP, JS - Also noted in BA, HU, TU
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
TUFTED TITMOUSE:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, SA, TU			
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
BROWN CREEPER:	1	CTP	Cooke Dam, IO	WS – Also noted in BA, MI, SA, TU
CAROLINA WREN:	1	01/21	NE Midland Co.	DE – per JL
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	1	01/17	Cooke Dam, IO	JS - Also noted in TU
	3	01/02	Bridgeport, SA	JSo
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	3	12/18	MCV Pond, MI	JZ, JU - Also noted in TU
	3	01/02	Hampton Twp, BA	JS – BCCBC
	2	01/08	Vassar Rd, TU	M&JH
AMERICAN ROBIN:	Noted in BA, IO, SA, TU – Peak count of 45 in Midland, MI on 01/25 – TS			
GRAY CATBIRD:	1	CTP	CNC, MI	CNC Staff – This hearty bird remained for the entire winter near the interpretive center.
EUROPEAN STARLING:	Noted in AR, BA, IO, MI, SA, TU			
CEDAR WAXWING:	9	12/25	Stark Rd., MI	JZ – Also noted in BA, HU, SA, TU
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	None to report.			
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	81	01/30	Hampton Twp, Ba	JS - Also noted in AR, HU, MI, TU
	206	01/21	SNWR, SA	DP
FOX SPARROW:	1	12/31	Hampton Twp, BA	MH, DD, MW – Quite late!
SONG SPARROW:	2	12/17	Quanicassee, TU	MH & DD – Also noted in BA, SA
HARRIS'S SPARROW:	1	01/05	Oscoda, IO	SMA – et.al. – It was at her feeders from Dec, '04 and was last reported on 01/25.
SWAMP SPARROW:	1	01/09	Tuscola CBC	per JHa
	1	02/04	Hampton Twp, BA	KB
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW:	1	01/30	Hampton Twp, BA	JS – With the large Am. Tree Sparrow group.
	1	12/20	Saginaw, SA	BG
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW:	1	02/27	Curtis Rd, SA	M&JH – over wintering bird
DARK-EYED JUNCO:	Noted in BA, HU, MI, TU			
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	1	01/22	Air Base, IO	SJ, et. al.

	3	02/27	Port Hope, HU	KO
SNOW BUNTING:	152	01/07	Karn Plant, BA	JS & MH
	275	01/19	SNWR, SA	DP – Also noted in IO, TU
NORTHERN CARDINAL:	Noted in BA, IO, MI, SA, TU			
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	30	12/17	Hampton Twp, BA	MH & DD
	1	01/02	Hampton Twp, BA	JS & DD
	1	02/16	Hartley NC, SA	Per PR
	26	02/24	Hampton Twp, BA	DD
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	8	12/02	SNWR, SA	DP – Peak count. Last 3 on 12/30
COMMON GRACKLE:	4	12/17	Hampton Twp, BA	MH & DD
	1	01/30	Baldwin Twp, IO	M&JH, M&MW, VT, JC
	1	02/18	Saginaw, SA	BG
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	3	12/14	Hartley NC, SA	PR – Also noted in BA
	20	02/27	Curtis Rd, SA	M&JH
PINE GROSBEAK:	None to report.			
PURPLE FINCH:	3	CTP	Cooke Dam, IO	WS
	3	01/05	CNC, MI	Per JL
	25	01/28	'Berry Patch', TU	MW – Near M-46 & Leix Rd.
HOUSE FINCH:	Noted in BA, HU, MI, SA, TU – Peak count of 31 on 12/27 in Hampton Twp, BA - JS			
RED CROSSBILL:	None to report.			
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:	None to report.			
COMMON REDPOLL:	2	12/30	Bangor Twp, BA	G&EP
	5	01/22	CNC, MI	Per JL
	1	01/22	M-65, AR	SJ, et.al.
	6	02/06	Cooke Dam, IO	WS
	2	02/15	Carrolton Twp, SA	G&DG
PINE SISKIN:	12	12/03	Cooke Dam, IO	WS – Also noted in BA, TU
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:	Noted in BA, HU, IO, MI, SA, TU			
EVENING GROSBEAK:	22	12/30	Cooke Dam, IO	WS
HOUSE SPARROW:	Noted in AR, BA, HU, MI, SA, TU			

TOTAL: 109 Species

OBSERVATIONS OUTSIDE THE SAGINAW BAY AREA:

PILEATED WOODPECKER:	1	02/20	MTU Campus	GS – Houghton County
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	60	02/27	MTU Campus	GS – Houghton County

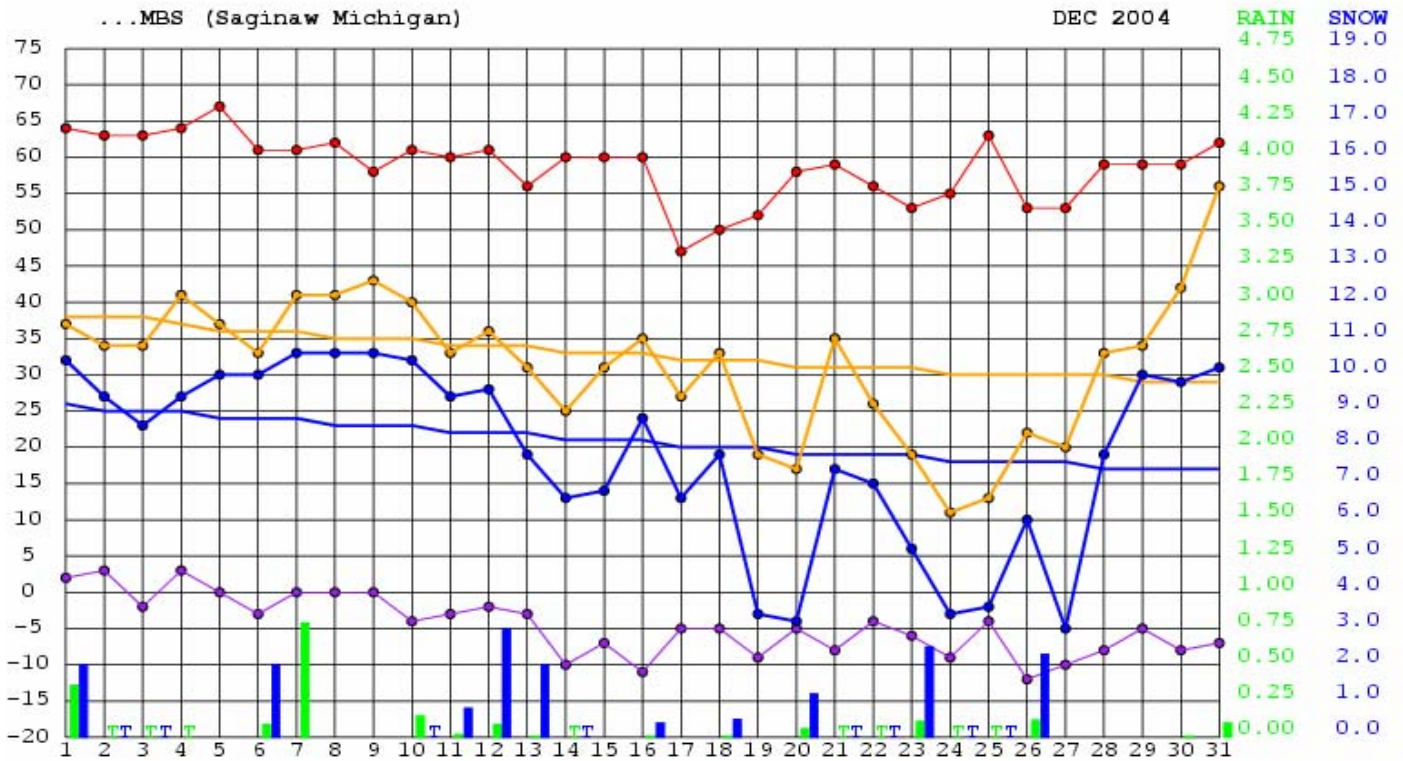
Observer Key:

LA	Larry Abraham	SMA	Sue Malski
KB	Kyle Bagnall	LM	Lisa McArthur
BB	Bob Bell	RM	Rick McAvinchey
MB	Mike Boyce	DM	Dave McDaniel
JC	Jenny Crandall	G&TN	Gary & Tess Nelkie
JD	Jim Dawe	KO	Karl Overman
DD	Dan Duso	DP	David Peters
RD	Ryan Dziedzic	G&EP	Glen & Ellen Peterson
DE	Dave Eigsti	PR	Paul Roose
JF	Jeff Fulkerson	CS	Chris Schumacher
G&DG	Gus & Delores Gavit	GS	Grant Soehnel
JG	Jack Gillespie	JS	Joe Soehnel
BG	Bob Grefe	RS	Reed Soehnel
JHa	Jerry Hall	TS	Tony Soehnel
DH	Dan Hansz	Jso	Jeff Sommer
JH	Jeanne Henderson	PS	Phil Stephens
K&SH	Ken & Sandy Hoover	CS	Carolyn Szaroletta
M&JH	Mark & Joanie Hubinger	VT	Val Trabucchi
SJ	Scott Jennex	JU	John Uhlmann
JL	Janea Little	M&MW	Myles & Marilyn Willard
WM	William McKenzie	GW	Grant Winchell
CM	Chris Madziar	JZ	Jerry Ziarno
SM	Stan Madziar		

Abbreviations:

AR	Arenac County	MCV	Midland Cogeneration Venture (Pond)
BA	Bay County	MI	Midland County
BCSRA	Bay City State Recreation Area	MO	Many Observers
CNC	Chippewa Nature Center	NMB	Northern Michigan Message Board
CTP	Common Through Period	SA	Saginaw County
FSL	Freeland Sewage Lagoon	SBA	Saginaw Bay Area
GPNC	Green Point Nature Center	SNWR	Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge
		SNWRS-S	Shiawassee NWR, Stroebe Rd.
HU	Huron County	SSGA	Shiawassee State Game Area
IO	Iosco County	TU	Tuscola County

December, 2004 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)

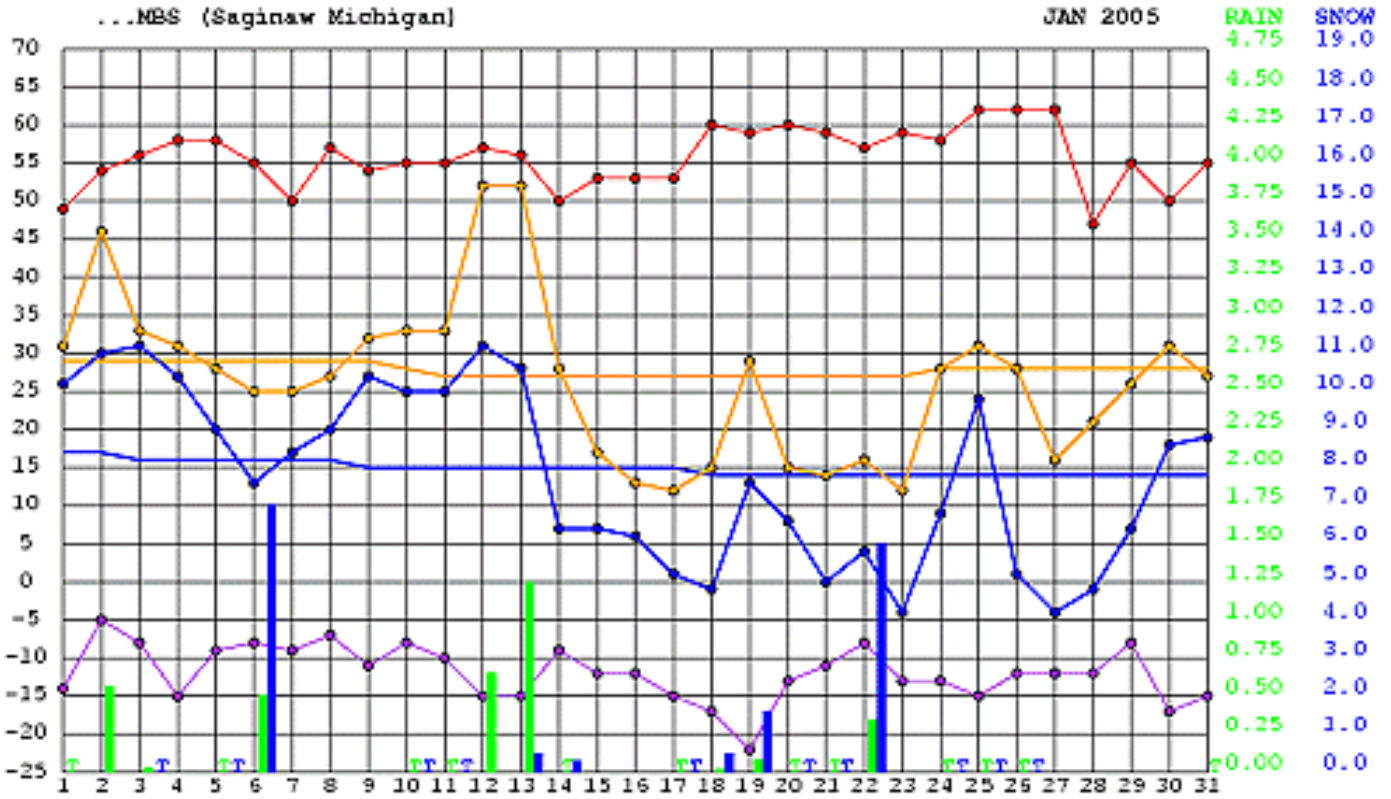


TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

Average High.....31.6	Monthly Normal.....33.0	Average Low.....19.3	Monthly Normal.....20.9
Average for Month...25.4	Monthly Normal.....27.0	Monthly HDD.....1220	Monthly Normal HDD..1179
Monthly CDD.....0	Monthly Normal CDD..0		
Monthly Precip.....1.93	Monthly Normal.....2.11	Yearly Norm Precip..31.61	
Monthly Snow.....16.7	Monthly Norm Snow...10.2	Yearly Norm Snow....	

GRAPH KEY	● Record High Temp	● Mean High Temp	● Mean Low Temp
	● Daily High Temp	● Daily Low Temp	● Record Low Temp

January, 2005 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)

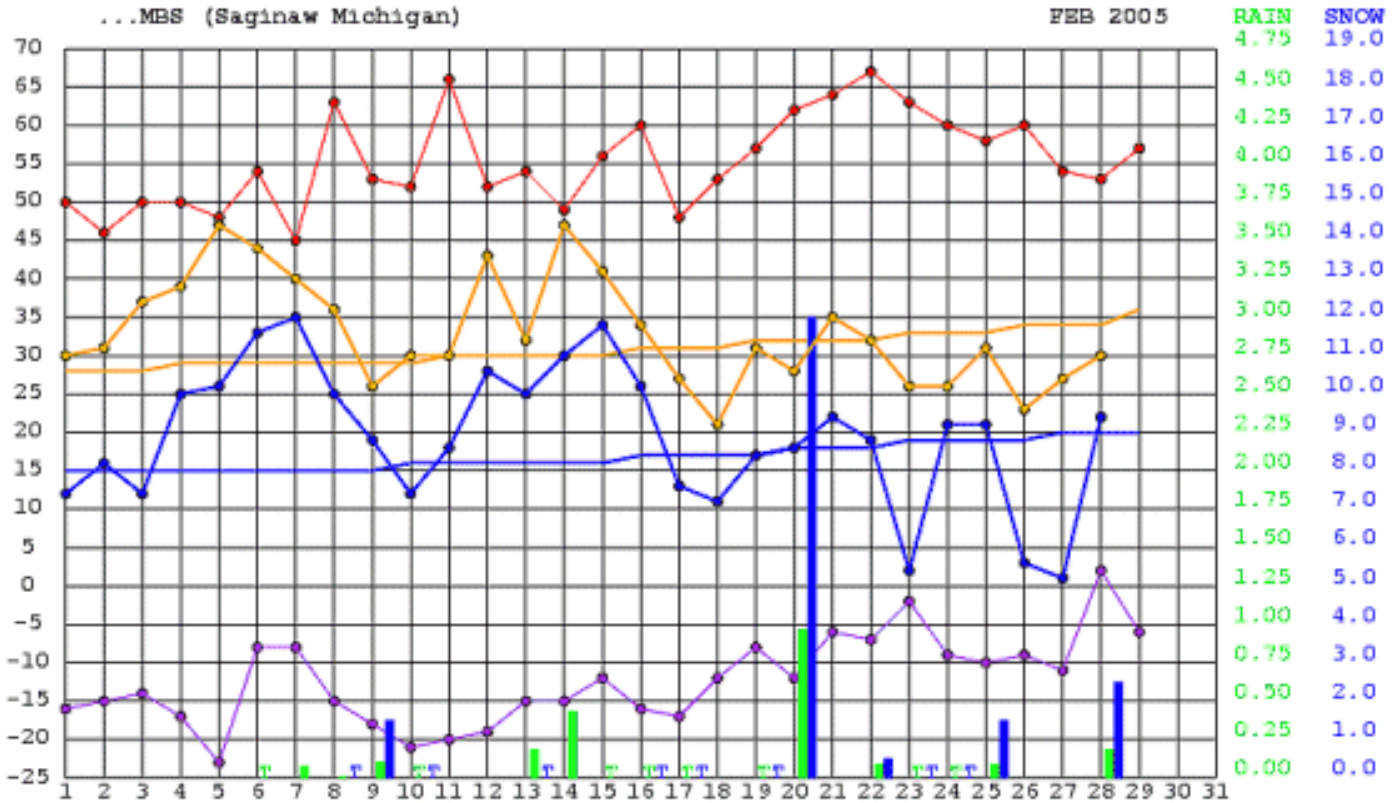


TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

Average High.....26.7	Monthly Normal.....27.9	Average Low.....14.0	Monthly Normal.....14.9
Average For Month...20.3	Monthly Normal.....21.4	Monthly HCD.....1378	Monthly Normal HCD..1352
Monthly CDD.....0	Monthly Normal CDD..0		
Monthly Precip.....3.43	Monthly Normal.....1.77	Yearly Norm Precip..1.77	
Monthly Snow.....15.9	Monthly Norm Snow...11.8	Yearly Norm Snow....	

GRAPH KEY	●	●	●	●	●
Record High Temp	●	●	●	●	●
Mean High Temp	●	●	●	●	●
Daily High Temp	●	●	●	●	●
Daily Low Temp	●	●	●	●	●
Record Low Temp	●	●	●	●	●

February, 2005 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

Average High.....33.0	Monthly Normal.....30.7	Average Low.....19.5	Monthly Normal.....16.8
Average for Month...26.2	Monthly Normal.....23.8	Monthly HDD.....1078	Monthly Normal HDD..1155
Monthly CDD.....0	Monthly Normal CDD..0		
Monthly Precip.....2.11	Monthly Normal.....1.57	Yearly Norm Precip..3.34	
Monthly Snow.....18.0	Monthly Norm Snow...8.3	Yearly Norm Snow....	

GRAPH KEY	Record High Temp	Mean High Temp	Mean Low Temp
	Daily High Temp	Daily Low Temp	Record Low Temp