Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area

Dec 1st, 2011 thru Feb 29th, 2012

Compiled by: David J. Peters

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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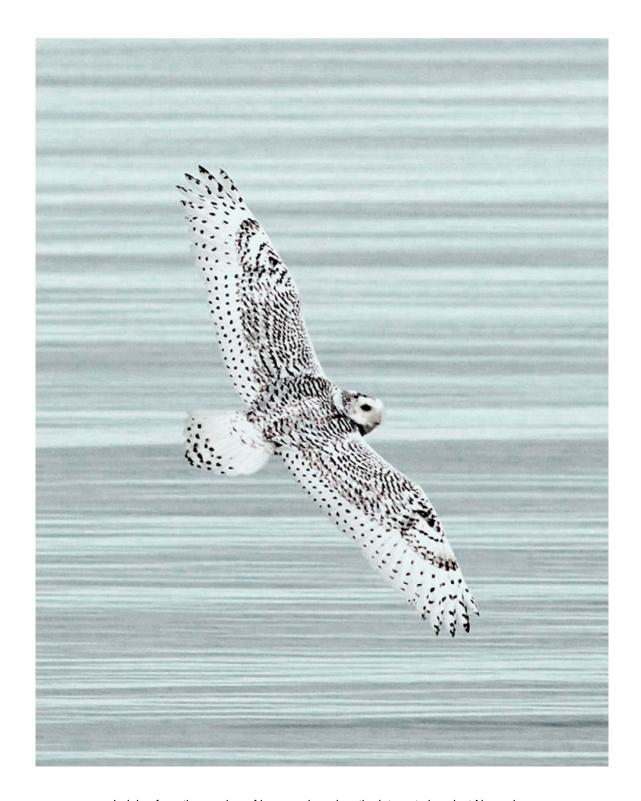
Summary: A new, all-time seasonal record total of 121 species from the Michigan Bird List were reported in the Saginaw Bay Area this winter. The previous record was 119, and the 22-year average for the season is 105.6. This report lists each of these species, along with the highest reported individual count for each, and a list of the SBA counties in which each was noted. A few species have all records listed, per the state compiler's instructions. Observer effort this winter was quite good, with enough coverage in each county to provide an adequate overall data image of the SBA. Observers appropriately described it as a season of snowy owls and gulls, and these species were indeed the impetus for many trips afield. It could as well be described as a winter of finches. Although these little ones didn't arrive in numbers until late January, they were widespread in occurrence and fair in number. The mild weather appeared to have some influence on birds lingering further into or even through the period, but this was not a widespread response among all species. Also in correlation to the climate, one observer (GSP) noted that "...feeder birds were down in number of individuals and in species this winter. I suspect the mild weather. I have the last five years kept averages for species per day at the feeder, and a generalization is that I averaged 2-3 species fewer per day all winter." Less statistically based, but otherwise similar, another observer (DJP) commented that "The typical mixed flocks of foraging winter woodland residents seemed smaller, and less cohesive, as if not as strongly driven as usual to cooperate in acquiring valuable winter calories." Record-wise, five new SBA peak counts were established, as well as three new winter high counts, and three new SBA fall late dates. One first ever SBA record was among three MBRC Review List species that were reported. Inclusion of these Review List records in this report does not signify that they have been verified, only that an encounter was reported. The observation will not be considered an official SBA record until it has been reviewed and accepted by the MBRC.

Weather: One observer (RAE) summed up the season's climate quite well with his comment - "Interesting winter season - warm weather - little snow - little ice." This was due to the jet stream being displaced further north than normal. December temperatures remained true to above average trend seen throughout 2011, and precipitation, particularly snowfall, was a little below average. Temperatures remained above average in January, and while snowfall was at or near average, this was hard to visualize because any accumulation melted within a short period. The trends remained unchanged in February - above average temperatures and near average precipitation.

(Weather is based upon the best available data from NOAA, which is for Saginaw MBS. While generally applicable to the greater SBA, conditions in the northern and lakeshore portions of the area may have varied to some extent.)

This report, as well as previous seasonal reports from 2000-2011, can be found at http://www.saginawbaybirding.org., along with updates on spring 2012 migration in the Saginaw Bay Area, as reported to Joe Soehnel at soehnelj@gmail.com or at 989-892-3687.

Many thanks to all observers who contributed their sightings directly to this compilation. Your extra efforts result in a significantly more accurate and thorough report. Additional thanks to Joe Soehnel for his ongoing input.



Judging from the number of images shared on the internet since last November, Snowy Owl had to be one of the most imaged birds in eastern North America this past winter. This stunning image of a Snowy near the mouth of the AuGres River in Arenac County, taken by the SBA's own **Doug Jackson**, is simply in a class by itself.

Species	Number	Date	Location	Observers / Comment
GRTR WHITE-FRNTED GOOSE:	3 6 2	12/1 12/23 1/11	FPSWA, Tu SNWR, Sa SNWR, Sa	JEV DJP DJP
SNOW GOOSE:	4	2/16	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Hu
CACKLING GOOSE:	3 6	12/1 1/11	FPSWA, Tu SNWR, Sa	JEV DJP
CANADA GOOSE:	7043	12/20	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
MUTE SWAN:	279	1/8	Linwood, Ba	RAE - new SBA peak count - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
TRUMPETER SWAN:	2 19 2 22 7	12/2 12/5 12/10 12/17 12/23	Cooke Dam area, lo Cooke Dam area, lo Cooke Dam area, lo Cooke Dam area, lo SNWR, Sa	WWS WWS WWS,TS DJP - the observer noted "Includes a pair neck collared in Ohio as juveniles in 2007, and their own juvenile from this year. The trio was present at this location throughout
	108 78 102 42 69 6 11 2 7 2 5	1/3 1/5 1/6 1/6 1/6 1/6 1/7 1/8 2/15 2/22 2/26 2/29	Cooke Dam area, lo Cooke Dam area, lo Westgate, lo largo Springs, lo Cooke Dam Area, lo Linwood, Ba Kawkawlin Twp., Ba Bayport, Hu Cooke Dam area, lo SNWR, Sa largo Springs, lo Harbor Beach, Hu	autumn, and remained until 1/18. " WWS - 81 adult, 27 immature WWS WWS,RAE - 60 adult, 42 immature WWS,RAE - 28 adult, 14 immature WWWS,RAE JMS GSP,EMP JEV WWS DJP JB JEV
TUNDRA SWAN:	1300 298	1/10 2/8	Wild Fowl Bay, Hu SNWR, Sa	SF - also noted in Ar,Ba,Tu DJP - the observer noted "The first time in my 23 years at SNWR that I have recorded Tundra Swans overwintering."
WOOD DUCK:	2	1/2	FPSWA, Tu	MW - also noted in Ba,Sa
GADWALL:	19	12/17	Dow Ponds, Mi	JZ,MM - also noted in Ba.Tu
AMERICAN WIGEON:	2	1/30	Middlegrounds, Ba	GSP - also noted in Sa,Tu
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK:	151	12/16	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
MALLARD:	2681	12/23	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
BLUE-WINGED TEAL:	4	12/1	FPSWA, Tu	JEV
NORTHERN SHOVELER:	7 1	12/23 2/20	SNWR, Sa Harbor Beach, Hu	DJP - also noted in Ba,Mi,Tu KO

NORTHERN PINTAIL:	402	2/3	SNWR, Sa	DJP - the observer noted "Encountering a winter straggler NOPI or two at SNWR is not uncommon, but a flock of this size on this date was quite a pleasant surprise" - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Tu	
GREEN-WINGED TEAL:	136 1	12/8 1/31	SNWR, Sa SNWR, Sa	DJP - new SBA winter high count DJP - also noted in Mi,Tu	
CANVASBACK:	2	12/15	Kawkawlin Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu	
REDHEAD:	7600	2/17	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi	
RING-NECKED DUCK:	70	12/17	Dow Ponds, Mi	JZ,MM - also noted in Ba,Sa	
GREATER SCAUP:	114	12/2	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS	
LESSER SCAUP:	1	12/29	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,GS,JZ - also noted in Mi,Sa	
WHITE-WINGED SCOTER:	3 3 3	12/2 12/16 1/15	Karn Plant, Ba Tawas Bay, Io Saginaw River, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu RAE DLJ	
BLACK SCOTER:	1 1	12/10 1/11	Sanford Lake, Mi Dow Ponds, Mi	RD - female or juvenile MW - new SBA fall late date	
LONG-TAILED DUCK:	8	1/11	AuGres River mouth, Ar	DLJ - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io	
BUFFLEHEAD:	100	12/5	Linwood, Ba	GSP,MW - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi	
COMMON GOLDENEYE:	4000+	12/29	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS,GS,JZ - new SBA peak count - also noted in Ar,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu	
HOODED MERGANSER:	47	12/2	Karn Plant, Ba	JMS -also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu	
COMMON MERGANSER:	5100	1/14	Saginaw River, Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Io,Hu,Mi,Sa	
RED-BREASTED MERGANSER:	102	12/3	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE - also noted in Ar,Hu,Mi	
RUDDY DUCK:	79 1	12/17 2/26	Dow Ponds, Mi Dow Ponds, Mi	JZ,MM JZ	
RING-NECKED PHEASANT:	5	1/18	Novesta Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ba,Hu,Sa	
RUFFED GROUSE:	7	1/9	Sterling Truck Trail, Ar	DLJ - also noted in Io,Mi,Tu	
WILD TURKEY:	381	2/10	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE - new SBA peak count - the observer noted - " <i>One</i> flock, obligingly crossing the road to make my counting easier!" - also noted in Ba,Hu,lo,Sa,Tu	
COMMON LOON:	1	12/17	Van Etten Lake, Io	LV - last date	
PIED-BILLED GREBE:	2	2/20	Harbor Beach, Hu	KO - also noted in Tu	
HORNED GREBE:	11	12/3	Tawas Bay, Io	RAE	
DOUBLE-CRSTD CORMORANT:	17 1	12/2 2/24	Karn Plant, Ba Dow Ponds, Mi	JMS - also noted in Sa JZ	
GREAT BLUE HERON:	31 1	12/23 2/14	SNWR, Sa Wickes Park, Sa	SFK - also noted in Ba,Tu JDS	

CATTLE EGRET:	1	12/1 - 12/9	FPSWA, Tu	JEV,SF,SJ - new SBA fall late date
TURKEY VULTURE:	1	12/4 -	St. Charles area, Sa	KL
	1	12/6 2/17	Midland, Mi	EK
BALD EAGLE:	47	1/5	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
NORTHERN HARRIER:	8	12/15	Wisner area, Tu	DD - also noted in Ba,Mi,Sa
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK:	1	12/31	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	JDS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Tu
COOPER'S HAWK:	2	1/29	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
RED-SHOULDERED HAWK:	1 1	1/2 1/20	Standish area, Ar Oil City area, Mi	RAE - also noted in Tu RD
RED-TAILED HAWK:	3	1/3	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK:	2	12/18	Moffatt Twp., Ar	DLJ - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu,Sa
GOLDEN EAGLE:	1 1 1	12/10 12/23 1/2	Homer Twp., Mi Dayton Twp., Tu FPSWA, Tu	MKE - immature age JEV - adult age MW
AMERICAN KESTREL:	3	12/1	Colling area, Tu	JEV - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa
MERLIN:	1 1	12/23 1/2	Cass City area, Tu Middlegrounds, Ba	JEV - also noted in Mi,Sa GSP,EMP
PEREGRINE FALCON:	1	1/3 1/7 - 1/12	Karn Plant, Ba Bay City, Ba	JMS DJP,EL,GSP,EMP - at City Hall
	1	2/18 - 2/23	Bay City, Ba	GSP,EMP,LMA,MKE,JMS - at City Hall
AMERICAN COOT:	70 1	12/5 1/18	NPSWA, Ba Saginaw River, Ba	GSP,MW - also noted in Mi,Tu JMS - last date
SANDHILL CRANE:	84 13 2	12/8 12/13 2/22	SNWR, Sa SNWR, Sa SNWR, Sa	DJP - new SBA winter high count DJP - new SBA fall late date DJP - first spring date
BONAPARTE'S GULL:	120 1	1/1 1/25	Tawas Bay, Io Saginaw River, Ba	RAE - also noted in Hu,Sa,Tu DD - last date
LITTLE GULL:	1	12/9	Baldwin Twp., Io	SJ
*MEW GULL:	1	2/21 - 2/25	Saginaw River, Ba	DD - 1 st winter age - 2 nd Ba record - pending MBRC acceptance - photographs submitted
RING-BILLED GULL:	2000	1/16	Saginaw River, Ba	DD,MW - JMS noted "That's, by far, the largest number of Ring-billed's in the SBA in January!" - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Sa,Tu
HERRING GULL:	12,000	1/9	Saginaw River, Ba	DD - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu

THAYER'S GULL:	1 1 1	12/13 1/7 1/9 2/7	Freeland Sewage pond, Sa Harbor Beach, Hu Saginaw River, Ba Saginaw River, Ba	JZ - 2 nd Sa record MW - 1 st Hu record DD - an adult DD - an adult	
ICELAND GULL:	1 2 3 1 3 2 2	12/13 1/9 1/14 1/19 1/23 2/7 2/11	Pinconning Twp., Ba Saginaw River, Ba Saginaw River, Ba Saginaw River, Ba Saginaw River, Ba Saginaw River, Ba Saginaw River, Ba	DD,JMS - also noted in Sa DD - adults DD,MW JMS - immature DD DD - a 1 st winter age and a 2 nd winter age DH - immature age - DD noted he observed 9 separable birds in Ba throughout the winter.	
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL:	4 1	12/10 2/16	SNWR, Sa Saginaw River, Ba	DJP RAE - adult age - DD noted that he observed 11 separable birds at this location throughout the winter.	
*SLATY-BACKED GULL:	1	12/12 - 12/16	Pinconning Twp., Ba	DD, many obs 1 st SBA record - pending MBRC acceptance - at the Republic Landfill	
GLAUCOUS GULL:	29	1/12	Pinconning Twp., Ba	RAE - also noted in Ar, Hu, Sa	
GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL:	140	1/14	Saginaw River, Ba	MW,DD - new SBA peak count -also noted in Ar,Hu,Sa	
ROCK PIGEON:	175	1/17	Bay City, Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Ar,Hu,Io,Tu,Sa	
MOURNING DOVE:	142	12/13	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Tu	
EASTERN SCREECH OWL:	2	2/5	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Mi	
GREAT HORNED OWL:	2	12/10	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa,Tu	
SNOWY OWL:	6 4	12/13 12/15 - 12/16	TPSP, Io FPSWA, Tu	MH - ties SBA peak count LMA,CS,EL,DD - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Sa	
BARRED OWL:	1	2/26	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	JDS - also noted in Ba,Mi	
LONG-EARED OWL:	1	1/3	western lo	PR - recently killed by a vehicle, collected by the observer	
SHORT-EARED OWL:	2	12/24 - 1/8	Elmwood Twp., Tu	JEV	
	3	2/4	SNWR, Sa	LMA	
BELTED KINGFISHER:	2	2/10	Homer Twp., Mi	MKE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Sa	
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER:	7	12/17	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba.Mi,Tu	
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER:	1	12/18 - 12/31	Bridgeport Twp., Sa	JDS	
DOWNY WOODPECKER:	19	12/21	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu	
HAIRY WOODPECKER:	6	12/7	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu	
NORTHERN FLICKER:	11	2/16	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Hu,Mi,Tu	

PILEATED WOODPECKER:	2 2	1/13 1/13	CNC, Mi Moffatt Twp., Ar	JML - also noted in Io,Mi,Sa DLJ
NORTHERN SHRIKE:	2	1/15	Tuttle Marsh, Io	RAE - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Sa,Tu
BLUE JAY:	12	1/22	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Sa
AMERICAN CROW:	126	12/20	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
COMMON RAVEN:	15 5	1/15 1/20	Monument Rd., Io Geneva Twp., Mi	WWS,TS RD
HORNED LARK:	34	2/24	Spaulding Twp., Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE:	25	2/25	Sanford Lake area, Mi	RD - also noted in Ar,Ba.lo,Tu
TUFTED TITMOUSE:	9	12/26	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Tu
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	3	2/8	Bay City, Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,lo,Sa,Tu
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH:	24	2/4	SNWR, Sa	DJP - new SBA peak count - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Tu
BROWN CREEPER:	9	12/7	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Hu,lo,Mi,Tu
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET:	2	12/17 2/8 - 2/9	Bridgeport Twp., Sa Bay City, Ba	JDS - also noted in Hu,Tu JMS
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	1	2/5	Sanford Lake, Mi	RD - 2 nd SBA winter record
EASTERN BLUEBIRD:	15	2/12	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Mi,Tu
AMERICAN ROBIN:	60	1/7	Hume Twp., Hu	MW - also noted in Ar,Ba,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD:	1	12/1	Koylton Twp., Tu	JEV
BROWN THRASHER:	1	12/1 12/20	FPSWA, Tu TPSP, Io	JEV DLJ
EUROPEAN STARLING:	500+	12/6	Pinconning Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Hu,lo,Sa
BOHEMIAN WAXWING:	9	2/16	Midland, Mi	MKE
CEDAR WAXWING:	160	1/15	Midland, Mi	MKE - also noted in Ar, Hu, Mi, Tu
LAPLAND LONGSPUR:	5	1/14	western Mi	RD - also noted in Tu
SNOW BUNTING:	500+	1/6	Fraser Twp., Ba	JMS - also noted in Ar,Io,Mi,Sa,Tu
YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER:	14	1/15	SNWR, Sa	DJP - new SBA winter high count - the observer noted "This loose flock first appeared in late December, and could be found frequenting the same location throughout the month of January. Their numbers dwindled late in the month, and my last encounter was of 2 on 2/4."

*SPOTTED TOWHEE:	1	2/20	Grindstone City, Hu	KO - 2 nd SBA and Hu record - pending MBRC acceptance - the observer photographed the bird, and noted "I found a female Spotted Towhee in the very same thicket that Myles Willard and Napier Shelton found a male in January of 2003' It was observed again, on 2/23, by MKE
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW:	219	2/8	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
CHIPPING SPARROW:	1	tp	Mayville, Mi	MW - the observer noted "at Roy Heckman's feeder through period. I saw it on (the) 3 rd try." - This represents the first record for a CHSP overwintering in the SBA.
FIELD SPARROW:	1	2/18	Baldwin Twp., Io	RAE
FOX SPARROW:	1	12/2 - 12/5	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP
SONG SPARROW:	1 1 1	12/23 1/20 2/26	SNWR, Sa Geneva Twp., Mi Bridgeport Twp., Sa	DJP RD JDS
DARK-EYED JUNCO:	32	12/23	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Tu
NORTHERN CARDINAL:	26	2/10	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD:	10 5	1/2 2/17	Quanicassee, Tu FPSWA, Tu	MW - also noted in Ba,Sa LMA
EASTERN MEADOWLARK:	2	2/20	Tawas, Io	RAE
RUSTY BLACKBIRD:	1	12/17 1/2	Cooke Dam area, Io Quanicassee, Tu	WWS,TS MW
COMMON GRACKLE:	5 2	1/2 2/6	Quanicassee, Tu Deford SGA, Tu	MW - also noted in Ba,Sa JEV
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD:	3	12/12	SNWR, Sa	DJP - also noted in Tu
PURPLE FINCH:	3 3	1/13 2/29	Moffatt Twp., Ar Homer Twp., Mi	DLJ - also noted in Ba,Hu,Io,Tu MKE
HOUSE FINCH:	25	2/12	Bangor Twp., Ba	GSP,EMP - also noted in lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL:	38	2/11	Bay City, Ba	LMA - also noted in Ar,lo,Mi,Sa
COMMON REDPOLL:	30	1/29	Saginaw Twp., Sa	SFK - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Mi,Tu
PINE SISKIN:	300+	2/15	Cooke Dam area, lo	WWS - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Mi,Sa,Tu
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH:	100+	1/13	Moffatt Twp., Ar	DLJ - also noted in Ba,lo,Mi,Sa,Tu
HOUSE SPARROW:	116	12/24	Saginaw Twp., Sa	SFK - also noted in Ar,Ba,Hu,Io,Tu

TOTAL: 121 Species

Peak/high counts and early/late dates are designated based upon records established in the publication *Birds and Bird Finding in the Saginaw Bay Area* by Ron Weeks, published in 1995, and subsequent updates to the data by the compilers of the Birds in the Saginaw Bay Area report. Comments on seasonal occurrences also relate to information found in this exhaustively researched book, as well as species notations on the Michigan Bird Survey Form.

Observer Key:

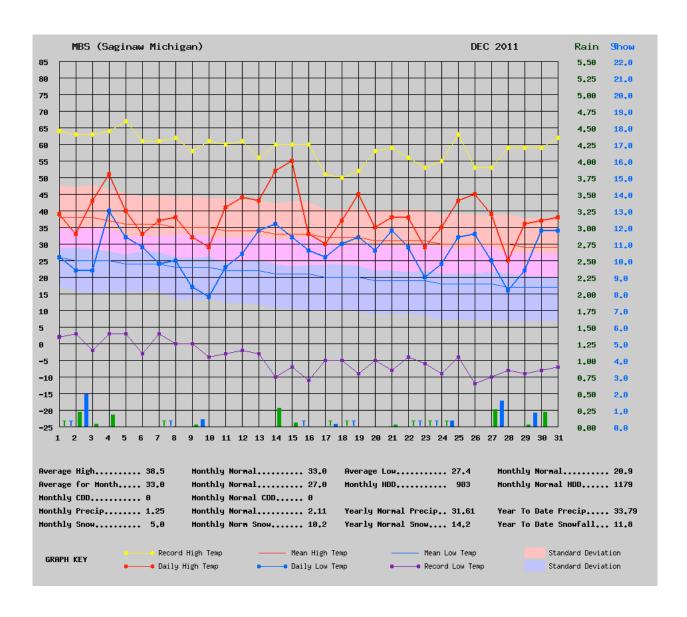
LMA	Larry M. Abraham	KO	Karl Overman
	,		
JB	Jeff Buecking	DJP	David J. Peters
LD	Louie Dombroski	GSP	Glenn S. Peterson
DD	Dan Duso	EMP	Ellen M. Peterson
RD	Ryan Dziedzic	PR	Peggy Ridgeway
RAE	Roger A. Eriksson	TS	Toni Shawl
MKE	Monica K. Essenmacher	WWS	Wayne W. Shawl
SF	Sean Fitzgerald	GS	Grant Soehnel
MH	Matt Hegwood	JMS	Joe M. Soehnel
DLJ	Doug L. Jackson	JDS	Jeff D. Sommer
SJ	Scott Jennex	CS	Carolyn Szaroletta
SFK	Steven F. Kahl	JEV	Jim E. VanAllen
EK	Elizabeth Kornacki	LV	Larry VanWagoner
KL	Kim LeBlanc	MW	Myles Willard
MM	Myles McNally	JZ	Jerry Ziarno
EL	Elaine Livingston		•

Twelve individuals generously submitted reports specifically for this compilation. Sightings were also obtained from postings on the saginawbaybirding.org winter migration update, or from personal communication. In each case, thanks to everyone who contributed.

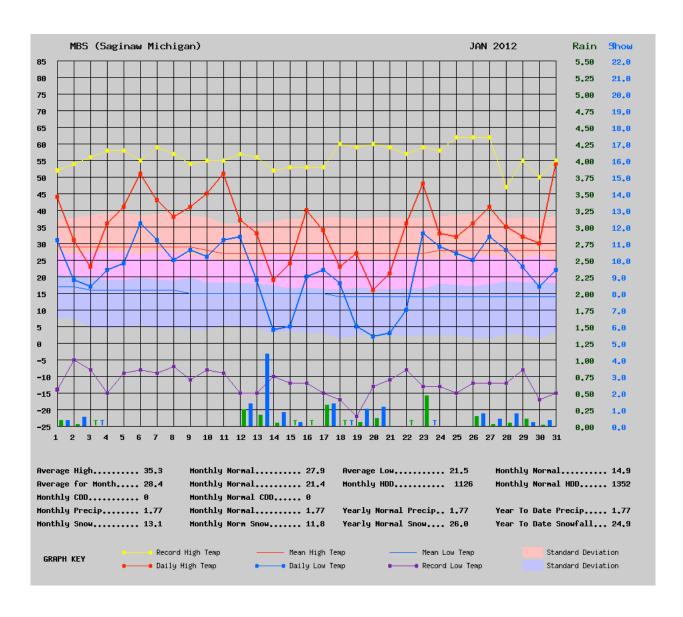
Abbreviations:

Ar Ba	Arenac County Bay County	Sa SBA	Saginaw County Saginaw Bay Area
FPSWA	Fish Point State Wildlife Area	SBB.org	Saginaw Bay Area SaginawBayBirding.org
Hu	Huron County	SNWR	Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge
lo	losco County	SGA	State Game Area
MBRC	Michigan Bird Records Committee	TPSP	Tawas Point State Park
Mi	Midland County	tp	throughout the entire, or entire remainder, of the period
NPSWA	Navanguing Point State Wildlife Area	Tu	Tuscola County

December, 2011 Weather Graph - Saginaw (MBS)



January, 2012 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)



February, 2012 Weather Graph – Saginaw (MBS)

