



Adam M. Byrne

The season started with cold temperatures but quickly transitioned to mild conditions that lingered through January. A change in the Polar Jet Stream then brought down frigid Arctic air for much of February. Minnesota reported below-average precipitation for December and January. Duluth actually had a brown Christmas: this northern outpost's first significant snowfall did not occur until late February!

Observers were treated to many rarities, most impressive among them the multiple Slaty-backed Gulls in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Minnesota and Michigan reported American Three-toed Woodpeckers, Green-tailed Towhee, Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Other highlights were Curve-billed Thrasher in Minnesota and Great-tailed Grackle in Wisconsin, while Michigan reported Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Black-throated Gray Warbler, and Bullock's Oriole.

## WATERFOWL

Rare mid-winter records for Minnesota were Greater White-fronted Geese in *Olmsted* 27 Dec–1 Jan (JWH) and *Lac Qui Parle* 12 Jan (BJU) and a Ross's Goose in *McLeod* 16 Dec–18 Feb (DMF, PRH). Single Ross's Geese were also reported on 16 Dec in *Rice*, MN (RBW) and *Dane*, WI. Wisconsin reported numerous wintering Cackling Geese, with a peak of 21 in *Iowa* 12 Jan (AH). Minnesota's Cackling Geese were scattered across 11 s. counties, while Michigan had singles on 16 Dec in *Midland* (JS, JZ) and *Washtenaw* (DC), 10 in *Saginaw* 18 Dec (DJP), and 3 in *Huron* 7 Jan (JCD). Noteworthy in Minnesota were 2 Greater Scaup at Duluth, *St. Louis* through 1 Jan (PHS), a female in *Benton* 5 Feb (HHD), and another in *Hennepin* through 17 Feb (m.ob.).

An imm. male King Eider was a pleasant surprise at Grand Haven, *Ottawa*, MI 21–22 Feb (CD, FD, CF, CP). Minnesota had a near-average 4 Harlequin Ducks on L. Superior, including 2 in Dec–Jan at Canal Park, Duluth, *St. Louis*, with one through 18 Feb. Wisconsin reported singles from nine locations and 2 in

*Kenosha* 6 Jan (PSc), while Michigan had one in *Berrien* 9 Dec (MJC) and up to 4 at Port Huron, *St. Clair* 29 Dec–3 Jan (ATC). Michigan reported good numbers of all three scoters. Wisconsin had lingering fall White-winged through 10 Dec in *Douglas* (PHS). In Minnesota, singles were present in *Washington* 3–11 Dec (m.ob.), in *Lac Qui Parle* 19 Dec (BJU), at Two Harbors, *Lake* through 28 Jan (JWL), and at Duluth, *St. Louis* through 18 Feb (m.ob.). Exceptional for Minnesota was a Black Scoter on Ten Mile L., *Cass* 11 Dec (BAW et al.). Minnesota reported low numbers of Long-tailed Ducks along L. Superior and singles inland in *Cass/Morrison* 1–4 Jan (BAW et al., RBJ) and in *Washington* 13–15 Jan (PEB, m.ob.). Wisconsin's largest concentration was of 1000+ in *Sheboygan* 19 Dec (DT); the state also had an inland record of 2 on 8 Feb in *Winnebago* (DK). Wisconsin had 2 Barrow's Goldeneyes on the *Kenosha* C.B.C., as well as singles in *Milwaukee* 24 Dec (MB) and



This female American Three-toed Woodpecker in Keweenaw County, Michigan 9 December 2006 was one of at least two birds at this site and up to five reported statewide. The species dispersed widely in winter 2006–2007, particularly in Ontario and Québec. Photograph David Pavlik.

*Ozaukee* 31 Jan (DT); Minnesota had an ad. male on the Mississippi R., *Dakota* 19 Jan–1 Feb (KJB, CMB, PEB, JPM).

## LOONS THROUGH RAPTORS

Wisconsin had a phenomenal six Red-throated Loon reports from six counties, including an amazing 15 in *Sheboygan* 20 Dec (DT); Michigan had birds in four counties. The lone Pacific Loon was in *Milwaukee*, WI 2 Dec (JH). Wisconsin had a Pied-billed Grebe winter in *Dane* (ST), single Horned Grebes on 6 Jan in *Sheboygan* (TW) and *Ozaukee* (KK), and single Red-necked Grebes in *Manitowoc* 10 Jan (FS) and in *Ozaukee* 19 Feb (DT). Michigan reported Red-neckeds from five

counties, including an unusual inland record at Baw Beese L., *Hillsdale* (JR). Rare in Michigan were Western Grebes in *Chippewa* 23 Dec (SH, LD, JRa; p.a.), *Berrien* 22–28 Dec (PCC, WG; p.a.), and *Marquette* 30 Dec (BV), as well as a Western/Clark's 30 Dec in *Keweenaw* (JK). A tardy American Bittern was found in *Saginaw*, MI 5 Dec (EPD). Michigan had late Great Egrets in *Monroe* 1 Dec and *Wayne* 3–4 Dec (WGP), and an odd lingering egret in *Washtenaw* 10 Dec–14 Jan (MSJ). Wisconsin also had a tardy egret present through 8 Jan in *Ozaukee* (DG). Michigan had 2 Black-crowned Night-Herons in *Monroe* 17 Dec (ATC), and at least 2 spent the winter in *Wayne* (WGP); Wisconsin had a late Black-crowned in *Marquette* 15 Dec.

A mid-winter Turkey Vulture in *Walworth*, WI 5–9 Jan (JJ, DG) was unusual. An Osprey on the Little Bay De Noc C.B.C., *Delta*, MI was very unexpected. Wisconsin had a lackluster season for Northern Goshawks, with only three reports statewide. Golden Eagles were reported in good numbers from all three states. Wisconsin had 4 different Gyrfalcons, most unusual being one patrolling fields in *Grant* 15 Dec (RH). Minnesota had ad. gray morphs near Hastings, *Dakota* 19 Jan+ (BSe, JPM, DAC, m.ob.) and at Duluth, *St. Louis* 3 Jan–16 Feb (DLE, PHS, m.ob.), both of these birds likely returning individuals from previous winters. Michigan's only Gyrfalcon was in *Marquette* 27 Jan+ (RDR).

## RAILS THROUGH JAEGERS

Wisconsin reported a Virginia Rail in *Jefferson* 10 Feb (MP). Michigan had 3 late Killdeer in *Manistee* 16 Dec (TG); more difficult to classify were 3 on 29 Jan (TB, MH) and up to 6 from 8–18 Feb (TB, PU) in *Berrien*, one in *Hillsdale* 27 Feb (JR), and 2 in *Van Buren* 28 Feb (MHW). Wisconsin had up to 4 Purple Sandpipers through 1 Jan in *Sheboygan* (DT) and another in *Racine* 28 Dec (JD); Michigan had up to 2 at New Buffalo, *Berrien* 2–22 Dec (MH, KM), one in *Muskegon* 21 Dec–2 Jan (JP, PCC), one at Saugatuck, *Allegan* 2 Jan (RiB), and one in *Macomb* 9–15 Jan (RP, ET, m.ob.).

Laughing Gulls were found in *Winnebago* 23–24 Dec and *Racine* 7 Jan (EH), both Wisconsin. Both Michigan and Wisconsin reported good numbers of Thayer's and Iceland Gulls. Minnesota reported 2 Iceland Gulls at Black Dog L., *Dakota*, a first-cycle bird 2 Dec (JPM, PHS, CLW) and a second-cycle bird 20 Dec–8 Jan (JPM, PEB, m.ob.), plus up to 2 ad. Lesser Black-backed Gulls in *Hennepin/Dakota* through 16 Dec (m.ob.). Wisconsin reported 7 Lesser Black-backed from six counties, while Michigan had birds in 10 counties.

A first-cycle Great Black-backed Gull was

**SA** While always on an avid larophile's target list, **Slaty-backed Gull** is an exceptional find anywhere in the United States. Nobody, however, would have anticipated the presence of at least 3 different birds in Minnesota and Wisconsin! Minnesota recorded its 2nd and 3rd Slaty-backed Gulls (both p.a.) within six months of its first. An ad. was well documented at Black Dog L., *Dakota* 9-13 Dec (JPM, ADS). A fourth-cycle bird discovered on the St. Croix R., *Washington* 14 Jan moved to the Mississippi R. and frequented both Minnesota and *Pierce*, WI through 25 Jan (JPM, MAO, BAF, DWK, PHS, LP). Additional Wisconsin reports were one at Little Lake Buttes des Morts, *Winnebago* 16 Dec-1 Jan and then again on 28 Feb (DT) and one in *LaCrosse* 2 Jan (DJ). A photographic review revealed very similar bill markings between the gulls in *LaCrosse*, WI and *Dakota*, MN/*Pierce*, WI, suggesting they may have been the same individual (DJ).

present intermittently in *St. Louis*, MN through 6 Jan (m.ob.). More than two weeks later than any previous Minnesota record was a Black-legged Kittiwake at L. Pepin, *Wabasha* 11-12 Jan (DB, JWH et al.). Michigan had a kittiwake in *Berrien* 13-17 Dec (TB, MH, m.ob.) and a Parasitic Jaeger in *St. Clair* 2 Dec (AJR).

## HUMMINGBIRDS THROUGH WARBLERS

Wisconsin hosted the only *Selasphorus* hummingbird through 8 Dec in *Green* (JRo). Michigan's only Eurasian Collared-Doves were in *Grand Traverse*, where they have been present for the past three years. Minnesota had record-high counts of 43 in *Renville* 13 Dec (PME) and 22 in *Brown/Cottonwood* 28 Jan (BTS), as well as reports from an additional nine counties; Wisconsin had seven reports from five counties. Minnesota reported below-average Snowy and Northern Hawk Owl numbers. Michigan had at least 10 Snowy Owls in seven counties and Wisconsin reported only 6 birds; neither state reported Northern Hawk Owl. Great Gray Owls were also in low numbers; Minnesota had birds in five counties, Wisconsin reported one in *Shawano* 16 Dec (RBr) and 3 in *Bayfield* 15 Jan-21 Feb (RB), and Michigan had no reports. Minnesota had more Short-eared Owl reports than normal, including up to 24 wintering in *Wilkin*, 16 wintering in *Anoka*, and another 16 on the Warren C.B.C. 30 Dec (fide JM). Michigan reported a maximum of 10 Short-eareds from 4 Dec-10 Jan in *Saginaw* (CS, LA, BG, m.ob.). A Boreal Owl was a rare find on the Little Bay de Noc C.B.C., *Delta*, MI (JF, MiB).

Minnesota had Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in *Lac Qui Parle* 27 Dec (BJU), *Dakota* 14 Jan (MR), and *Houston* 6 Feb (AS); Michigan reported at least 7 sapsuckers from six counties. American Three-toed Woodpeckers were found in 10 Minnesota counties, with the southernmost records at the *Pine/Carlton* line 20-27 Dec (MCA, K&CR) and in *Pine* 1-11 Feb (JMP). Michigan's last American Three-toed Woodpecker report was in 2002, so 2 females through 21 Dec in *Keweenaw* (CP, ZG, JY, m.ob.), one in *Alger* 28 Dec (SCH, JHo),

and one in *Marquette* 20 Feb+ (RDR) were exceptional. Michigan's 3rd Vermilion Flycatcher lingered through 1 Dec and was found dead on 2 Dec in *Marquette* (m.ob.). The fall's Gray Jay irruption tapered off by Dec, leaving only a few strays in nw. Minnesota. A skittish Black-billed Magpie frequented a deer carcass in *Keweenaw*, MI 30 Dec-10 Jan (ZG, JK, m.ob.). Minnesota reported 5 Carolina Wrens from three counties, while the species was much more numerous in both Wisconsin and Michigan. The only Marsh Wrens were 2 in *Monroe* 17 Dec (ATC) and a very northerly bird in *Marquette* 11 Jan (ZG), both Michigan. Michigan reported Ruby-crowned Kinglets from six counties.

A female Mountain Bluebird was in *Dakota*, MN 18-30 Jan (JPM, DAC, m.ob.). Townsend



Furnishing the sixth record for Michigan, this Black-throated Gray Warbler at Grand Rapids, Kent County treated birders 17 through 20 (here) January 2007 before being found dead on 21 January. Photograph Jeff Schultz.

Solitaire numbers were below average in Minnesota, with 11 birds in three n. counties and 6 birds in the south. Wisconsin reported a returning solitaire in *Sauk* 12 Jan (TW) and one in *Ashland* (RB), while Michigan had 2 at Copper Harbor, *Keweenaw* (TA, m.ob.) and one in *Marquette* 11 Jan (ZG). Minnesota reported 20 Varied Thrushes in 14 counties, down from recent years. Wisconsin had 6 Varied Thrushes in six counties, while Michigan had one linger into Jan in *Iosco* (DKo) and one in *Midland* 20 Jan-4 Feb (MF). A Gray Catbird lingered through 18 Feb in *Lake*, MN (B&SN); other catbirds were singles in *Berrien*, MI 16 Dec (WEJ) and in *Dane*, WI 20 Jan (AM). Rare in Michigan's Upper Peninsula was a Northern

Mockingbird in *Alger* 20 Dec (NFC), while Minnesota had late Jan reports in *Hennepin* and *Lac Qui Parle*. Michigan had Brown Thrashers in *Berrien* 17 Dec (JTW, m.ob.) and *Kalamazoo* 6-23 Feb (RLL, L&MW). Wisconsin had thrashers in *Dunn* 20 Dec (MM), *Richland* 27 Dec (JC), and *Dane* 29 Jan (BS), while Minnesota had reports from *Itasca* 7 Dec (EEO), *Clay* 16 Dec (fide JM), and *Dakota* 11 Jan (R&CP). Minnesota's 4th Curve-billed Thrasher, reportedly present since Aug, lingered through 3 Dec at *Nashwauk*, *Itasca* (R&LL; p.a.).

Winter American Pipits are becoming almost commonplace in Michigan; this year's reports were one on 5 Dec and 4 on 22 Feb, both in *Wayne* (ATC), and up to 2 in *Berrien* 10-18 Feb (DCV, TB). With only three Bohemian Waxwing reports statewide, this was one of Wisconsin's poorest winters for this species in decades. Outstanding was a well-documented Yellow Warbler at Belle Isle, *Wayne*, MI 27-28 Dec (AD, N&JG). A Black-throated Gray Warbler at Grand Rapids, *Kent* 17-20 Dec (CP) was found dead 21 Dec, providing Michigan its 6th record. A Pine Warbler wintered at a feeder in *Outagamie*, WI (DT), while Minnesota had a Pine Warbler at a feeder on the Duluth C.B.C., *St. Louis* 16 Dec (KRE). A Prairie Warbler lingered through 2 Dec in *Milwaukee*, WI (BA), while Michigan had a Common Yellowthroat in *Wayne* 17 Dec (ATC).

## TANAGERS THROUGH WEAVER FINCHES

Michigan had a rare winter tanager duo: a Summer Tanager lingering through 3 Dec at Grand Marais (TBl, JRa, KZ) and a Western Tanager 6-9 Jan at Munising (RE, SCH), both *Alger*. Providing Minnesota's 3rd winter record and 5th overall was a banded Green-tailed Towhee that wintered at Mountain Lake, *Cottonwood* (R&DG, EDu, DAC, m.ob.); photographs documented the band number, and it was eventually determined that this individual was banded as an ASY male at Thunder Cape B.O., Ontario 10 Jun 2006! Not to be outdone, Michigan hosted its 5th winter and 9th overall Green-tailed Towhee in *Marquette* (LFT, m.ob.). Minnesota reported a male Spotted Towhee in *Mower* 6-26 Feb (J&JS, RNS) and another in *Scott* 29 Jan-2 Feb. Wisconsin had Eastern Towhees in *Grant* 26 Dec (DKi) and an amazing bird in n. *Iron* 15 Jan+ (RB), while Michigan had a towhee in *Bay* 29 Jan+ (G&EP) and 4 in early Feb in *Berrien* (fide TB). Chipping Sparrows were present in *St. Croix*, WI 3 Jan+ (MRo), *Ramsey*, MN 21-27 Jan (SKE), *Van Buren*, MI 26 Feb (MHW), and *Kalamazoo*, MI 28 Feb (RS). Minnesota re-

ported a Clay-colored Sparrow, accidental in winter, at a feeder in *Olmsted* 12 Feb (JWH) and a female/imm. Lark Bunting near Duluth Airport, *St. Louis* 11 Dec (DAG, KRE, JWL). Michigan had Harris's Sparrows at Hastings, *Barry* 10 Dec (AK) and *Traverse City, Grand Traverse* 19 Feb. A phenomenal flock of 10,000 Snow Buntings was present in *Landglade*, WI 3-4 Jan (DT, TP). Rare in Michigan were 2 different Indigo Buntings, singles in *Marquette* 16 Dec (JQ) and *Houghton* 16 Dec-early Jan (O. Mills, J. Kaplan).

A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was photographed at a feeder in *Ashland*, WI 5-21 Dec (RB). Marking the mild winter were a Yellow-headed Blackbird in *Nicollet* 12 Dec (RMD) and at least 2 in *Lac Qui Parle* 31 Dec and 17 Jan (BJU). Minnesota birders reported Rusty Blackbirds from six s. counties and *Beltrami, Cass, Lake, and Otter Trail* in the north. Wisconsin had Rusty Blackbirds in *Waukesha* 16 Dec (DG) and *Rock* 13 Jan (QY), while Michigan's only report was 5 on 17 Dec in *Monroe* (ATC). Wisconsin's first Great-tailed Grackle was present near Horicon Marsh, *Dodge* 31 Jan+ (JB, m.ob.). A potential 5th state record was a **Bullock's Oriole** in Bangor Twp., *Bay* 3 Dec (G&EP, M&MW; p.a.). Minnesota reported a late ad. male Baltimore Oriole at Rochester, *Olmsted* 23 Dec (WJK).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches were found in both Minnesota and Michigan. Minnesota had 3 of the "interior form" winter near Cloquet, *Carlton* (MS, m.ob.), while Michigan had its 5th state record at L'Anse, *Baraga* 17 Dec+ (MHe, CP, JK, m.ob.). Multiple Hoary Redpoll reports came from eight n. counties in Minnesota, while Michigan and Wisconsin had only singles in *Marquette* 5 Jan (BJ) and *Iron* 22 Jan (RB), respectively. Observers continue to comment on the declining presence of Evening Grosbeaks. Wisconsin reported a peak of 155 in *Ashland* 29 Jan (ASh), while Minnesota's high counts were only 40 in *Aitkin* 3 Dec (K&CR) and 50 in *Koochiching* 28 Dec (TC). Minnesota's 6th Eurasian Tree Sparrow sporadically visited a feeder at Fergus Falls, *Otter Tail* 15 Dec-22 Jan (S&DM, D&ST); Michigan's 3rd made a return visit to a feeder at Topaz, *Ontonagon* 23 Dec-29 Jan (KW, RSe).

**Corrigenda:** The 6 Ross's Geese reported on 22 Feb at Paw Paw L., *Berrien* included in the winter 2005-2006 report were not accepted by the Michigan records committee. Also in that report, the Northern Hawk Owl at Soo Junction should be in *Luce*, not *Chippewa*.

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