

# Western Great Lakes



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Each state had its share of rarities, headlined by the Region's first Inca Dove at W.P.B.O.

**Abbreviations:** H.R.N.R. (Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth, MN); Mud L. (Traverse, MN); Salt L. (Lac Qui Parle, MN); S.M.R.R. (Southeast Michigan Raptor Research, including Lake Erie Metropark and Pte. Mouillee Headquarters, Wayne, MI); U.P. (Upper Peninsula, MI); W.P.B.O. (Whitefish Pt. B.O., Chippewa, MI).

### LOONS THROUGH CRANES

A total of 522 Red-throated Loons at W.P.B.O. 16 Aug–14 Nov included 247 on 22 Sep. Record-early for Wisconsin was a Red-throated in Douglas 5 Sep (AP); singles in Manitowoc 17–18 Oct (WM, DC) and Racine 14 Nov (RHu) were timely. Minnesota's only report was of one or 2 on Mille Lacs L. 2–14

Oct+ (AS et al.). Still casual in Michigan, 2 Pacific Loons at W.P.B.O. 1 Oct and another there 20 Oct (KJB, CN), plus one in Alger 18 Oct (SH, ZG), were noteworthy (all p.a.). Wisconsin had singles in Douglas 24 Sep (DT) and 26 Nov (RJ); the former wandered into Minnesota waters and lingered through 11 Oct. Ten more Pacific Loons in Minnesota was the most ever in one season. W.P.B.O. tallied 4620 Common Loons 15 Aug–15 Nov (peak 1361 on 23 Sep). Minnesota's 1158 Common Loons at L. Winnibigoshish 9 Oct and 1467 at Mille Lacs L. 14 Oct (AXH, PHS) were heartening counts. Down more than a third from last fall's record high was a total of 13,101 Red-necked Grebes at W.P.B.O. 15 Aug–15 Nov (peak 1763 on 18 Aug). Western Grebes in three Wisconsin locations included a flock of 5 in Dane 7 Nov (ME). Minnesota reported Clark's Grebes in Big Stone, Douglas, and Yellow Medicine.

In Michigan, a juv. Brown Pelican wandered along the L. Michigan shoreline 29 Aug–6 Sep (SM, m.ob.). Almost exactly one year after 2 were found at Big Stone N.W.R., an ad. Neotropic Cormorant furnished Minnesota's 3rd record in Otrey Twp., Big Stone 15 Aug (PHS, PCC et al.). Snowy Egrets visited two Wisconsin and four Michigan locations; Minnesota topped off its best year ever for this species, with six additional reports.

Michigan had the Region's only Little Blue Herons in Berrien through 4 Aug (JTW, DCV), Lapeer 8 Aug (JSm), and at Pte. Mouillee 28 Sep (TSM). In Minnesota, single Cattle Egrets lingered in Otter Tail 10 Nov (EE) and Roseau 16 Nov (MBr, SW). Michigan hosted Yellow-crowned Night-Herons (all p.a.) in Monroe 25 Aug (SAJ), Genesee 15–16 Sep (JBU, EW, SJ, SAJ), and Barry 28 Oct (IG, VW); Minnesota added one in Dakota 27 Aug (RPR et al.). A Plegadis ibis in Monroe 24 Aug (p.a., TW) and 8 at W.P.B.O. 24 Oct (p.a., AMB, SAJ, BMu, CN) were unusual for Michigan; four w. Minnesota locations produced a total of 8 Plegadis. Record-high seasonal (56,655) and daily counts (12,131 on 10 Oct) of Turkey Vultures were obtained at S.M.R.R.

Early for Michigan were 38 Greater White-fronted Geese in Marquette 18 Sep (SH). Eight Ross's Geese at W.P.B.O. 12 Sep were also early (p.a., KJB, CN); other Ross's were in five Wisconsin and four Minnesota locations. Single Brant visited Alger, MI 13 Sep (p.a., SCH) and Manitowoc, WI 1 Nov (MM, JPe). Two King Eiders and an unidentified female-type eider loitered at Port Huron, St. Clair, MI 11 Nov+ (p.a., BM, KO et al.). Unlike the previous two fall migrations, scoters were mostly confined to the Great Lakes. Scoter totals for the season at W.P.B.O. were 241 Surfs, 3978 White-wingeds, and 144 Blacks. Setting a seasonal record at W.P.B.O. were 34,116 Long-tailed Ducks counted 9 Sep–15 Nov (peak 16,231 on 31 Oct). For the 2nd consecutive Nov, a drake Barrow's Goldeneye was found in Houston, MN (PEJ, DFN).

Juv. Mississippi Kites at H.R.N.R. 30 Aug and 7 & 8 Sep included Minnesota's first identifiably photographed individual (FJN et al.). Another (age unreported) was in Ozaukee, WI 21 Sep (DB, NM). Casual in Michigan, a juv. Ferruginous Hawk was studied at Muskegon 23–24 Sep (p.a., JJo, CW, CP). An ad. Ferruginous Hawk transited Felton Prairie, MN 13 Oct (PHS). The only documented Gyrfalcon was in Ashland, WI 19–29 Nov (p.a., RB, JPe, TO, DV et al.). A Yellow Rail at Warren Dunes S.P., Berrien 15 Oct (BRA) was among the latest ever found in Michigan. A Black Rail was reported in Waukesha, WI 7 Nov (p.a., MS). A survey conducted by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service tallied 11,250 Sandhill Cranes in Michigan 1 Nov (fide RHH)—the highest since these surveys began in 1979.

### SHOREBIRDS THROUGH HUMMINGBIRDS

Shorebird surveys in w. Minnesota peaked at 17,757 individuals (of 23 species) in three counties 21–22 Aug (PCC, PHS). Michigan and Wisconsin each had 2 Piping Plovers; Michigan's were at Muskegon 28 Aug (EEn, SAJ) and Berrien 12 Sep (JTW)



This Brown Pelican wandered the southern Lake Michigan shoreline (through the Michigan counties of Allegan, Ottawa, and Berrien) 29 August–6 September 2004 (on the last date here in St. Joseph, Berrien County). It apparently also wandered southward into Indiana. Photograph by Kip Miller.

and Wisconsin's in Manitowoc 6 Sep (TCW) and Ozaukee 9 Sep (TCW). The maximum Killdeer counts were of 800–900 in Big Stone and Lac Qui Parle, MN in Aug. Establishing the Badger state's 2nd breeding record was a pair of Black-necked Stilts with 4 young in Dodge, WI 7–26 Aug (DT, TCW, JF, JL, T&CS); 3 ads. were at a different Dodge location 7 Aug (ST, NP). Each state hosted American Avocets in three to five locations; the highest count was of 7 in Sauk, WI 25 Aug (AH). Yellowlegs peaked at 139 Greater 15 Aug (PCC, PHS) and 2316 Lessers 1 Aug in Big Stone, MN (PHS et al.); a Lesser was late in Chippewa, WI 17 Nov (JP). Normally rare in fall, Michigan had Willets in five locations, including 30–35 at Warren Dunes S.P., Berrien 26 Aug (RH), apparently the 2nd highest count for the Wolverine State.

Normally rare in fall, about 31 Red Knots were scattered across Michigan, including 6 at Tawas Pt. 2 Sep (WNG, CSz, LA) and 4 at Pte. Mouillee 11 Sep (JJo, DH, SAJ). Wisconsin had 3 knots in Milwaukee, one in Manitowoc 2–6 Sep (CSO, TCW), and 7 in Oneida 28 Aug (AH, JB), while Minnesota had only singles in Beltrami and St. Louis. Semipalmated Sandpipers peaked at 1194 at Mud L. 6 Aug (KJB) and 1228 in Big Stone, MN 22 Aug (PHS). Michigan reported single juv. Western Sandpipers in Houghton 11 Aug (MTA, LCB), Monroe 21 Aug (SH), Muskegon 28 Aug (SAJ), and Washtenaw 20–21 Sep (DCh, MKH, ATC); another was

in Manitowoc, WI 17 Oct (p.a., CSo, WM). Three w. Minnesota counties each supported 1300+ Least Sandpipers 28 Aug–4 Sep (PCC, PHS). Exceptional numbers of Baird's Sandpipers migrated through Michigan and Minnesota. Michigan's 260+ included a state record of 140 at Muskegon 3 Sep (DMc, EEen). Minnesota counts of Baird's included



Cackling Goose was carefully studied throughout the continent in autumn 2004, following its elevation to full species by the American Ornithologists' Union. These two, with Ring-billed Gulls providing a nice size comparison, were at the Lakewood Sewage Lagoons, Ionia County, Michigan 7 October 2004. Photograph by Scott Jennex.

256 in Big Stone 22 Aug (PHS), a state record 625 at Mud L. 28 Aug (PCC), and 445 at Salt L. 4 Sep (PCC, PHS). Mud L. attracted 2400+ Pectoral Sandpipers 21–28 Aug (PCC), while 3179 were tallied in Big Stone, MN 22 Aug (PHS). A Purple Sandpiper at W.P.B.O. 24 Oct (AMB, SAJ) was only the 3rd for that location; 4 more turned up elsewhere in Michigan in late Nov. Wisconsin

had the Regional trophy for most Dunlin—2000 in Fond du Lac 30 Sep (DT). Stilt Sandpipers peaked at 1177 in Big Stone, MN 7 Aug (KJB, PCC) and 1185 at Mud L. 21 Aug (PCC). Buff-breasted Sandpiper appeared in 10 Wisconsin counties; numbers were down in Michigan (34 birds, 27 of these at W.P.B.O.), and, alarming in Minnesota, the total of 75 Buff-breasteds in 14 counties was down dramatically from 550+ in 2001 and 547 in 2002. Red-necked Phalaropes were scarce in Michigan (three locations) and Wisconsin (two locations). The Region's only Red Phalarope was at Salt L. 11–13 Sep (PCC, m.ob.).

A Pomarine Jaeger was at Duluth, MN 7 Sep (PHS); also at Duluth were 4 Parasitic Jaegers and up to 7 unidentified jaegers. A Parasitic was inland in Dodge 4 Sep (JF); the rest of Wisconsin's Parasitic Jaegers were on the Great Lakes in Douglas, Ozaukee, and Racine. A total of 12 Parasitic and 22 unidentified jaegers migrated past W.P.B.O.; elsewhere in Michigan, Parasitics were in Berrien 28 Aug (SAJ, SO, JSh, JTW et al.), St. Clair 29 Sep (SAJ), Bay 22 Oct (JS, MHu, MW, DD), and Van Buren 16 Oct (JGG, RS), plus 11 more unidentified jaegers at these and other locations. In Wisconsin, Laughing Gulls visited Milwaukee 10 Aug (SF) and Sheboygan 18 Oct (DC). Most unusual of the 4 Little Gulls reported in Michigan was an ad. inland at L. Chapin, Berrien 18 Nov

(TB). Wisconsin had Little Gulls in Manitowoc 18 Oct (DC) and Racine 14 Nov (RHu), plus 2 different juvs. on both sides of the Superior Entry in Douglas, WI and St. Louis, MN 24–27 Sep (SP, RJ, MH) and 10–15 Oct (MH, PHS). For the 7th consecutive fall, a Black-headed Gull was found along the Iowa–Minnesota border. Another Mew Gull appeared in Milwaukee, WI 22–25 Nov (SL, JI). A first-winter California Gull was carefully identified in Hennepin, MN 31 Oct–15 Nov (BAF, PEB, JPM, m.ob.). Eleven Sabine's Gulls was about twice the usual fall total in Michigan; unusually cooperative were 2 juvs. in Muskegon 16–18 Sep (CP, m.ob.) and 16–30 Nov (CF, ATC, m.ob.). At least 2 of the 4 Sabine's Gulls in Douglas, WI were seen 4 Sep and 2 Nov were seen

on the Minnesota side of the Superior Entry; less expected was one in Crow Wing, MN 16–21 Sep (JEB, m.ob.). Four Black-legged Kittiwakes were more than usual for Michigan and included an ad. at W.P.B.O. 4 Oct (KJB, AMB) and a juv. in Berrien 22–25 Nov (m.ob.). Only 1045 Common Terns passed W.P.B.O. 15 Aug–2 Oct (peak 330, 16 Sep). An ad. Arctic Tern was seen on both sides of

the Superior Entry 22–25 Sep (Wisconsin) and 25–27 Sep (Minnesota), while a juv. was a remarkable find at W.P.B.O. 26 Sep (p.a., AMB, CN, LG).

An **Ancient Murrelet** established Michigan's 5th record by flying across the international boundary at Port Huron, St. Clair 7 Nov (p.a., D&ES). New Minnesota locations for Eurasian Collared-Dove included *Lac Qui Parle* (BWF) and *Swift* (PHS); up to 8 birds were in *Milwaukee*, WI (BA, RCD). The Region's first **Inca Dove** was photographed at W.P.B.O. 7–11 Oct (CN, BMu, JM, m.ob.). Providing Minnesota's 2nd record was a **Common Ground-Dove** in *Lake* 17–19 Oct (PCC, RAE, m.ob.); the first was also along the North Shore of L. Superior, at H.R.N.R. 16 Oct 1993. Sibley observed a ground-dove, the 3rd ever in Wisconsin and most likely a Common, in *Door* 26 Sep (DAS).

A **Barn Owl** was reported in *Shawano*, WI 31 Oct (p.a., LDS). Normal numbers of **Snowy Owls** appeared in each state, but record-high numbers of **Northern Hawk**, **Great Gray**, and **Boreal Owls** appeared in Minnesota. This massive irruption propelled hawk owls into *Outagamie*, *Bayfield*, *Oconto*, and *Douglas* in Wisconsin and *Chippewa* in Michigan by the end of Nov. Final totals for each species will be published at a later date, but as an example of the magnitude of this irruption, the previous Minnesota record for **Boreal Owl** was exceeded by the number of birds banded (268) by just one individual along the North Shore of L. Superior (FJN)! An additional 110 were caught at other banding stations in ne. Minnesota, and one was netted in *Portage*, WI 1 Nov (DM, DB); 44 **Boreals** transited W.P.B.O. 21 Sep–13 Nov. **Hummingbirds** in Nov are not necessarily w.



This immature male and female King Eider were part of a trio that included another female at Port Huron, St. Clair County from 11 November 2004 into the winter. The species is casual in Michigan. Photograph by Allen Chartier.

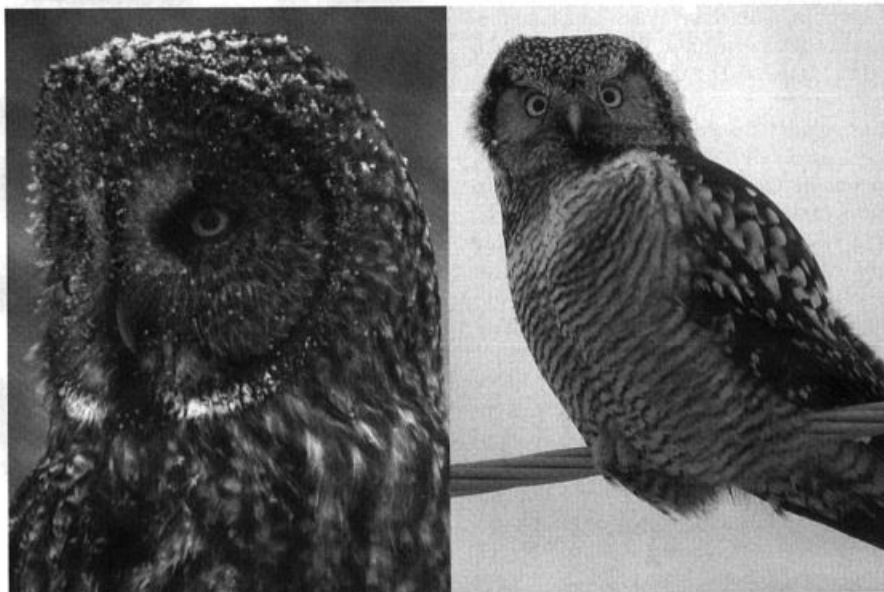
species; record late for the U.P. by about a month was a **Ruby-throated** in *Alger*, MI 30 Oct–6 Nov (DK, SCH, ZG). A **Rufous Hummingbird** visited a feeder in *Bayfield*, WI 5–13 Aug (S&TB, RB, DV, DT); an ad. male in *Berrien*, MI 7 Nov+ (R&PP, JTW) was banded 14 Nov (ATC). An ad. female *Selasphorus* lingered in *Duluth*, MN 16 Nov+ (LE, m.ob.).

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH FINCHES

Among the highlights of an excellent season for vagrants at W.P.B.O. was an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** 22 Sep (p.a., CN, AMB, KJB). Tardy **Western Kingbirds** were carefully scrutinized to eliminate congeners in *Cook*, MN 30 Oct (KRE) and at W.P.B.O. on the

same date (KJB, CN, SAJ); **Westerns** also strayed to *Berrien*, MI 2–9 Aug (AV) and *Douglas*, WI 4 Sep (RJ). **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** showed up in *Wilkin*, MN 6 Sep (RAE), *Duluth*, MN 7–9 Oct (MTA et al.), and *Marquette*, MI 25 Oct (p.a., SH). Unexpected in fall was a **Bell's Vireo** in *Van Buren*, MI 3 Aug (p.a., CG). Late vireos included a **Yellow-throated** in *Walworth*, WI 7 Oct (WR), a **Philadelphia** in *Portage*, WI 24 Oct (MB), and a **Red-eyed** in *Schoolcraft*, MI 2 Nov (LJD).

Continuing the recent trend of discoveries by "young birders" in Minnesota was a **Clark's Nutcracker** found by 4-year-old Al Robertsen at his parents' feeder in *Silver Bay*, *Lake* 14–24 Oct (m.ob.). Out of range was a **Black-billed Magpie** in *Oconto*, WI 1 Oct (fide BBo); a flock of 110 at *Agassiz N.W.R.* 4 Sep (KRE et al.) was among the largest ever found in Minnesota. Surpassing Minnesota's previous latest date by nearly three weeks was a well-documented **Cliff Swallow** along the North Shore of L. Superior 7 Nov (DWK). Michigan's 2nd through 4th records (all p.a.) of **Cave Swallow** were furnished by one at W.P.B.O. 30 Oct (CB, CN, SAJ), 2–4 at S.M.R.R. 5–6 Nov (CB, JSc, DA), and 8 at *Pte. Mouillee* 21 Nov (AMB, BMu, TW). **Carolina Wrens** forayed as far n. as *Huron*, *Iosco*, and *Manistee* in Michigan and scattered across 11 s. Wisconsin counties. A **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** at W.P.B.O. 13 Nov was very late. The only **Mountain Bluebird** zipped through *Aitkin*, MN 29 Oct (fide MMc). Michigan reported an unprecedented 11+ **Townsend's Solitaires**, including up to 3 at W.P.B.O. in Nov (KJB, CN et al.) and 3 in *Alger* 12 Nov (SCH, SH, ZG). Wisconsin had 4 solitaires at the traditional location (*Devil's Lake S.P.*), plus singles in *Dane* 17 Oct (AST),



Forerunners of one of the largest northern owl invasions in recent years, this **Great Gray Owl** (left) and **Northern Hawk Owl** were photographed 27 November 2004 in the *Sax-Zim Bog* area of *St. Louis County*, Minnesota. Photographs by Travis A. Mahan.

Bayfield 19 Oct (RB), and *St. Croix* 13 Nov (LP,JP); near average was the count of 8 solitaires in Minnesota. A Varied Thrush in *Oconto*, WI 6–7 Nov (BW) and 2 in *Ramsey*, MN (CBa, LK) were fewer than normal. A Sprague's Pipit in *Cottonwood* 10–11 Oct (RMD et al.) was one of the few photographed in Minnesota in recent decades (PHS).

Tardy warblers included a Tennessee in *Dane*, WI 12 Nov (ST) and a Yellow Warbler in *Hennepin*, MN 31 Oct (SLC). Record late for the U.P. was a male Black-throated Blue Warbler at Peninsula Pt., *Delta* 9 Nov (ZG, SH). Minnesota's 5th Townsend's Warbler foraged in White Pines at Linwood L., *Anoka* 9–11 Sep (CFo, m.ob.). A count of 40 Pine Warblers was obtained in *Vilas*, WI 11 Sep (JB), and one lingered at W.P.B.O. 6 Nov (SAJ). A wayward Prairie Warbler visited W.P.B.O. 18 Sep. Rarely found in the Region during fall migration, Western Tanagers (all p.a.) appeared in *Dane*, WI 12 Sep and 2 Oct (K BK, ME) and *Winnebago*, WI 8 Sep (DT). Possibly returning for the 2nd consecutive fall was a Spotted Towhee in *Waukasha*, WI 8–26 Nov (DG et al.). Away from its usual migration corridor in w. Minnesota was a Spotted Towhee in *Hennepin* 14–20 Oct (D&BM et al.).

Out of range was a Lark Sparrow in *Cook*, MN 7 Nov (KRE et al.). In Michigan, where casual, a Lark Sparrow was banded in *Chippewa* 23 Aug (MBo), and singles strayed to Copper Harbor, *Keweenaw* 29 Aug (p.a., MTA) and W.P.B.O. 3 Nov (CN, BS, KJB). In Minnesota, Lark Buntings briefly visited Duluth 6 Sep (MTA, MH, PHS) and Gooseberry Falls S.P., *Lake* 4 Oct (RPR). A Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow was discovered in *Cook*, MN 2 Oct (JWL, SLL); this species showed well in Wisconsin, with reports from *Milwaukee* 25 Sep–24 Oct (SL, SF, ICW, BBo), *Dane* 26 Sep–11 Nov (m.ob.), and *Walworth* 7 Oct (WR). Indigo Buntings tarried in *Dane*, WI 31 Oct (PA) and at W.P.B.O. 3–6 Nov. A flock of 1500 Rusty Blackbirds was spotted at Horicon, WI 14 Nov (RHo). Pine Siskins moved southward in good numbers, e.g., 850 at Tawas Pt., MI 31 Oct (BB). Evening Grosbeaks were scarce in Minnesota and ap-



This Lark Sparrow (a former nester, now rare in Michigan) was banded at Vermillion, Chippewa County 23 August 2004—one of three in the state this fall, all from the Upper Peninsula. Photograph by Mike Boyd.

peared in only three Wisconsin counties, but Michigan had 200 at W.P.B.O. 6 Nov and 40 in *Marquette* 21 Nov (GC).

**Corrigenda:** Change dates for Red Phalarope in *Macomb*, MI to 3–8 Oct and delete *Selasphorus* sp. (N.A.B. 58: 78–81); the Western Tanager should be *Van Buren*, MI (N.A.B. 58: 532); for Minnesota, delete Mississippi Kite in *Big Stone* and all *Lac Qui Parle* reports for Black Rail, Western Sandpiper, Ruff, Say's Phoebe, Worm-eating Warbler, and Black-headed Grosbeak (N.A.B. 58: 374–377).

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