

Trip Report — Michigan II 2024

May 16, 2024 to May 24, 2024 Guided by Cory Gregory



We tallied a whopping 34 species of warblers on this trip! The most popular was the Kirtland's Warbler and not only did we see them, we saw them do really cool things like feeding by creeping along the ground! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

There is no better time to go birding in Michigan than during the spring migration. Besides the many breeding species, Michigan boasts an impressive collection of migrants and vagrants. Our tour, which fell right in the peak migration window, tallied an impressive 200+ species! From the southern songbirds, like Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Summer Tanager, to the northern boreal species like Spruce Grouse, our tour sampled it all!

Starting our trip together in the southwestern part of the Great Lakes State gave us the opportunity to see some species rarely seen in Michigan by other birders. From the Summer Tanager and Acadian Flycatcher singing at Warren Dunes, the very vociferous

Prairie Warbler in the dune clearings, the Louisiana Waterthrush singing at Lakeside Road, to even a Prothonotary Warbler showing nicely by the Galien River. The tour even started out with a rare species for Michigan, the Eurasian Collared-Dove, as well as a great show by the American Woodcocks right at our hotel! A Connecticut Warbler dropped in while we were looking for Henslow's Sparrows, a nearby Willow Flycatcher gave a great show as it sang from a fence, and Hooded Warblers, Canada Warblers, and White-eyed Vireos sang at Floral Lane. All in all, we had a great start to the trip after tallying more than 100 species in the first day or two!

We birded our way around the Allegan State Game Area and Muskegon Wastewater, which was another species-rich day. The Allegan SGA netted us all sorts of grassland species like Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Sandhill Crane, Orchard Oriole, and lots of Eastern Kingbirds. The wooded portion had a different mix of new species for us including Veery, Scarlet Tanager, Blue-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. To the north, in Muskegon, we birded around the huge lagoons at the treatment plant. The 40-50 species there included 10+ species of waterfowl, hundreds of gulls, and even some very rare Fish Crows! Farther north we encountered our first of many Upland Sandpipers and Brewer's Blackbirds.

The Jack Pine forests around Grayling were the main destination for one of the most important key targets on the entire trip, the one and only Kirtland's Warbler. No sooner than we got out of our comfortable van did we start hearing them singing. Not just one or two, but heaps and heaps of them, all around us! We ended up getting such good looks, including a male singing point blank, that we were rather speechless. In fact, we even watched as one of these ground-nesters creeped along the ground, feeding. Seeing such intimate behavior was really a highlight! In the nearby mixed forests we connected with another suite of interesting species; a pair of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers showed nicely, a couple of Great Crested Flycatchers called from above, a Pine Warbler danced above us, a couple of Ovenbirds rocketed back and forth over the road, and even a sneaky Brown Creeper joined the party. We visited some wetlands near Houghton Lake which gave us the chance to watch nesting Ospreys before enjoying lunch at a little local cafe (but the pancakes weren't little!). Later in the day we connected with a couple more target species like Alder Flycatcher, Golden-winged Warbler, a whopping 33 Black Terns, and we even chanced into a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos that flew right in front of the van!



Connecting the Lower Peninsula to the Upper Peninsula, the Mackinac Bridge is an impressive engineering feat! We enjoyed this look at the bridge before crossing over to the birding that awaited us in the north. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

One of the highlights of this trip was getting to see, and then cross, the famed Mackinac Bridge. First, we checked the beach for new things and found a couple of Long-tailed Ducks, and a few warblers bopped through the trees including Yellow, Nashville, Orange-crowned, and Tennessee. Before we crossed the bridge though, we checked out the stale report of a Harlequin Duck. To my surprise, it was still there! We hopped out and enjoyed quick looks at this stunning species which is rare anywhere in Michigan! After we crossed the Mighty Mac, we drove north until we entered open country where our target was hopefully at a grouse lek. We drove up quietly and sure enough, about 20 Sharp-tailed Grouse were still using the lek. They even got excited a few times and did some dancing! Nearby, the Munuscong Potholes gave us more views of Sharp-tailed Grouse but also of a singing Clay-colored Sparrow. An Alder Flycatcher sang, nearly half a dozen Upland Sandpipers kept an eye on us, and a Wilson's Snipe was displaying overhead. Shortly after, the walk out along the river gave us a nice chance to stretch our legs and enjoy birding on foot. We found several Virginia Rails which were seen completely in the open! A number of

Marsh Wrens were clinging and singing in the cattails, Swamp Sparrows trilled nearby, and even a few Sedge Wrens also joined in.

Our time in the Upper Peninsula was spent at a number of good birding spots including Whitefish Point, Point Iroquois, the Tahquamenon River Mouth, Shelldrake Lake, Farm Truck Trail, and Tahquamenon Falls State Park. Lake Superior was kind to us, thankfully. We encountered several diverse migrant flocks which really filled in our our warbler list; we saw Ovenbird, Black-and-white, Nashville, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Chestnut-sided, Pine, Black-throated Green, Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Wilson's warblers, to name a few. Migration was really interesting to watch at Whitefish Point where hundreds of Blue Jays swirled overhead, sparrows worked the feeders, Red Crossbills flew over, Broad-winged Hawks gathered and circled, and even the nesting Piping Plovers put on a good show. One of my favorite aspects of birding in the UP is the chance to look for Spruce Grouse in the deep and dark spruce bogs. And yes, we found one! At night, the owl researchers at Whitefish Point were able to show us a Northern Saw-whet Owl that they had caught. Adorable to us, but probably not to its tiny prey! As we said goodbye to the UP, we stopped at Point LaBarbe for one final stop. It's a good thing we did, because migration was hopping; we laid eyes on Black-throated Green, Black-throated Blue, Canada, Yellow, Blackburnian, Nashville, Tennessee, and Black-and-white warblers.

Back in the Lower Peninsula, we continued to bird our way down along the shoreline of Lake Huron. We added a singing Northern Waterthrush, a handsome Chestnutsided Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, and a couple of singing Blueheaded Vireos. As we approached Tawas City, we checked out Tuttle Marsh which was another very birdy spot. We added 14+ Trumpeter Swans, Pied-billed Grebe, and a stoic Bald Eagle. Returning at night was a blast; we saw Eastern Whip-poor-wills, Eastern Screech-Owls, and a Barred Owl! The main attraction on that side of the state in the spring is the famous Tawas Point. Known for its migration-condensing geography, it was a great place to be based for a couple of nights. For example, one morning we spent about 4 hours birding up-and-down the many paths and we tallied a very impressive 74 species! The highlights were many; we tallied 8 species of shorebirds including Piping Plover and Whimbrel, 3 vireo species, a scattering of flycatchers, a very uncommon Northern Mockingbird at the tip, a number of Orchard Orioles, and 14 species of warblers (including a singing Mourning Warbler!). Whether it was the chance to see a flock of 80+ Whimbrel swirling over the beach, watching an impressive array of migrating raptors, or watching the dozens of tanagers, grosbeaks, and buntings, this place really was special.

In the end, with a triplist loaded with more than 200 species, our trip was a really successful one, perhaps my biggest tally for this route! I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and I want to thank each of you for joining me on this Field Guides tour. Michigan means a lot to me and I hope you can now say you too have experienced a good chunk of the Great Lakes State. Of course, a big "thank you" to Karen for managing this trip and I speak for all of us in saying thank you again for choosing Field Guides for this adventure. Until we see you on another of our trips somewhere else in the world, stay safe and good birding!

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <u>https://ebird.org/tripreport/247051</u>

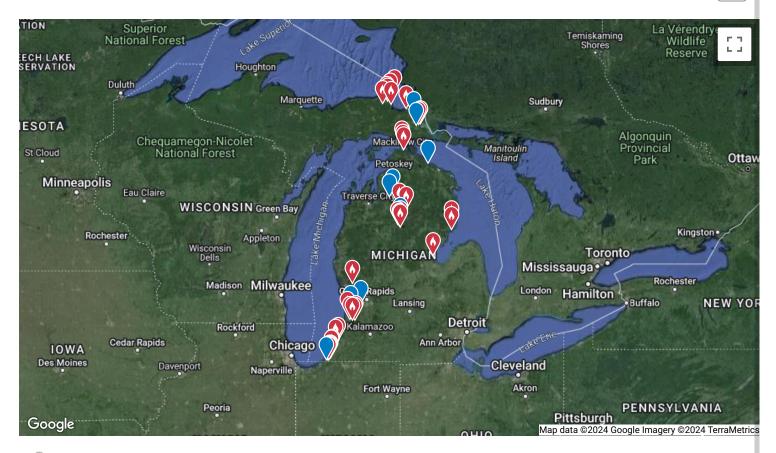
You can download a combined PDF of this page and the eBird report at this link: https://fieldguides.com/triplists/mic24bTRIPLIST.pdf

--Cory Gregory (Curlew)



Field Guides Birding Tours -- MICHIGAN II, 2024 (with Cory Gregory)

16 - 24 May 2024 (9 days) Link-only



Michigan, United States

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🐣 Cory Gregory



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Species Observed Show all details 454 Canada Goose Branta canadensis 19 15 Mute Swan Cygnus olor * 3 16 **Trumpeter Swan** Cygnus buccinator ▶ 12 30 Wood Duck Aix sponsa ■ 3 25 **Blue-winged Teal** Spatula discors E 1 1 5 14 Northern Shoveler Spatula clypeata F 🛯 3 17 Gadwall Mareca strepera ▶ ∎2 3 American Wigeon Mareca americana ► 12 108 Mallard Anas platyrhynchos 115 1 American Black Duck Anas rubripes • 🔳 1 **1** Northern Pintail Anas acuta E<1</p> 3 Green-winged Teal Anas crecca • **1**1 1 Canvasback Aythya valisineria ► **1**1 2 **Redhead** Aythya americana 1 19 Lesser Scaup Aythya affinis ▶ **1**3 1 Harlequin Duck Histrionicus histrionicus) 🖂 1 💼 1 20 White-winged Scoter Melanitta deglandi ▶ **1**1 2 Long-tailed Duck Clangula hyemalis) 📲 🕹 2 Bufflehead Bucephala albeola • **1**1 13 Common Merganser Mergus merganser ▶ ∎ 4 12 Red-breasted Merganser Mergus serrator 4

203	Ruddy Duck Oxyura jamaicensis	▶ 📲 2
	Wild Turkey Meleagris gallopavo	▶ 🖪 3
2	Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus	▶ ∎ 2
31	Sharp-tailed Grouse Tympanuchus phasianellus) 🖪 2 📄 2
1	Spruce Grouse Canachites canadensis	► m l 1
2	Ring-necked Pheasant Phasianus colchicus 🔹	► 1 2
4	Pied-billed Grebe Podilymbus podiceps) 📑 3
3	Rock Pigeon Columba livia *) ∎ 1
1	Eurasian Collared-Dove Streptopelia decaocto *	▶ 🗐 1
27	Mourning Dove Zenaida macroura	► 🖬 12
1	Yellow-billed Cuckoo Coccyzus americanus	► m 1
2	Black-billed Cuckoo Coccyzus erythropthalmus	> 🖬 1
6	Common Nighthawk Chordeiles minor	▶ 🖪 2
6	Eastern Whip-poor-will Antrostomus vociferus	► m l 1
10	Chimney Swift Chaetura pelagica) 🖪 3
7	Ruby-throated Hummingbird Archilochus colubris	▶ 🖬 4
5	Virginia Rail Rallus limicola) 🖪 2 📄 2
5	Sora Porzana carolina	▶ ∎ 4
1	Common Gallinule Gallinula galeata	> 🖬 1
6	American Coot Fulica americana	▶ 🚮 1
49	Sandhill Crane Antigone canadensis) 23 1 () 11
3	Black-bellied Plover Pluvialis squatarola	▶ 🖬 2
40	Killdeer Charadrius vociferus) 🖬 12
22	Semipalmated Plover Charadrius semipalmatus) 🖬 1

3	Piping Plover Charadrius melodus	▶ ∎ 2
7	Upland Sandpiper Bartramia longicauda	▶ ∎ 2
91	Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus	▶ 🖾 1 📄 2
4	American Woodcock Scolopax minor) ∭ 1
1	Wilson's Snipe Gallinago delicata) ∭ 1
22	Spotted Sandpiper Actitis macularius	▶ ∎ 4
1	Solitary Sandpiper Tringa solitaria) ≣ 1
3	Lesser Yellowlegs Tringa flavipes) 🗐 (
14	Ruddy Turnstone Arenaria interpres	▶ ∎ 4
4	Sanderling Calidris alba) 🗐 I
297	Dunlin Calidris alpina	► ∎ 3
2	White-rumped Sandpiper Calidris fuscicollis) 🗐 (
3	Least Sandpiper Calidris minutilla	▶ 🖪 2
3	Semipalmated Sandpiper Calidris pusilla	► ∎ 3
2	Bonaparte's Gull Chroicocephalus philadelphia) 🗐 (
650	Ring-billed Gull Larus delawarensis) 🖬 🕅
82	Herring Gull Larus argentatus	▶ ∎7
7	Caspian Tern Hydroprogne caspia	▶ ∎ 2
55	Black Tern Chlidonias niger	▶ ∎ 2
3	Common Tern Sterna hirundo) ∎ 1
5	Common Loon Gavia immer	▶ ∎ 2
78	Double-crested Cormorant Nannopterum auritum	▶ 🖪 7
17	American White Pelican Pelecanus erythrorhynchos) 🖬 1

2	Black-crowned Night Heron Nycticorax nycticorax) 🖬 1
2	Green Heron Butorides virescens	▶ 🖪 2
11	Great Egret Ardea alba	▶ 📑 4
20	Great Blue Heron Ardea herodias	▶ 🖪 8
39	Turkey Vulture Cathartes aura) 🖬 🕅
4	Osprey Pandion haliaetus	Þ 🖪 1 👖 3
3	Northern Harrier Circus hudsonius	▶ 🖪 3
17	Sharp-shinned Hawk Accipiter striatus	► m l 1
6	Bald Eagle Haliaeetus leucocephalus	▶ 🖪 6
45	Broad-winged Hawk Buteo platypterus	▶ ∎ 3
10	Red-tailed Hawk Buteo jamaicensis	▶ 🖪 3
2	Eastern Screech-Owl Megascops asio	► "]]
1	Barred Owl Strix varia	→ m 1
1	Northern Saw-whet Owl Aegolius acadicus	► m l 1
4	Belted Kingfisher Megaceryle alcyon	▶ ∎ 4
3	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Sphyrapicus varius	▶ 🖾 1 📑 2
3	Red-headed Woodpecker Melanerpes erythrocephalus	▶ ∎ 2
5	Red-bellied Woodpecker Melanerpes carolinus	▶ ∎ 4
4	Downy Woodpecker Dryobates pubescens	▶ ∎ 4
2	Hairy Woodpecker Dryobates villosus	▶ ∎ 2
2	Pileated Woodpecker Dryocopus pileatus	▶ ∎ 2
8	Northern Flicker Colaptes auratus	▶ 🖬 7
3	American Kestrel Falco sparverius) 📑 1

3	Merlin Falco columbarius	► 🖪 3
1	Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus	> 🖬 1
10	Eastern Wood-Pewee Contopus virens	► 🖬 7
1	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Empidonax flaviventris	› 🖬 1
1	Acadian Flycatcher Empidonax virescens) 🗖 3 📑 1
6	Alder Flycatcher Empidonax alnorum	Þ 🖪 1 📄 4
2	Willow Flycatcher Empidonax traillii	▶ 🖬 2
8	Least Flycatcher Empidonax minimus	▶ ∎ 6
2	Eastern Phoebe Sayornis phoebe	► 1 2
12	Great Crested Flycatcher Myiarchus crinitus	▶ ∎ 6
54	Eastern Kingbird Tyrannus tyrannus	▶ 💌 1 📄 14
2	White-eyed Vireo griseus) 🖂 1 📑 1
3	Yellow-throated Vireo flavifrons	► 🖪 3
2	Blue-headed Vireo solitarius	› 🖬 1
13	Warbling Vireo Vireo gilvus	► 🖪 5
31	Red-eyed Vireo olivaceus	▶ 💌 1 📄 13
623	Blue Jay Cyanocitta cristata	► 🖪 12
16	American Crow Corvus brachyrhynchos	► 🖪 7
2	Fish Crow Corvus ossifragus	► 1 2
20	Common Raven Corvus corax	▶ 🖪 8
72	Black-capped Chickadee Poecile atricapillus	► 🖪 9
3	Tufted Titmouse Baeolophus bicolor	► 🖪 3
45	Bank Swallow Riparia riparia) ≣1

43	Tree Swallow Tachycineta bicolor) 🖬 13
10	Purple Martin Progne subis	► 🖬 2
2	Northern Rough-winged Swallow Stelgidopteryx serripennis) 🖬 1
64	Barn Swallow Hirundo rustica	▶ 🔊 9
38	Cliff Swallow Petrochelidon pyrrhonota	► 🗐 5
1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet Corthylio calendula) 🖬 1
1	Golden-crowned Kinglet Regulus satrapa) 🖬 1
3	White-breasted Nuthatch Sitta carolinensis	► 🖪 3
6	Red-breasted Nuthatch Sitta canadensis	▶ 🖾 1 🗐 5
1	Brown Creeper Certhia americana) 21
2	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher Polioptila caerulea	▶ 📲 2
6	House Wren Troglodytes aedon	► 🗐 5
10	Sedge Wren Cistothorus stellaris	► 🖪 3
15	Marsh Wren Cistothorus palustris	Þ 🗖 1 🗐 4
1	Carolina Wren Thryothorus Iudovicianus) 🖬 1
25	European Starling Sturnus vulgaris *	▶ 🗐 6
32	Gray Catbird Dumetella carolinensis	Þ 🖪 7
10	Brown Thrasher Toxostoma rufum	▶ 🗐 6
1	Northern Mockingbird Mimus polyglottos	2]1
9	Eastern Bluebird Sialia sialis	▶ 🗊 4
7	Veery Catharus fuscescens	► 🗐 3
1	Hermit Thrush Catharus guttatus) 🖬 1
1	Wood Thrush Hylocichla mustelina	▶ 🚮]

59	American Robin Turdus migratorius	▶ ∎ 22
82	Cedar Waxwing Bombycilla cedrorum	▶ 🛐 9
4	House Sparrow Passer domesticus *	▶ ■ 2
1	American Pipit Anthus rubescens) 🖬 1
1	House Finch Haemorhous mexicanus 🔹) 🖬 1
4	Red Crossbill Loxia curvirostra) 🖬 1
8	Pine Siskin Spinus pinus	▶ ■ 2
22	American Goldfinch Spinus tristis	▶ 🖬 4
7	Grasshopper Sparrow Ammodramus savannarum) 🖪 1 🗐 3
9	Chipping Sparrow Spizella passerina	► 🖬 5
2	Clay-colored Sparrow Spizella pallida) 🖬 1
6	Field Sparrow Spizella pusilla	▶ 📑 4
1	Dark-eyed Junco hyemalis) 🖬 1
2	White-crowned Sparrow Zonotrichia leucophrys) 🖬 1
1	White-throated Sparrow Zonotrichia albicollis) 🖬 1
4	Vesper Sparrow Pooecetes gramineus	Þ 📑 3
6	Savannah Sparrow Passerculus sandwichensis) 🖪 🖥 6
2	Henslow's Sparrow Centronyx henslowii) 🖬 1
30	Song Sparrow Melospiza melodia	Þ 👖 13
1	Lincoln's Sparrow Melospiza lincolnii) 🖬 1
16	Swamp Sparrow Melospiza georgiana	► 🖪 9
4	Eastern Towhee Pipilo erythrophthalmus) 📑 3
1	Yellow-breasted Chat Icteria virens	› 🖬 1

2	Yellow-headed Blackbird Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus	> 🖬 1
12	Bobolink Dolichonyx oryzivorus	► 1 4
10	Eastern Meadowlark Sturnella magna	► 🖬 5
12	Orchard Oriole Icterus spurius	► 🖬 3
41	Baltimore Oriole Icterus galbula) 🗹 l 👖 8
198	Red-winged Blackbird Agelaius phoeniceus) 🖪 1 📄 21
14	Brown-headed Cowbird Molothrus ater	▶ 🖬 7
2	Brewer's Blackbird Euphagus cyanocephalus) 🖬 🗎
52	Common Grackle Quiscalus quiscula	▶ ∎17
10	Ovenbird Seiurus aurocapilla	▶ 🖪 6
1	Louisiana Waterthrush Parkesia motacilla) 🖬 1
3	Northern Waterthrush Parkesia noveboracensis) 1
4	Golden-winged Warbler Vermivora chrysoptera	▶ 🖪 1 📑 3
2	Blue-winged Warbler Vermivora cyanoptera	▶ █1 ▮2
6	Black-and-white Warbler Mniotilta varia	▶ 🖬 4
1	Prothonotary Warbler Protonotaria citrea) 🖂 l
10	Tennessee Warbler Leiothlypis peregrina	▶ 🖬 4
1	Orange-crowned Warbler Leiothlypis celata	> 🖬 1
12	Nashville Warbler Leiothlypis ruficapilla	▶ ∎ 7
1	Connecticut Warbler Oporornis agilis) 1
1	Mourning Warbler Geothlypis philadelphia	> 🖬 1
21	Common Yellowthroat Geothlypis trichas) 🖬 11
1	Hooded Warbler Setophaga citrina	• 🖂 1 📑 1

67	American Redstart Setophaga ruticilla	► 🖪 13
15	Kirtland's Warbler Setophaga kirtlandii	Þ 🖪 7 📲 1
1	Cape May Warbler Setophaga tigrina	• 🖬 1
3	Cerulean Warbler Setophaga cerulea	▶ 🖬 2
7	Northern Parula Setophaga americana	▶ 🗐 5
5	Magnolia Warbler Setophaga magnolia	Þ 🖪 3
3	Bay-breasted Warbler Setophaga castanea	Þ 🖪 3
14	Blackburnian Warbler Setophaga fusca	► 1 5
36	Yellow Warbler Setophaga petechia	▶ ■ 12
8	Chestnut-sided Warbler Setophaga pensylvanica	▶ 🖬 7
4	Blackpoll Warbler Setophaga striata	► 🖬 2
3	Black-throated Blue Warbler Setophaga caerulescens	Þ 🖪 3
2	Palm Warbler Setophaga palmarum) 🖬 1
10	Pine Warbler Setophaga pinus	Þ 🖪 1 🗐 4
5	Yellow-rumped Warbler Setophaga coronata	Þ 🖪 3
1	Yellow-throated Warbler Setophaga dominica) 🖬 1
1	Prairie Warbler Setophaga discolor	• 🖪 1 🗐 1
10	Black-throated Green Warbler Setophaga virens	▶ 📕 6
4	Canada Warbler Cardellina canadensis	► 🖪 3
2	Wilson's Warbler Cardellina pusilla	► 🖬 2
1	Summer Tanager Piranga rubra) 🖾 l 📲 l
8	Scarlet Tanager Piranga olivacea	▶ 🖪 7
10	Northern Cardinal Cardinalis cardinalis	▶ 🖪 6

20	Rose-breasted Grosbeak Pheucticus Iudovicianus) 👖 10
10	Indigo Bunting Passerina cyanea	▶ ∎ 6
ADDITIONAL TAXA		
202	Larus sp. Larus sp.	Þ 🛯 2
1	woodpecker sp. Picidae sp.	• 🖪 1