

Michigan: Kirtland's, Mourning, & Connecticut Warblers
June 8-17 2021

Itinerary:

Day 1 – June 8 - Arrival

Please plan to arrive in Traverse City airport (TVC) no later than 5 pm. We will all meet at the Cherry Country Café in the airport terminal for a dinner, load up our rental van then drive to Graying, MI for the night. ***Night in Graying***

Day 2 – June 9 – Kirtland's Warbler

We'll arise early for breakfast then drive to Michigan Forest Visitor Center in Hartwick Pines State Park for our 7 am appointment with a guide escorted tour of Kirtland's Warbler habitat and breeding territories. The tour will last 2-3 hours and we should observe other species well such as Nashville Warbler and Upland Sandpiper, flycatchers and other common mid-Michigan breeders. We'll then head north to the Mackinac Bridge and make a brief stop for lunch in Mackinaw City and scope for birds at the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. Once crossing the mighty Mackinac Bridge, we'll stop the Michigan Welcome Center and bird the area around the State Park here. From these locations we should be able to find the common breeding gulls, terns, and other waterbirds. Leaving St. Ignace we'll head north to Paradise near Whitefish Point. ***Night in Paradise***

Day 3 – June 10 – Boreal Birding; Whitefish Point

We'll get up early and explore two of the most productive back roads of the northern boreal bog forests, Farm Truck Road and Vermillion Road. Birds seen along these roads in June 2015 include Canada Jay, Nashville Warbler, Spruce Grouse, Red Crossbill, Hermit Thrush, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Sandhill Crane, Wilson's Snipe, and several other warblers and common northern breeders. We'll travel to Whitefish Point and bird around the feeders and grounds and time permitting, head out to the Point and look for gulls and shorebirds and nesting Piping Plover. ***Night in Paradise***

Day 4 – June 11 – Whitefish Point & Tahquamenon Falls SP

We begin the day at Whitefish Point again and cover any territory we missed the day before and potentially explore more areas in the region. After leaving this area, we'll travel to Tahquamenon Falls State Park and do some afternoon birding before heading towards Seney National Wildlife Refuge for the next day's birding. ***Night in Munising***

Day 5 – June 12 – Seney NWR

From Munising, we'll bird the Shingleton Fen and hope to see Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher and Magnolia Warbler. Touring Driggs River Road on the way to Seney should yield Black-backed Woodpecker and Black-billed Cuckoo and we'll try for Golden-winged Warbler north of Seney. At Seney National Wildlife Refuge, we'll drive the Wildlife Drive and look for waterbirds and hopefully come across a Yellow Rail, but we should also find terns, swallows, Trumpeter Swans, Hermit and Wood Thrushes, and plenty of sparrows and warblers. Areas around the refuge might yield Boreal Chickadee.

Night in Ishpeming

Day 6 – June 13 – Peshekee Grade

We'll spend the entire morning and perhaps more at the Peshekee Grade, a fantastic boreal forest, riverine, bog system that harbors lots of boreal species. We'll walk a bit here at the White Deer Lake Trail. Hopefully we'll find Boreal Chickadee here, along with other boreal species such as Pine Siskin, Evening Grosbeak, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Black-capped Chickadee, Purple Finch, and plenty of warblers! If we've not located Boreal Chickadee by now, we'll stop at a stunted spruce bog near Diorite. In the afternoon we'll explore Kate's Grade for Golden-winged Warbler, Canada Jay, Black-billed Cuckoo and Cape May Warblers. ***Night in Ishpeming***

Day 7 – June 14 – Baraga Plains

Today we will tour the Baraga Plains, a sandy Jack Pine barrens, where a known nesting pair of Connecticut Warbler occurs. Connecticut Warblers are on the decline in the UP and what was once a great place to find them is not the case any longer. If Connecticut Warbler is located here, this will be the holy grail of the trip for many! Also here are many sparrows including Clay-colored and Lincoln's, plus Upland Sandpiper, Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpeckers and 20 species of warbler! ***Night in Ishpeming***

Day 8 – June 15 – Baraga Plains; Munuscong SWMA

Today, we'll finish up some touring of the Baraga Plains and head back to the eastern UP where we will visit Rudyard, Pickford, and the Munuscong State Wildlife Management Area in search of Le Conte's Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Upland Sandpiper, perhaps lekking Sharp-tailed Grouse. ***Night in Sault Ste. Marie***

Day 9 – June 16 – Munuscong SWMA; mop-up

We'll arise early as usual and head out and explore the Munuscong State Wildlife Management Area where we'll have further chances for Le Conte's Sparrow, Alder Flycatcher, Bobolink and several warblers. From there we'll travel back through Pickford and on to Rudyard in search of more grassland species along the way, eventually ending up back in Traverse City. ***Night in Traverse City***

Day 10 – June 17 - Departure

After breakfast, we head back to the Traverse City airport for our morning flights home.