



2026

EcoTravel

Overnight Natural History Tours and Day Trips

Magee Marsh: Warbler Capital

May 10 – 16, 2026



Ohio/Michigan May 2026 7 Days!

Overview

Explore some of the most famous spring birding locations in North America where breathtaking looks and excellent photography opportunities abound. Discover various habitats, from the remnants of the Great Black Swamp to Carolinian Forest to Oak Savanna and various pine-dominated forests. The sights and sounds are endless.

Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, outside of Toledo, Ohio, has the distinction of being known world-wide as “The Warbler Capital of the World,” with over 30 species of warblers regularly occurring during May migration. Each spring tens of thousands of visitors from around the world witness the breathtaking spectacle. Just a couple miles away lies Oak Openings Preserve Metropark, the largest remaining swath of oak savanna in the world, home to uncommon eastern breeding species such as **Lark** and **Henslow’s sparrows**. The protected metroparks around the region are a perfect example of how hunters and nature observers can come together to protect habitat for the benefit of all species.

The area of Grayling, Michigan, is home to young jack pines, the exclusive breeding habitat of the federally endangered **Kirtland’s Warbler**. In the 1970s fewer than 500 individuals of this large warbler species remained, but conservation efforts have recently led to a population of more than 5,000. We’ll also keep our eyes open for **Evening Grosbeaks**, **Brewer’s Blackbirds**, and other specialties of Michigan.

The birds won’t be the only highlights of the trip, however! Humans also migrate to Magee Marsh and the surrounding areas each year to see the migration spectacle. There’s something special about hanging out on the boardwalk with visitors from all 50 states and multiple countries, all gathered together for the same reason. It’s worthwhile to start conversations and share some birding adventures while you can!

Join us as we visit the Warbler Capital of the World, and search for nearly all the eastern breeding warblers, and more!



Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrival

After departing home airports early, we'll hit the ground running after arriving in Detroit and making the short drive down to the Ohio lakeshore where, if time allows, we'll hit some of the major birding spots.

Night: Oregon, Ohio.

Days 2 – 3 Black Swamp Birding B

We'll spend the next two days exploring the incredible parks of northwest Ohio. A mix of federal, state, and city-level parks, along with private waterfowl hunting clubs, dot the lakeshore, protecting vital habitat from the ever-encroaching farmland. Of course, the most famous of these parks is **Magee Marsh Wildlife Area**. Situated on the southern shore of Lake Erie, it's a prime stopover for North American warblers during spring migration. Every year thousands of birders, photographers, and nature lovers flock to this location in spring to witness the unforgettable spectacle of large songbird concentrations preparing to migrate across the great lake toward their breeding grounds in the North.

The Lake Erie marshes gained fame during the late 1800s as some of the best waterfowl hunting areas in the United States. By the end of 1951 the entire 30,000 acres of remaining marshland along Lake Erie, from Toledo to Sandusky, was under private club ownership. Today, the region still supports some of the most intensively developed and managed hunting clubs in the Midwest. The Magee Marsh Wildlife Area, purchased by the Ohio Division of Wildlife in August 1951, lies in some of Ohio's finest remaining wetlands. The primary responsibility at Magee Marsh is the development and maintenance of high quality wetland habitat for a diverse array of wetland wildlife species.

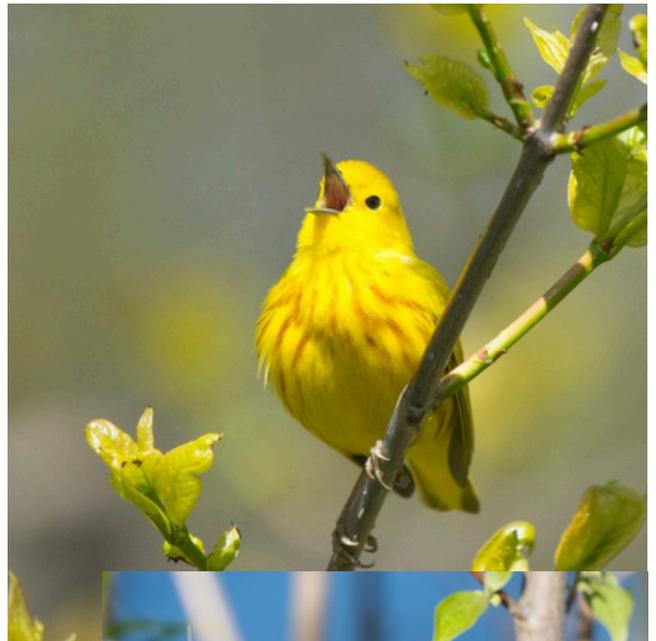
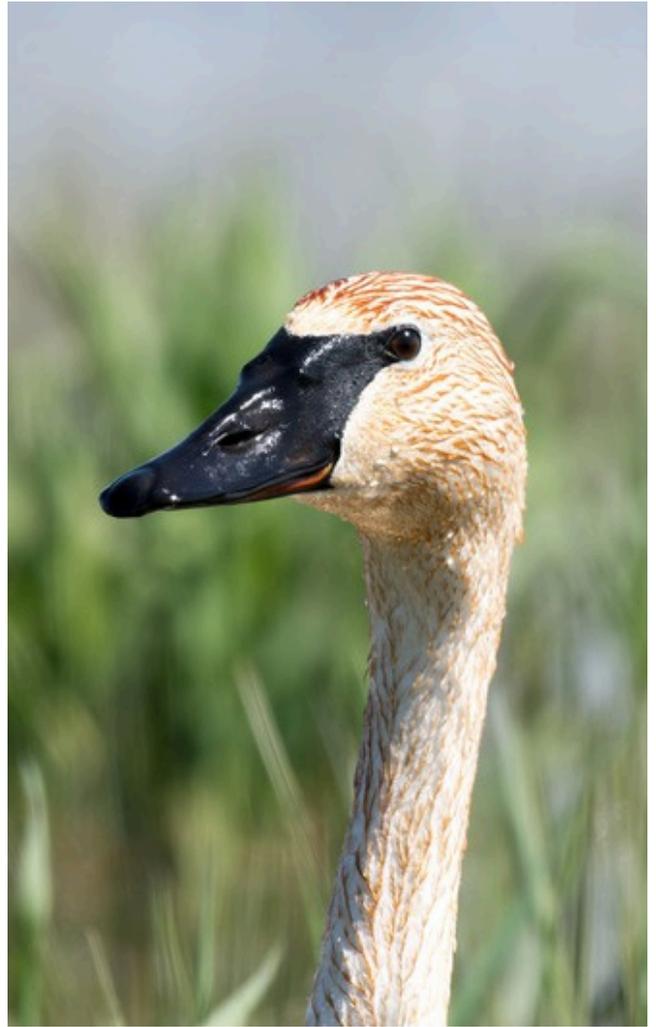
While the warblers are the main draw, some parks in the area are home to other speciality birds. From **Lark** and **Henslow's sparrows** to **Sedge Wren**, and so much more, breeding birds establish their territories while the migrants race north to do the same.

Nights: Oregon, Ohio.

Day 4 – Ohio to Michigan B

We'll play the morning by ear, moving our schedule around depending on bird activity. If the previous night was a strong migration, then we'll spend the morning searching for recently arrived migrants. If the winds were less than ideal, we'll leave after breakfast and head north into Michigan, stopping at destinations along the way.

Night: Bay City, Michigan.



Days 5 – 6 Tawas Point and Kirtland's BD

The next two days will be spent exploring areas of Michigan. One day will be dedicated to exploring Tawas Point State Park and some of the surrounding area marshes. This lesser-known birding destination is comparable in shape to Point Pelee National Park in Canada, and is the first stretch of land that warblers see after crossing Saginaw Bay. On good days, the morning flight here rivals that of Magee!

Another day will be spent in search of Kirtland's Warblers and some of the other parks in the area. A conservation success story, Kirtland's Warbler numbers were as low as 167 singing males in 1987, but after 50 years on the endangered species list were delisted in 2019 after the population had rebounded to over 5,000 adult birds!

Two other locations we'll also explore are Hartwick Pines State Park, where with patience **Evening Grosbeaks** can be found, and Tuttle Marsh Wildlife Area, where one evening will bird as the sun sets and search for secretive marsh life including **American** and **Least Bitterns**.

Nights: Bay City, Michigan.

Dinner is included only on the final night.

Day 7 – Departures B

We'll bird our way back down to Detroit, targeting any species we may have missed before departing on afternoon flights back to home. The memories and birds will last a lifetime!



General Information

Tour Cost: \$3,498.

Members: \$2,798.

The above cost is based upon a minimum number of five paying participants traveling together. If there are fewer participants, there will be a small group supplement. Per person Tour Cost is based on two people sharing a room.

Single Room Supplement: \$700.

All rates are calculated at the time of publication and are subject to change due to conditions out of our control (i.e. hotel rates). All passengers will be notified if changes in pricing occur.

Tour Includes:

Accommodations are based on double occupancy, one or two beds. Meals are included as outlined in the itinerary section (B=Breakfast/L=Lunch/D=Dinner). Additional charges for meals may apply if needs are out of the standard offerings. Entrance fees to national parks and sightseeing as specified in the itinerary.

Not Included:

Taxes; costs of obtaining passports and visas; airfare; baggage fees; personal expenses such as room service, beverages, laundry, gratuities for the local guide and housekeeping; personal communications; airport taxes; tax increases or new taxes charged for services that were not taxed at the time the booking was made; excess mileage carried out at the request of the passenger; sightseeing or meals not specified in the itinerary; personal insurance coverage (strongly recommended); and transfers to and from your home airport.



Matt Bell is a graduate of the Ohio State University with BS degrees in both earth sciences and evolution/ ecology. He started birding in May 2013 and became more seriously involved after a trip to Costa Rica. Since then, he helped revive The Ornithology Club at Ohio State and assisted as a volunteer guide for The Biggest Week in American Birding and the Yellow Rails and Rice Festival. He absolutely loves participating in citizen science, tour guiding, chasing rare birds in his free time, and meeting fellow birders from around the globe. Most of all, Matt enjoys sharing his passion for birds and conservation with others and never shies away at taking the time to help beginners start their explorations of the avian world. Matt is the EcoTravel travel specialist and leads day trips and overnight tours.



General Terms & Conditions

Reservations

Early reservations with deposit are essential to guarantee your booking. A **\$1,500 deposit**, per person, applicable to final payment, is required to reserve space on this trip. Reservations made within 120 days of departure require full payment along with the formal Registration Forms. Final payment for programs is due 120 days prior to departure. Payments can be made by personal check, money order, certified check, or a cashier's check.

Rates and Fares

Prices are accurate as available at the time of publication. Prices do not include airfare unless otherwise stated. The Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) reserves the right to alter quoted prices to reflect changes in airline fares, land service, or currency exchange rates. In the event that the number of participants is below the minimum required for the quoted price, a small group surcharge may be added.

Cancellation and Insurance

At the time the EcoTravel Office receives written notice that you must cancel your trip, the following cancellation fees will apply: Prior to 120 days from departure, your payments will be refunded minus **\$350 per person**. At 120 days and less, no refund is granted.

NOTE: In addition to cancellation fees, airline tickets and deposits required to guarantee hotel rooms may be nonrefundable. The purchase of a general travel insurance plan covering baggage, accident/life, and trip cancellation is highly recommended. Give us a call and we can put you in touch with those providers. CAS reserve the right, if registration is insufficient or other reasons out of our control, to cancel, postpone, or offer the trip with a small group supplement. In the event that CAS cancels or postpones, those with reservations will be notified as soon as possible and a credit of payments will be held on file. The Connecticut Audubon Society is not responsible for the refund or credit of additional expenses incurred in preparation for a trip. Any "delay" or "postponing" of departure by tour participants is considered a cancellation and cancellation parameters will be apply relative to the 120-day window. There are no exceptions.

Responsibility

Payment of deposit represents and acceptance of the following terms and conditions by the purchaser: The Connecticut Audubon Society, its affiliates, and all cooperating airlines and agencies act only in the capacity of agents in all matters of transportation and tour operations, and their liability is limited to the terms of the airline tickets and land accommodation contracts. They are not responsible for any delays, inconveniences, accidents, expense, or mishap of any kind whatsoever resulting entirely or in part from the negligence of others or from causes beyond their control. They can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, riot, war, pandemic, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses must be borne by the passengers, as the tour rate provides for arrangements only as describe in the tour brochure. The right is reserved to change tour leaders, substitute hotels, of similar category, and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by unforeseen circumstances. Baggage is at the owner's risk entirely. No refund can be made for unused hotel rooms, meals, and sightseeing tours unless arrangements are made at time of booking. The right is reserved to decline any person as a tour member for any reason which affects the operation of the tour or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of the other tour members. Any refund of the recoverable land tour services in the limit of The Connecticut Audubon Society and its affiliates' liability.

To make a Reservation:

Send the above stated deposit to hold your reservation. Nonmembers, please add \$45 (single) or \$58 (family) for your annual membership and to take advantage of the member discount.

Send your name(s), address, phone number, email address, name of the trip, your deposit, and membership fee (if applicable) to:

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