

Kirtland's Warbler Eco-Tour

Monday, May 22 at 9AM through Wednesday, May 24 at 3PM

The endangered and elusive Kirtland's Warbler always causes a stir when one is sighted passing through Northwest Ohio in the spring. Once on the verge of extinction, this bird nests exclusively in the young jack pine forests of the northern lower peninsula of Michigan before traveling south to warmer climates. Hike at Marl Lake State Park, enjoy the warbler tour at Hartwick Pines State Park, and search for the local elk herd on this trip for nature lovers and birders!

Fee: \$685 per guest. Program fees include all transportation costs, lodging, state park entry fees, and tour fees. Meals are not included.

We will adhere to any recommendations or requirements that come from the state during the time of the trip, should there be any COVID concerns.

Because of the intense planning for this trip, 50% of the fee is considered a non-refundable deposit per the refund policy. If you need to cancel for any reason, please call Ashley Smith at 419-265-2920. Anyone who would like to cancel their trip due to concerns related to COVID-19 may do so with no financial penalty.

The following packet contains information and resources you need to prepare for the trip including the trip agenda, packing list, and food suggestions for the trip. Please feel free to reach out to your trip leader with any additional questions.

Patrick Bronson: 734-770-7747 or Patrick.Bronson@MetroparksToledo.com

Travel Plan

- Guests will meet at Wildwood Metropark, Parking Lot 7 (closest to the playground, see map below) at 8:45AM to check in and load luggage. The minibus will depart for Michigan at 9:00AM.
- Guests are able to leave a car in that parking lot during the trip. We will need to submit car make, model and license plate information to our rangers.
- Please have your day hike bag packed and ready for Marl Lake State Park so we can leave your overnight bag in the back of the bus.



Tentative Schedule

Monday, May 22nd

8:45 AM: Meet at Wildwood Parking Lot 7 (look for minibus)
 9:00 AM: Depart Wildwood Metropark
 Birch Run, MI for lunch
 Continue to Marl Lake State Park (5 mile hike)
 Grocery store
 Check into cabin, house tour
 Make dinner at the cabin, group games, campfire, evening share

Tuesday, May 23rd

8:00 AM: Wake, breakfast
 Head to Hartwick Pines State Park by 9:30.
 11:00 – 2:00 PM, Kirtland Warbler tour.
 2:30 – 4:00 Hartwick Pines hike, 3-5 miles.
 Look for Grayling elk herd (time permitting)
 Dinner in Gaylord, MI
 Group games, campfire, evening share

Wednesday, May 24th

8:00 AM: Wake, breakfast, travel back to Toledo

Food Plan

We will stop at a grocery store once we are in Grayling, MI. We will have one dinner out in town, so please bring cash/debit/credit card for that or any other food purchase. Bring a refillable water bottle for the trip.

For this trip you will need to buy:

- 2 dinners – Monday, Tuesday (Tuesday will be at a restaurant in Gaylord, MI)
- 2 lunches – Monday, Tuesday (Tuesday needs to be a packed lunch)
- 2 breakfasts – Tuesday, Wednesday (Please eat breakfast before you arrive to Wildwood on Monday morning)

The cabin we are staying in has a kitchen. We will be sharing cooking utensils, but plates, silverware, etc should be available for everyone.

May 22nd – We will stop for lunch at Birch Run, go to a grocery store in Grayling, and have dinner at the cabin. Guests will be responsible for preparing their own meals.

May 23rd – Breakfast at the cabin, packed lunch at Hartwick Pines, dinner location TBD.

May 24th – Breakfast at the cabin, we will arrive back at Wildwood around lunch time so pack snacks if you think you will need them.

Packing List

Backpack

- Day hike bag with water bladder or water bottles that add up to 2 liters.
- Snacks for hiking

Clothing

Temperatures in the Grayling, MI area during our time on this trip range from 32°F - 57°F.

- 1 pair good hiking shoes/boots, well broken in.
- Casual shoes for travel and leisure time (optional but recommended to let feet breathe.) Crocs or light tennis shoes.
- 2-3 pair medium weight hiking socks.
- 1 set clean underwear per day
- Sleep Clothes
- Hiking shirt and pants: 1 set, quick dry, non-cotton recommended
- Packable rain gear such as Frogg Toggs (\$40 at Walmart or online). Jacket and pants.
- Wool sweater or down or fleece jacket (when paired with your rain suit this should be suitable for most weather conditions).
- Wicking base layer (tops/bottoms): Optional but recommended
- Hat, gloves, buff (optional)



Miscellaneous

- Cash and/or credit card for food
- Lip balm (with sunscreen recommended)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Personal first aid items: Staff will have a full first aid kit, but we cannot administer medications. Please bring a personal supply of your pain reducer of choice in case of sore muscles, headache, etc. (a small supply of ibuprofen, antacids such as Tums, Tylenol and aspirin should cover most inconveniences that may occur). Also include band-aids, antiseptic wipes.
- Personal medications
- Sun protection: hat with brim, sunscreen, long sleeves, sunglasses
- Feminine hygiene items
- Hand sanitizer
- Soap/shampoo
- Pack food according to the food plan above

Optional

- Binoculars (available to borrow)
- Trekking poles (available to borrow)
- Camera
- Note pad/pencil
- Watch
- Personal pillow

Frequently Asked Questions

1) Do I have to be an experienced birder?

No. Between Metroparks staff and the Audubon guide there should be plenty of trained and experienced eyes to help spot and identify birds.

2) Where are we staying?

Here is a link to the beautiful cabin we are renting:

<https://www.vrbo.com/9742995ha?adultsCount=12&arrival=2023-05-22&departure=2023-05-24&unitId=8826282>

3) Are there any dangerous animals?

Yes. Northern Michigan has a fairly healthy black bear population. Although extremely rare, mountain lions, lynx, and gray wolves have been documented in northern Michigan. However, these animals tend to be very shy and elusive. Since we will be traveling in a large group and have some experienced outdoorspeople with us the odds of any sort of interaction with any of these animals is extremely low.

4) What else can we expect to see?

Northern Michigan is home to a huge variety of animals. While some like the white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and red fox are well-known to us, others like the black bears, bobcats, beavers, otters, gray fox, and long-eared owls might be a bit more exciting to see. There is also a herd of elk in the area; time-permitting we will look for them. Waterfowl and other species of warblers next in the area in significant numbers. Woodpeckers are abundant and include familiar species like the pileated and red-headed woodpeckers, as well as unfamiliar ones like the yellow-bellied sapsucker and black-backed woodpecker. The terrain and soil types are similar to those of the Oak Openings Region, but there are more abundant wetlands, and the biome covers a much vaster territory.

5) Why all the info? This is overwhelming.

None of this information is intended to scare off potential participants but it is very important to make sure you have a full understanding of this trip. We are very excited about the planning and execution of this eco-tour and hope to fulfill some birding dreams!