



*Our main target on this trip, the Kirtland's Warbler.*

# Michigan

## *Kirtland's Warbler Extension*

Tour Leaders: Eric Ripma and Larry  
Richardson  
May 13-15, 2019

*May 13 – Pte. Mouillee State Game Area, Huron-Manistee National Forest*

After meeting the group at Maumee Bay State Park in Ohio we started our drive to Pte. Mouillee State Game Area in Michigan. This state game area is a huge wetland that borders Lake Erie, providing great habitat for birds. Luckily, we had permission to drive the dike roads instead of taking the many hours it takes to walk around the wetlands. We had many species of ducks including lingering species such as Redhead and Gadwall, Common Gallinule, Common, Forster's, Black, and Caspian Terns, and American White Pelicans. The swallows put on a spectacular show which included all the regularly occurring species. The water was high, so shorebirds were in low supply, but we did see hundreds of Dunlin and a small flock of Short-billed Dowitchers.

After a quick lunch we started heading north to Mio, Michigan where we would spend the next two nights. A little afternoon/evening birding along the Au Sable River netted us a nice flock of migrants and breeders! We watched a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker excavating a nest hole and had great views of Black-and-white, Cape May, Yellow, Chestnut-sided, and Black-throated Blue Warbler.

*Caspian Tern*



## *May 14 – Huron-Manistee National Forest, Tuttle Marsh*

Our morning started out driving towards a breeding area for Kirtland's Warbler-this is the Kirtland's Warbler extension after all! On our way we had great looks at a Merlin. Once we arrived at our Kirtland's Warbler location, we quickly heard many individuals. It took a long time to get looks at one but once we did, we all had great looks at a couple individuals. We also had great looks at breeding Nashville Warbler, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Common Raven, Hermit Thrush, Brown Thrasher, and Field, Vesper, and Song Sparrows. In a field close by we had great scope views of Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark. After lunch we headed up to Tuttle Marsh Wildlife Area. It wasn't too active in the middle of the day but watching sparring Ospreys and Bald Eagles was exciting. Some of our group got lucky and saw an American Bittern fly by! In the late afternoon and evening, we spend some time birding the forest around Mio. Good looks at Blue-headed and Yellow-throated Vireos, Cape May and Magnolia Warblers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. However, one of the biggest highlights was a mammal. A porcupine sleeping in a tree was enjoyed by all!



*Kirtland's Warbler*



*Kirtland's Warbler Habitat*

*May 15 – Huron-Manistee National Forest, Hartwick Pines State Park*

We all wanted better and longer views of Kirtland's Warblers, so we headed to another area where this species breeds. Again, we heard many as soon as we got out of the vehicle, but this time we quickly got great scope views of a couple individuals. We also enjoyed hearing the winnowing of the flight display of the Wilson's Snipe. This noise is made by air rushing through the snipe's tail feathers. We didn't have long before we would have to start heading back south to Maumee Bay State Park, so we drove over to Hartwick Pines State Park. As soon as we parked, we had beautiful views of a male Evening Grosbeak. A short time spent watching the feeders gave us more views of Evening Grosbeaks as well as Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, and Black-throated Green Warblers. It was a great way to end this short trip to the breeding grounds of the Kirtland's Warbler!