

info@naturetravelbirding.com  
www.naturetravelbirding.com



## Birding Michigan's Saginaw Bay in Autumn

### 4 DAY/ 3 NIGHT TOUR

#### OVERVIEW

Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay found in the central Lower Peninsula of Michigan is the largest contiguous freshwater wetland complex in the United States. Where land meets water, one finds the greatest diversity of birds as passerines and raptors follow and concentrate along this natural ecological barrier providing for September birding that rivals the fabled spring migration noted for in the Midwest. The middle of September is perhaps the best time of the year to bird this area as recently-fledged boreal passerines arrive in excellent numbers and waterfowl move south. Neotropical migrants have yet to fully push south, while Nearctic migrants will have just begun migration. All in all, an eclectic mix of birds will be found at this time including migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, raptors, and passerines, including 25+ species of wood-warbler, 10+ species of sparrow, 7+ species of flycatcher, 6 species of thrush, 5 species of vireo, buntings, kinglets, nuthatches, wrens, cuckoos, and woodpeckers among others.

This trip will be centered around Tawas, Michigan, which is located at the northern extent of the Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron! With our focus in a narrow geographic area, it will allow participants to have multiple opportunities to see the diverse birds making passage through Michigan's Saginaw Bay region.

#### DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Bay City SP, Nayanquing Point SWA
DAY 2	Tawas Point SP, Kirtland's Warbler restoration lands, Tuttle Marsh
DAY 3	Tawas Point SP, Au Sable River & Lumberman's Monument, Wurtsmith AFB, Clark's Marsh
DAY 4	Tawas Point SP, Au Gres area (Midland)

## DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

### DAY 1: Bay City SP, Nayanquing Point SWA

After a late morning pick-up in or near MBS International Airport, we will begin the day at Bay City State Park. With its proximity to Saginaw and mixture of habitats, this very accessible park will allow us to encounter our first passerine migrants as well as shorebirds, gulls, terns, and herons along the lakeshore and interdunal wetlands.

After a quick, late lunch in Linwood, we will visit Nayanquing Point SWA which is known for its collection of waterfowl and waders. If water levels have been controlled, shorebirds should be excellent. From the viewing platform, we will be able to watch southbound raptors. The small, wooded areas of this marsh complex contain excellent pockets of migrating passerines. This is a relatively large area, so we will sample the more easily accessible habitats. If time allows, we may visit Pinconning County Park and check for late afternoon migrants.

Dinner will be along Tawas Bay where we can watch for migrating Common Nighthawks!

🏠 **Accommodation: East Tawas, MI**

**Sunrise: 07:10; Sunset: 19:50**

### DAY 2: Tawas Point SP, Kirtland's Warbler restoration lands, Tuttle Marsh

After a 06:00 breakfast, we will begin the day at Tawas Point State Park. This is one of the premiere migratory stopover sites in the Great Lakes as this narrow peninsula funnels southbound migrants into a small area with short trees allowing for optimal viewing. As well, an extensive sandy beach that projects into Tawas Bay ensures loafing gulls, terns, and shorebirds. The unique position of this park attracts any number of migrant species, including rarities and vagrants.

Lunch will be in Tawas.

In the afternoon, we will visit Tuttle Marsh, a series of extensive diked pools known for waterfowl, rails, and if the water is drawn down, excellent shorebirds. The coniferous woods will also contain passerine migrants. We may have time before or after Tuttle Marsh to visit one of the Kirtland Warbler breeding areas in Iosco County to look for any remaining birds.

Dinner will be in Tawas.

If the group has the inclination, we will call for nocturnal birds locally with hopes of hearing and seeing: Barred, Great Horned, Eastern-Screech, and Northern Saw-whet as well as a late Eastern Whip-poor-will perhaps.

🏠 **Accommodation: East Tawas, MI**

**Sunrise: 07:11; Sunset: 19:48**

### **DAY 3: Tawas Point SP, Au Sable River & Lumberman’s Monument, Wurtsmith AFB, Clark’s Marsh**

After another 06:00 breakfast, we will begin the day at Tawas Point State Park, checking for new migrants and experiencing anew the more common passerine migrants. Depending on the activity of the birds at the park, we will then have an early or late lunch in Tawas.

After lunch, we will explore the Au Sable River Valley which has a series of dams on the Au Sable River with multiple scenic pull-outs and parks. Not only we will learn a little about the lumber era in Michigan, but also look for migrants along the way. On our return towards Tawas, we will take a short diversion to Wurtsmith Air Force Base. Its grasslands provide opportunity to see Savannah and Vesper Sparrows as well as other open field species. Nearby Clark’s Marsh is one of the better locations for now-localized Red-headed Woodpeckers.

**🏠 Accommodation: East Tawas, MI**

**Sunrise: 07:14; Sunset: 19:47**

### **DAY 4: Tawas Point SP, Au Gres area (Midland)**

Our last morning will begin at 06:00. We return once more to Tawas Point State Park, looking for new migrants as turn-over is very high day-to-day.

After lunch in Tawas, we will explore shoreline, grassland, and forest habitats near Au Gres including Noggle Road, Point Au Gres and the Big Creek/Manor Road area.

Afternoon return may afford us to stop at Whiting Overlook Park in Midland, known in recent years for fall American White Pelicans.

Guests will be dropped off in the late afternoon/evening at or near MBS International Airport.

**Sunrise: 07:15; Sunset: 19:45**

**Expected Trip List (all locations combined – ~200 species)**

Canada Goose	Buff-breasted Sandpiper (rare)	Willow Flycatcher (late)
Mute Swan	Pectoral Sandpiper	Alder Flycatcher (late)
Trumpeter Swan	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Least Flycatcher
Wood Duck	Short-billed Dowitcher	Eastern Phoebe
Blue-winged Teal	American Woodcock	Great Crested Flycatcher
Northern Shoveler	Wilson's Snipe	Eastern Kingbird
Gadwall	Spotted Sandpiper	Yellow-throated Vireo
American Wigeon	Solitary Sandpiper	Blue-headed Vireo
Mallard	Greater Yellowlegs	Philadelphia Vireo
American Black Duck	Lesser Yellowlegs	Warbling Vireo
Northern Pintail	Bonaparte's Gull	Red-eyed Vireo
Green-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Blue Jay
Redhead	Herring Gull	American Crow
Ring-necked Duck	Caspian Tern	Horned Lark
Lesser Scaup	Common Tern	Bank Swallow (late)
Surf Scoter	Common Loon	Northern Rough-winged Swallow
White-winged Scoter	Double-crested Cormorant	Tree Swallow
Bufflehead	American White Pelican (rare)	Barn Swallow
Hooded Merganser	American Bittern	Cliff Swallow
Common Merganser	Great Blue Heron	Black-capped Chickadee
Red-breasted Merganser	Great Egret	Tufted Titmouse
Ruddy Duck	Green Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Ring-necked Pheasant	Black-crowned Night-Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch
Ruffed Grouse	Turkey Vulture	Brown Creeper
Wild Turkey	Osprey	House Wren
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Harrier	Winter Wren
Horned Grebe	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Sedge Wren
Red-necked Grebe (rare)	Cooper's Hawk	Marsh Wren
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	Northern Goshawk (rare)	Carolina Wren
Mourning Dove	Bald Eagle	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Red-shouldered Hawk	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Black-billed Cuckoo	Broad-winged Hawk	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Common Nighthawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Bluebird
Eastern Whip-poor-will (rare)	Eastern Screech-Owl	Veery
Chimney Swift	Great Horned Owl	Gray-cheeked Thrush
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Barred Owl	Swainson's Thrush
Virginia Rail	Northern Saw-whet Owl (rare)	Wood Thrush (late)
Sora	Belted Kingfisher	American Robin
Common Gallinule	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Gray Catbird
American Coot	Red-headed Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher
Sandhill Crane	Red-bellied Woodpecker	European Starling
Black-bellied Plover	Downy Woodpecker	American Pipit
American Golden-Plover	Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Semipalmated Plover	Pileated Woodpecker	House Finch
Killdeer	Northern Flicker	Purple Finch
Ruddy Turnstone	American Kestrel	Pine Siskin
Sanderling	Merlin	American Goldfinch
Dunlin	Peregrine Falcon	Lapland Longspur
Baird's Sandpiper	Olive-sided Flycatcher (late)	Chipping Sparrow
Least Sandpiper	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Clay-colored Sparrow
White-rumped Sandpiper	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Field Sparrow

*Nature Travel Birding –Birding Tour*

Dark-eyed Junco  
White-crowned Sparrow  
White-throated Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Savannah Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Lincoln's Sparrow  
Swamp Sparrow  
Eastern Towhee  
Bobolink  
Eastern Meadowlark  
Baltimore Oriole (late)  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Rusty Blackbird  
Common Grackle

Ovenbird  
Northern Waterthrush  
Blue-winged Warbler (late)  
Golden-winged Warbler (late)  
Black-and-white Warbler  
Tennessee Warbler  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Nashville Warbler  
Connecticut Warbler (rare)  
Mourning Warbler  
Common Yellowthroat  
American Redstart  
Kirtland's Warbler (rare)  
Cape May Warbler  
Northern Parula  
Magnolia Warbler

Bay-breasted Warbler  
Blackburnian Warbler  
Chestnut-sided Warbler  
Blackpoll Warbler  
Black-throated Blue Warbler  
Palm Warbler  
Pine Warbler  
Yellow-rumped Warbler  
Black-throated Green Warbler  
Canada Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Scarlet Tanager  
Northern Cardinal  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Indigo Bunting  
House Sparrow

Please check the Saginaw Bay Birding website for the most recent sightings in the region!

<http://www.saginawbaybirding.org/>

**Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.**