



Ohio: Eastern Warblers and Spring Migration Sensation
11 - 18 May 2024



*The striking **Magnolia Warbler** is always a fan favorite of the trip.*

On this tour we have a good chance of finding almost every eastern warbler. **Kirtland's Warbler** migrates through this area but is easy to miss and a lot of luck is needed to find it. Some of the other warblers are also difficult, but the trip is timed to give us the best chance at **Connecticut**, **Mourning**, and **Canada Warblers**, plus other less common species. However, many of the warblers are abundant and we usually see stacks of **Blackburnian**, **Magnolia**, **Chestnut-sided**, **Bay-breasted**, **Prothonotary**, **Cape May**, **Black-throated Blue**, **Black-throated Green**, and **Black-and-white Warblers**, **American Redstart**, **Northern Parula**, etc. These are some of America's brightest, most beautiful birds. We also expect to see a lot of the duller warblers such as **Blackpoll Warbler** with its orange legs, **Tennessee Warbler**, **Nashville Warbler**, etc. We spend two nights in the hilly extreme south of Ohio on the edge of the Appalachians for some other fantastic warblers including the Vulnerable, beautiful **Cerulean Warbler**, the unusual **Worm-eating Warbler**, and some dazzling yellow and black ones in the form of **Kentucky** and **Hooded Warblers**. **Yellow-breasted Chat** is also easiest to find here near the southern state line.

It's not all about warblers. We'll also look for **Blue Grosbeak**, **Scarlet Tanager**, **Baltimore Oriole** and so many other brightly-colored migrants. **Wood** and **Swainson's Thrushes** and **Veery** are almost always seen. **Blue-headed**, **Philadelphia**, **Yellow-throated**, **Red-eyed** and **White-eyed Vireos** should be on the cards as well.



*The gorgeous **Cerulean Warbler** is one of several southern breeders we will target.*

Northern Ohio is bordered by the great Lake Erie, creating expansive freshwater marshes. The lake is like a freshwater ocean, creating similar effects as birds migrate along its shores. In the spring, this can create a jaw-dropping spectacle as **Blue Jays** and many other species move along the lakefront in groups of 100+. As birds migrate north and encounter the huge body of water,

they will put down into the trees along the shore to rest and feed before attempting to cross the unknown. This creates a massive build-up of extremely tired and hungry birds with one mission, to fuel up for their big lake crossing. The sheer number of eye-level warblers, thrushes, vireos, orioles, tanagers, flycatchers and more, can present birders with close-up views within 10-20 feet. This phenomenon in northern Ohio is unlike any other in the United States.

The north also has some fantastic shorebird habitat, which supports tremendous numbers of birds on their journey to breeding grounds in Canada. These beautiful birds are normally molting into their dapper breeding plumages. These include **Stilt Sandpiper**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Wilson's Phalarope**, and upwards of 15 others.

Itinerary (8 days/7 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Cincinnati

The tour begins with arrival at the Cincinnati airport (airport code CVG). After arrival, you will be transferred to our hotel for the evening before we all meet up and have our first dinner together as a group. We will discuss all of the exciting birds we hope to see and get to know each other a bit better.

Overnight: Cincinnati, Ohio



*This **Blue-headed Vireo** says it is not all about warblers on this trip!*

Day 2. Birding Sharon Woods and transfer to Shawnee

This morning will see us off to one of Cincinnati's finest parks, Sharon Woods Metropark. This pristinely kept park has a gorgeous stream running through it and is often a great place for migration. We will check out the morning birding here and pick up our first birds of the trip like **Nashville**, **Palm**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **Baltimore Oriole**, **Warbling Vireo** and more. After a lovely morning here, we will enjoy some lunch and transfer to the Shawnee Forest region. Will get our first taste of birding the Appalachian foothills as we target some southern specialties like **Blue Grosbeak**, **White-eyed Vireo**, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, **Grasshopper Sparrow**, and more. Of course, there are many southern warblers as well like **Louisiana Waterthrush** and **Yellow-throated Warbler**. We will wrap up the day with dinner at the lodge.

Overnight: Shawnee State Park Lodge, Ohio



Black-throated Blue Warbler is another showstopper!

Day 3. Shawnee State Park

Today we will have a full day at Shawnee State Park. We will be up and out of the door very early to explore the 60,000+ acres of old-growth forest. As we navigate our way up the curvy roads before dawn, we will look for the eyeshine of **Eastern Whip-poor-will** in the road. The morning chorus here can be absolutely deafening with loads of migrating birds echoing through the slopes and ravines. We will start on higher ground, as migrants typically land at the tops of the hills for a rest. As with most migration, it can be hit or miss depending on the winds, but we should be able to score a bright **Blackburnian Warbler** glowing in the morning sun and see loads of **Black-and-white Warblers** scooting up trunks. After things slow down on the hilltops

we will move back down into the ravines near creeks and streams. Here we will see loads of **Yellow-throated Warblers** and **Northern Parulas**. Next, we will move into areas with precipitous drops to find a true southern specialty, **Worm-eating Warbler**. These mid-to-high elevations also provide us with excellent opportunities to see the jaw-dropping blue of **Cerulean Warbler** up close and personal. This huge forest is filled with the skulking **Ovenbird** and **Hooded Warbler** as their songs echo throughout the entire area. In the evening we will head out to a small creek in Adams County to listen for **Barred Owl** and **Eastern Screech Owl**. This is also the only place in the entire state of Ohio where **Chuck-will's-widow** breeds. Then we'll head back to the lodge for a good night's sleep after an action-packed day.

Overnight: Shawnee State Park Lodge, Ohio



*We hope to score the less common **Canada Warbler** during our trip.*

Days 4-7. Magee Marsh and Northwest Ohio

The morning of day 4 will be spent cleaning up on any southern breeding species we may have missed on the previous day. After this, we will make the roughly 5-hour journey north. We will arrive at the wonder of Magee Marsh and the countless other parks along the Lake Erie shoreline to begin our Northern Ohio exploration.

Over the next four days we will experience the true greatness and wonder of spring migration in Ohio. Spending most mornings at the Magee Marsh boardwalk, we will be treated to eye-level looks at a great diversity of warblers and migrants as they drip from the trees like rain droplets. This will also give us a chance to see how drastically things can change from one day to the next with different waves of birds moving through. One day may be dominated by **Chestnut-sided**

and **Black-throated Blue Warblers** and the next by **Bay-breasted** and **Cape May Warblers** with little to none left of the previous day. Expect to experience things like **Magnolia Warbler** bouncing in trees right above your head and **Northern Waterthrush** foraging on the marshy leaf litter under the boardwalk. We will take special interest in targeting any warbler or other migrant we still need for the trip, especially some of the later migrants like **Wilson's Warbler** and **Canada Warbler**.

There is great diversity in habitats here for all species of birds from warblers to shorebirds. We will see breeding-plumage **Dunlin** and **American Golden Plover** in great numbers at the brand-new and fantastic Howard Marsh. This is a site specially managed with birds in mind, as the water levels are controlled to aid shorebirds in migration. We will also explore some unique areas to the west in Toledo like the pine and oak savanna at Oak Openings. It is here we will find one of Ohio's breeding populations of the colorful **Lark Sparrow** as well as plenty of singing **Blue-winged Warblers** and some noisy **Red-headed Woodpeckers** foraging in a stand of dead trees. There is nothing quite like a good day of migration in northern Ohio!

Overnight: Oregon, Ohio



Baltimore Oriole shines bright in the canopies of trees.

Day 8. Tour conclusion and departure

Depending on everyone's flight times, we may have time for an early morning birding session around the boardwalk at Maumee Bay State Park. After this we will make the approximately 50-minute drive to the Detroit Airport (airport code DTW) where we will say our goodbyes and wrap up our amazing trip through Ohio.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 8 days
Limit: 6 - 8
Dates: 11 – 18 May 2024

Start: Cincinnati, Ohio
End: Detroit, Michigan

Prices: US\$3,150 per person, sharing

Single supplements: US\$690

Price includes:

A \$200 donation to the GGBA
Meals
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees
Entrance fees

Price excludes:

Flights
Personal insurance
Alcoholic beverages
Gratuities (See [GGBA Tipping Guidelines](#) here.)
Laundry service
Personal expenses such as gifts