

Here is the current field trip line up for 2021. We are always looking for additional field trips. Contact Becky Kuhn or Cate Roesler at field.trips@graud.org if you have an idea for a trip you would like to lead. Watch the **Caller** for future trip announcements.

Statement on Covid-19 coronavirus

Our club will continue to offer field trips within the Kent County area where attendees will meet at the hike location (Millennium Park and Kentwood). We also plan to offer trips into surrounding areas later in the spring (to be added below). All COVID-19 protocols in effect at the date of those trips must be adhered to. Carpooling from the meeting place should only be allowed among fully vaccinated participants. Discuss this with your trip leader. Others should continue on to the trip destination in their own vehicles. All field trips led by our guides will follow COVID-19 protocol, including social distancing and masks. At present our field trip offerings include the weekly Thursday walks at Millennium Park led by Katie Bolt, Jeanne Griffin or Kathy Haase and Tom Leggett's monthly second Friday trips to various locations in Kentwood. Please continue to watch GRAC's website for future field trip offerings.

Safety hazards for GRAC field trips

Always be aware that driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader and exercise caution on the road at all times. Have a passenger handle all radio or phone communications. Dress and drive for the weather particularly in the event of hazardous winter weather. Be aware that bad weather may cancel a trip. Unique or special safety hazards for some of our field trips will be included with the trip details.

Millennium Park Hikes**

Leaders: Katie Bolt, Jeanne Griffin or Kathy Haase

Thursdays 8:00 AM (May through September) or 9:00 AM (October through April)

(starting time varies depending on time of year. See http://graud.org/field_trips.html for current start time.)

Hike Millennium Park to see what's hanging around. Flat 2.0 or 3.0 mile loops are planned to see whatever might show up. Many birds have been reported from this varied habitat near the river. There are ponds, swampy ponds, lowland forest and various secondary growth. This can lead to a good variety of birds.

Essentials: Meet at the end of the dead-end section of Veterans Memorial Drive east of Maynard at 8:00 AM or 9:00 AM. Take Collindale south from Lake Michigan Drive. Take a right (west) on O'Brien for about a half-mile. Go left (south) on Maynard past the beach entrance to Millennium Park. Turn left (east) on Veterans Memorial Drive and park near the end of the road.

Safety Hazards: Always dress for the expected weather conditions. Paved trails have bike traffic and the trail may crossroads. So, watch for auto and bike traffic. Please exercise caution on the roads driving to and from the meeting place.

****Due to COVID-19 concerns masks are required. Limited to a group of six. If more than six show up, groups will be split and have staggered starting times or walk in different directions.**

Field Trips: Birding Southeast Kent County with Tom Leggett

Join Tom on the second Friday of each month at 9:00 AM as he explores some of his favorite spots. Details can be found on the field trip page of the GRAC website.

Saturday, May 8, 8:00 AM

Leader: Larry Burke

Paul Henry Thornapple Trail in Middleville

This trail is the site of the annual Woodpecker Festival and is a great place to find Red-headed Woodpeckers and most of the other resident Michigan woodpeckers. Many other species should be present, including early migrating warblers and possibly summering Prothonotary Warblers. The paved, flat trail makes for an easy, safe, wheelchair-accessible walk. The trail more or less follows the Thornapple River and is bordered by bayous that invite many ducks and other waterbirds. The variety and number of birds should make this enjoyable.

Essentials: We will meet at the Arby's at M-37 (Broadmoor Avenue) and 44th Street (northeast corner of the intersection) in Kentwood at 7:30 AM and carpool from there to Middleville. Alternatively, you can meet us at the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail behind Village Hall (100 Main St.) in Middleville at 8:00 AM. This will be a morning trip and we will be finished no later than noon. Be prepared for insects.

Saturday, May 22, 6:30 AM

Leader: Scott Hutchings

Berrien County Warblers Trip

This is a prime date for warblers at Warren Dunes State Park and a major focus will be the trails from Floral Lane entrance. This is a heavily birded area and many years, species such as Worm-eating Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Mourning Warbler and Connecticut Warbler are reported here. This should be getting into the right time for Mourning and Connecticut Warbler. At least one of the four is likely for the week. Prairie Warblers nest out in open dune areas here. If you make the effort, they can be found. Other possible stops are the Three Oaks Sewage Ponds and the South Branch of the Galien River. The Kesling Nature Preserve on Forest Lawn Road and Lakeside Road are both good for Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler and White-eyed Vireo. In recent years, Fish Crows have been reported from the nearby dump, but with the dump closing, they may move elsewhere. Other stops are possible including, Galien River Park north of New Buffalo and Chikaming Township Park. Bring your CB or Family radio if you have one and try to keep in touch between cars. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville, north of the freeway, at 6:30 AM. Plan to leave extra cars in the carpool lot on the way back to the freeway. This is a longer trip as it is a 90-minute drive to areas near the state line. Plan on the better part of the day. Bring snacks and drinks to keep you going. A lunch stop is planned.

Safety Hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times and watch the car ahead of you. Insects and poison ivy are likely; take appropriate precautions. Please have a passenger handle all radio or phone communications.