

Here is the current field trip line up for 2018-19. We are always looking for additional field trips. Call Becky Kuhn at 616-437-9205 if you have an idea for a trip you would like to lead. Watch the **Caller** for future trip announcements.

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 (*recurring*)

Leaders: Katie Bolt, Jeanne Griffin or Kathy Haase

Thursdays 8:00 AM or 9:00 AM

(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 cross roads. So, watch for auto and bike traffic. Please exercise caution on the roads driving to and from the meeting place.

Saturday, October 20, 2018, 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Fall Migrants at Muskegon State Park

We'll plan to check Lake Michigan to see what's on the beach, hike the jack pines in the dunes and hike the trails from the Snug Harbor Picnic area. Many birds are possible on the beach, or it could be quiet. In the trees, late warblers, vireos and thrushes are all possible. In the past, owls have been found roosting in the pines; if we are really lucky, we could find one. If we run long, we'll look for a place to stop for lunch. If the state park is quiet, we will consider a stop at the Muskegon Lake Conservation Area or the Muskegon Wastewater. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters on Walker (north of I-96) at 8:00 AM. You may want a drink or snack to keep you going until lunch.

Saturday, October 27, 2018, 9:00 AM

Leader: Chris Baer

Field Trip to Maher Sanctuary

When our club first formed, members would not go "birding" but would go on hikes and look for birds and nature things. That is what we will be doing on this trip. We will look for birds, creatures of the wetland, upland and forest. There might be some asters still blooming and we might even see evidence of the bear that made its appearance last month. This is a chance for newer members to experience Maher and see what it looks like.

Essentials: Participants can carpool from the Arby's on M-37 (Broadmoor Avenue) and 44th Street (northeast corner of the intersection) at 8:30 AM. To reach Maher from the north, take Alden Nash (Lowell exit or from M-21) south until it dead-ends into 100th Street. Go left and take Baker Street at the first right. That turns into Wood School Road at the Barry County line. Take the first right at 108th Street and the parking lot for Maher is on the left after a short distance. We will be on the boardwalk and some of the trails on this loop walk. If it has rained the boardwalk can be slippery. Sturdy shoes may be helpful.

Saturday, November 17, 2018, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Lake Shore Migrants

We will plan to look for the best reported late shorebirds, winter ducks, winter gulls or winter finches along the lake shore. Winter ducks should be in the area, and the other late migrants should still be moving south. This time of year presents an opportunity for birds that can difficult to find in our area, so we'll check the bird alerts and go with the best prospects. We are likely to start on the lake shore with Holland State Park, Oval Beach or Douglas Beach as possible targets. From Lake Michigan, we're likely to work inland with stops possible along Lake Macatawa, the Kalamazoo River or the Todd Farm Unit of the Allegan State Game Area. If we are lucky, a mega rarity will be chaseable and we may travel further afield. Bring your Family radio if you have one and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. This is planned as a morning trip, but we could extend it with a lunch stop.

Essentials: Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville, and car pool from there. Be ready to head out at 7:30 AM. You may want a drink or snack to keep you going until lunch. Come prepared for cold weather. A spotting scope could come in handy on this trip.

Tuesday, January 1, 2019, 6:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

New Year's Day in Kent County

Get your bird list for 2019 started in Kent County. We'll try to track down some of the birds seen on the Christmas Count, and just look for whatever sounds good. We will start at 6:00 AM to look for owls in the Cannonsburg State Game Area and vicinity. At dawn, we will shift to looking for winter passerines, waterfowl and hawks. Birders of all skills are welcome to join us and start their bird list for 2019.

Essentials: Meet at the new Ada McDonald's on M-21 at the Citgo Gas Station by 6:00 AM. This is across M-21 from Amway and near the Post Office. We plan to be back at McDonald's at 8:00 AM for break and in case anyone wants to join us. We plan to finish around 11:30 AM. Dress for cold weather, and bring a snack or warm beverage to keep you fueled up.

Saturday, January 19, 2019, 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Winter Field Birding

This is planned a winter trip to search for winter birds such as Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike and Snow Bunting. These can be quite nomadic and hard to find, so we'll try to cover lots of territory to look for them. We'll search fields in northern Ottawa County and Muskegon County northwest of Grand Rapids. We'll probably check some of the Crockery Creek bottomlands looking for Red-shouldered Hawk. If conditions permit, we'll try to include the Muskegon Wastewater in our search. Expect to spend most of the time in the car searching the fields for anything different. Bring your CB or Family radio if you have one and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters west off Walker Road just north of I-96 at 8:00 AM. We plan to bird until noon. You may want to bring a snack to hold you over until lunch.

Saturday, February 9, 2019, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Allegan State Game Area Winter Trip

Explore the Allegan State Game Area, including the Swan Creek Highbanks and the Todd Farm Unit, for winter birds. Bald Eagle and Rough-legged Hawk are likely to be near the flocks of Canada Goose at the Todd Farm Unit. Wild Turkey, Northern Shrike and Ross's Goose have been found here in past winters. With luck, winter finches will make an appearance. Bring your CB or Family radio if you have one and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville, and car pool from there. A spotting scope will come in handy on this trip. A bit of food and a warm beverage will take care of any hunger pains. We plan to bird until noon; lunch afterwards is an option.

Saturday, April 20, 2019, 7:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Spring Marsh Birds and Hawks

Join us to look for marsh birds at Lane's Landing in the Muskegon State Game Area. Rails should be in the marsh by this date, and Swamp Sparrows should be on territory. After checking out the marsh, we'll see how the winds blow and either head over to the Muskegon Wastewater to check out the waterfowl or head to Grand Haven to check out Harbor Island and hawk watch locations to look for migrating hawks. At the Wastewater, Northern Shoveler and Ruddy Duck are likely; in Grand Haven, we could see Caspian Tern on Lake Michigan or a Peregrine Falcon at the power plant. Rails can also be seen in Grand Haven.

Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters west off Walker Road just north of I-96 at 7:00 AM. We plan to bird until noon. You may want to bring a snack to hold you over until lunch.

Tuesday, May 7, 2019, 6:30 PM

Leader: Steve Minard

Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake

This trip is an evening walk to the Hodenpyl Woods area at the west end of Reeds Lake. Varied woodland, marsh and lake habitat provides a variety of birds right in town. On this trip, we will concentrate on waterbirds and early warblers. The boardwalk provides good views of the lake and marsh areas so we will visit it. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot, on Reeds Lake Blvd north of Gaslight Village, at 6:30 PM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful. Poison ivy is thick in places.

Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 6:30 PM

Leader: Steve Minard

Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake

This trip is an evening walk to the Hodenpyl Woods area at the west end of Reeds Lake. Varied woodland, marsh and lake habitat provides a variety of birds right in town. The second week of May should be near the peak of spring migration, and just about anything is possible here. We will be looking for migrants.

Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot, on Reeds Lake Blvd north of Gaslight Village, at 6:30 PM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful. Poison ivy is thick in places.