

# **THE MICHIGAN ROADSIDE NATURALIST**



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**J. Alan Holman and Margaret B. Holman**

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Two pleasant peninsulas surrounded by blue freshwater seas.

Rolling glacial hills. The smell of cedar and pines.

An encounter with a bear and her cubs.

Smoked-fish houses on a long pier.

The whimsical Upper Peninsula of writer John Travers.

Indian “arrowheads” in a field.

Big dunes by the lake. Boulders in a stream.

A doe and her fawn at meadow’s edge. Lumberjack lore.

Young Ernest Hemingway fishing for trout.

Beautiful bays. Waterfalls. Quaking bogs.

Ski slopes in winter. Ice Age mastodont bones.

Morel mushrooms. A blueberry patch.

A dead porcupine on the road.

A green frog jumping in the water.

An old man hunched over a hole in the ice.

Loon calls. Storms on the Great Lakes.

A rowboat on a still pond.

A lone fly fisherman standing in a stream at dawn.

Petoskey stones on a beach.

The Straits of Mackinac. An old fort.

A soaring eagle.

Wave-cut cliffs of Lake Superior.

*These are visions of some of Michigan’s rich geological,  
biological, and archaeological heritage. This book is a  
roadside guide to such sights.*

—JAH, MBH

## PREFACE

Michigan's highways traverse a wonderful mix of geological, biological, and archaeological features that are often missed by busy travelers whose main purpose is getting from one place to another. Some of these sights may be easily recognized from the car window, while others may be enjoyed by making short diversions. This book is meant to be a guide for the discovery of such features, either for persons merely passing through, or for those who wish to more thoroughly enjoy the natural treasures of the state.

The first part of the book suggests how to prepare for your trip through the "Great Lakes State," including what to read before you leave and what to take along. Next we describe the state's four regional landscape ecosystems, two in the Lower Peninsula and two in the Upper Peninsula. Then comes an introduction to the geology, biology, and archaeology of Michigan. First we examine the ancient bedrock, then discuss the Ice Age and its impact on the landscape. Next we detail assemblages of plants and highlight characteristic animals. Finally, we discuss human occupants, from the earliest Ice Age hunters to European settlers.

The second part of the book provides seven highway adventures that indicate sightings likely to be observed along major routes. We outline numerous short diversions. (Needless to say, the book is meant to be in the hands of passengers rather than the drivers of vehicles.)

This book should be an invaluable companion for anyone traveling through the state of Michigan, whether a native Michiganiaan, a tourist, or a person on a business venture. It is written for the layperson, and a list of easy-to-use field guides is provided on pages 297–301. Being teachers, both of us hope that some readers will want to go to the next level of knowledge. Thus we have included a detailed bibliography at the end of the book.

We hope that your trip through the Great Lakes State is enhanced by what you read here.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

First and foremost we thank the staff of the University of Michigan Press for producing and editing this work. The Press went far beyond the call of duty, not only in their help in the organization of the book but in the procurement of extra illustrative material for it. We are grateful to all of you!

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