

Lighthouses on Lake Huron: Michigan

by Michelle Clark, PassPorter Message Board Guide (Moderator)

My husband is a huge fan of the TV show "Modern Marvels." One of his favorite episodes involves the construction of the Mackinac Bridge in Michigan, and he has always wanted to see it in person. Since we live in Georgia, it's not exactly a hop, skip, and jump up there! So we planned a road trip to visit our neighbors up north. I had seen two Great Lakes, so I was excited to add two more to my checklist during our nine-day adventure.

We decided to drive straight up to Bay City, Michigan on the eastern shore of the state, and then follow the shoreline of Lake Huron north via U.S. Highway 23 to Mackinaw City. During my research online I found a map of lighthouses along Lake Huron, along with their addresses on the [Michigan website](#), and decided to add those to our itinerary. (Having the addresses is very helpful as some of them are off the beaten path.) None of the lighthouses were that difficult to find (especially since we had our GPS), and the views were definitely worth it! Unfortunately, we didn't have time to visit every lighthouse on our route, but the ones we did were unique and beautiful.

[Tawas Point Lighthouse](#), East Tawas, MI: This lighthouse was constructed in 1876 and is located in Tawas Point State Park. Tawas Point is a Victorian-era lighthouse design, with a white tower contrasted by the red brick keeper's quarters. Over the years Tawas Point has extended further into the lake due to reductions in the lake level, leaving the lighthouse too far away from the lake to serve as a proper maritime light. It was therefore closed in 1953 and later transferred to the State of Michigan as a historical structure.

It's a short walk from the parking area to the lighthouse. Park admission is \$8 per vehicle for out-of-state visitors, and there is a \$2 per person charge to go inside the lighthouse. There's no charge to walk around the grounds, take exterior photos, or visit the gift shop. Bird lovers will find a haven here, as the area is popular for bird watching. There is a small building near the lighthouse with information on recently spotted species. Nearby are a nice covered picnic pavilion, a playground, restrooms, and a boardwalk out to Lake Huron. There's also an outdoor footwash to wash those sandy toes! The state park also has designated areas for boating, fishing, hiking, and swimming.

[Sturgeon Point Lighthouse](#), Harrisville, MI: Sturgeon Point was named for the fish that frequent the waters surrounding this narrow tip of land in Lake Huron. The dangerous reefs near the point required the

construction of a lighthouse on the point in 1870. The tower is another stunning example of Victorian-era lighthouse architecture and was operational until 1941. The grounds surrounding the lighthouse include maritime objects such as shipwrecks and anchors. The keeper's house is fully furnished with original and period furnishings. Currently the keeper's house and grounds are open to the public for free but there is a charge to enter the tower. The lighthouse at Sturgeon Point was my favorite of the three we visited.

Sharing the grounds at Sturgeon Point is the Bailey School, a one-room schoolhouse built in 1907. The school was originally located in nearby Mikado, Michigan, and served students until 1941. In the late 1990s the structure was moved to its current location. The school is fully furnished with the original chalkboard, maps, and school bell. There is no charge to go inside the school, and there's usually a volunteer stationed inside to answer any questions.

When we visited Sturgeon Point we noticed several people with buckets collecting the small, smooth stones that covered the narrow point. One such collector told us he made jewelry from the polished stones.

[Forty Mile Point Lighthouse](#), Rogers City, MI: This is one of the more unique lighthouses we visited. The keeper's home is a two-story brick duplex with the tower in between the two units. The structure was built in 1896 and operated for approximately 60 years. There are several structures on the property including a foghorn station, and the grounds are quite attractive and well kept. There is no charge to view the grounds or beaches at Lighthouse Park, but the nautical museum does have an admission fee. Unfortunately, we arrived after the museum had closed for the day, so check with the Lighthouse Society for operating hours ahead of time.

The two lighthouses I really wished we had time to visit are located at Presque Isle - the [Old Presque Isle Lighthouse](#) and the [New Presque Isle Lighthouse Park and Museum](#). Maybe next time!

About The Author: Michelle Clark is a self-professed thrill ride junkie and the mother of three teens who share in her obsession. Her goal is to experience as many theme parks as possible and stay in every Disney resort before she dies!

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