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WJR

"POINT OF VIEW"

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Hello, this is George Bushnell, and this is my

point of view.

small

I have great affection for a/bird that has been on

the verge of extinction and now is making a comeback—

the Kirtland Warbler. One reason for my enthusiasm

over this tiny object stems from the fact that it nests

in Michigan and migrates to the island of Abaco in

The Bahamas. The Bushnell family has deep roots in

both places, thus sentiment is a big factor.

Another reason for delight with the Kirtland

Warbler is that not a very great deal is known either

about it or its habits. It does seem to be established,

however, that the bird only nests successfully in burned-

over pine forests, and when there are no forest fires

the creature disappears!! Thus, the intriguing paradox

of ecologists, on the one hand, moving heaven and earth to preserve so-called unspoiled natural resources, efforts replete with dire warnings about destruction of our forests, and, on the other hand, ornithologists and naturalists applauding the disasters of nature in order that there might be burned-over breeding grounds. This is one that fascinates me. For this is a rather impressive power struggle—all over my friend the Kirtland Warbler; and the bird is winning.

As fond as I am of the Kirtland, however, this paradox suggests a much larger question. Is the current fad of ecology throwing out the baby with the bath water? Is an unpolluted environment worth the penalties attached to achieving that end?

Substitute this little warbler for employees of the auto industry and ask if extensive unemployment is worth

squeaky clean air. Substitute Kirtland for the blighted and depressed economies of the Dakotas and New Mexico and ask if poverty is worth an undisturbed ecology or should open strip mineral mining be permitted.

Other situations suggest themselves that highlight the dichotomy facing today's society. Do we forsake a modestly polluted atmosphere that is the product of petroleum-generated electricity for greater pollution resulting from coal-generated electric power; or, given the realities of ever increasing costs of oil, do we significantly reduce our consumption of electric energy? What then do we do about the millions of us who work and live in structures built since World War II that, for all practical purposes, are hermetically sealed and are completely dependent upon electric power for light and air?

Another example:

Given the fact that the best demographic and economic opinion is certain that overpopulation in portions of the world portends disaster for all of the world, and given the fact that the best medical and scientific advice is that all presently known female birth control devices are seriously threatening to the health of the user; do we agree that several million may starve to death from overpopulation, or do we acknowledge that several thousand may die from use of currently available procedures?

Admittedly, this is all a bit over-simplified.

Nevertheless, the demands identified by the jolly little Kirtland Warbler are real and must be faced. Essentially, they are: We must make value judgments. Those judgments must be well thought-out and all foreseeable consequences must be identified. We must make decisions.

And we must accept the results of those decisions.

Perhaps if we do all this, the Kirtland Warblers may
have taught us more than simply how to survive.

I am George Bushnell, and that is my point of view.