

Feds urged to buy area forest lands

DETROIT (AP) — A coalition of conservation groups is recommending the federal government acquire land in several national parks, including four of Michigan's national forests.

Kirtland's Warbler National Wildlife Refuge in Roscommon County is among the four Michigan areas on the coalition list, as is the Huron National Forest, which stretches across several area counties.

The Wilderness Society released a report Saturday urging Congress to spend \$634 million to acquire land plus another \$158.5 million in matching funds for states to spend on recreation projects.

Money for the project would come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which gets more than 80 percent of its revenue from offshore oil drilling royalties. The fund was established in 1964 to take money from environmentally threatening activities and spend it on environmental preservation.

President Clinton in his recent federal budget proposed \$234 million in appropriations from the fund.

About \$900 million goes into the fund each year, but appropriations have averaged about \$253 million since 1981, The Wilderness Society said.

G. Jon Roush, president of the society, said Clinton's proposed spending is at odds with his campaign promises.

"Time is running out for America's last undeveloped lands," Roush said. "Every year there are more people, more development schemes, more dollars chasing

Kirtland's Warbler National Wildlife Refuge in Roscommon County is among the four Michigan areas on the coalition list, as is the Huron National Forest.

these special places. If we put off these purchases, we're going to lose a lot of these areas."

The coalition has proposed the following in Michigan:

- Spending \$200,000 to purchase 267 acres at Kirtland's Warbler National Wildlife Refuge.

- Acquiring 9,000 acres in the Ottawa, Hiawatha and Huron-Manistee national forests and the Grand Island National Recreation Area for \$3 million.

- Spending \$3.9 million to acquire 11,855 acres in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore along Lake Superior.

The exact locations of the acreage in Kirtland Refuge and the Huron National Forest were not available Saturday.

"Subdivision and development is also a concern at a number of spots in Michigan's national forests," said Don Hellmann, vice president of conservation for The Wilderness Society.

"Congress should not miss this chance to acquire the acreage now available and thus stave off developers," he said.



TRAVEL WISE

First warbler fest to take wing in Mio

This year marks the debut of the Kirtland's Warbler Festival in Mio, the same northern Lower Peninsula town that gives you the annual Iris Festival.

The Kirtland's warbler, one of the rarest songbirds in America, nests in the jack pine plains of the area, where the females build nests on the ground beneath relatively young jack pines, those 5 to 20 years old. The birds remain through summer before wintering in the Bahamas. Nice schedule, eh?

Since about two-thirds of Oscoda County is state or federal forest land, it would seem that Kirtland's warblers should be flourishing in the region, but they are not. The problem is the lack of new trees.

The U.S. Forest Service, state Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are managing a section of the jack pine plains, cutting and replanting trees in an effort to provide a breeding habitat for what officials hope will someday be the summer home for 1,000 breeding pairs of Kirtland's warblers.

Free guided tours by the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service are conducted between May 15 and July 4 in Mio and Grayling.

The new festival will include the guided tours, as well as a clean-up of a stretch of Au Sable River bank, a kid's fishing derby, a free ice cream social, arts and crafts show, cycling and running events and nature walks.

The Kirtland's Warbler Festival runs June 10-19. For more information on either, write the Oscoda County Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 670, Mio, Mich. 48647, or call (800) 800-6133.

MICHIGAN PARADE: The fifth annual Michigan Parades into the 21st Century is Saturday in downtown Lansing. This year's parade has a special focus on the years 1940 to 1949. The parade starts at 11:30 a.m. at Michigan and Pennsylvania and travels west to the State Capitol. All 83 Michigan counties are represented in the parade. At 11 a.m., World War II and other vintage aircraft will fly overhead.

RIVER CLEAN-UP: The third annual Pine River clean-up is May 14-20 in Cadillac. The Pine River Canoe Livery Association is supplying canoes, equipment, litter bags, transportation and refuse disposal to individuals or groups picking up litter along the river or its corridor. Call (616) 862-3471, for details or to volunteer.

Phil

Another Successful Customer

Doug

A top-flight BIRDER

Birdwatcher hopes to add No. 6,989 this weekend

By NORRIS INGELLS
Lansing State Journal

On Memorial Day weekend, Peter Kaestner is going up north to see a bird he has never seen before — Michigan's rare Kirtland's warbler.

That's news? Yes!

Because Kaestner, a U.S. State Department international affairs and trade adviser, currently working with the Michigan Department of Commerce, has more than earned the title "superbirder."

He is to birdwatching what Itzhak Perlman is to the violin, or Reba McEntire to country music. Only three other people in the world have a longer life list of bird sightings.

There are about 9,000 species of birds on Earth, and Kaestner has seen 6,988 of them. Most birders consider 600 to 700 sightings a significant accomplishment. Ted Black of Okemos, a retired state wildlife biologist considered the dean of mid-Michigan birders, is just approaching 2,000.

And consider this:

■ Kaestner is in the Guinness Book of Records. It says he's "the first person to have ever seen at least one species of each of the world's 159 bird families."

■ A newspaper in Malaysia called him "The Indiana Jones of Birdwatching."

■ Sports Illustrated magazine said he was "A Birder Aiming To Fly To The Top."

■ He discovered a new species of bird in Colombia, and it now bears his name — *Grallaria kaestneri*.

■ He has birdwatched in nearly 60 different countries.

"Kirtland's warbler is going to be my No. 6,989," said Kaestner.

He counted No. 6,988 in Michigan too. Earlier this month he saw his first spruce grouse at Whitefish Point in the Upper Peninsula.

"It was a fabulous experience. The bird performed absolutely perfectly. The male was strutting his stuff in the middle of an open road. There was a group of us there and the bird actually charged us, sort of trying to scare us off of his territory," said Kaestner.

Adding the spruce grouse to his life list was easy. Adding birds like the ibisbill was anything but easy.

In 1981, while stationed in

New Delhi, India, he traveled to the southeast corner of the fabled and beautiful Vale of Kashmir. He spent the night in a forestry hut at 8,000 feet, and the next morning set off over a 12,000-foot mountain pass and down to the valley of the Wardwan River.

"The trip was spectacular, with many exotic birds giving relief from the strenuous walk. Rosy pipits cavorted with red-billed choughs, while lammer-

geiers and Himalayan griffon vultures soared overhead," he recalled.

"Arriving at dusk at the Wardwan River, after walking 10,000 vertical feet and 25 miles in 10 hours, I found myself at the exact spot from which, over 30 years earlier, an ibisbill photograph in the (book) 'Birds of Kashmir' had been taken," said Kaestner. "I walked to the edge of the water. There, immediately in front of me, was an ibisbill feeding."

"The ibisbill looks like it comes out of a Gucci catalog," said Kaestner. "It's a beautiful thing," with subdued gray, tan and black colors, accented by its coral-red bill.

The top birder in the world, as of 1993, was a Missouri woman named Phoebe Sneltinger, who has spotted more than 7,500 species.

Kaestner's wife, Kimberly — whom he calls "a fair weather birdwatcher" — goes on some of his expeditions. And though she hasn't seen nearly as many birds as her famous husband, she has spotted six species he has not — a fact she takes particular delight in pointing out.



Kaestner expects Michigan's Kirtland's warbler to be No. 6,989 on his life list.



Superbirder Peter Kaestner checks out the feathered friends near the Capitol. He has seen 6,988 different species, which makes him the fourth-best birdwatcher in the world.

"She's very proud of those six birds," he said.

Like most serious birdwatchers, Kaestner is concerned about environmental problems that are causing some species to decline. "Habitat destruction is one of the biggest issues we all face," he said.

That doesn't mean birdwatching in North America may someday become an endangered species.

"The real devastation (in North America) occurred centuries ago," Kaestner said. Today people are much less tolerant of environmental destruction.

"What we're seeing now is a shift in populations. Some birds are becoming more common, others less common," he said.

Kaestner has been birding since he was 5 years old, influenced by an older brother. He studied ornithology at Cornell University, known worldwide for its bird research programs. A stint with the Peace Corps in Zaire gave him a chance to see many African species — "except the whale-headed stork, which I missed six times in four countries."

What's the appeal of birding?

"I enjoy traveling, seeing new places and new birds. There's a real aesthetic side to birds. Some of them are absolutely beautiful. There's a competitive side I enjoy a lot too. And I have a scientific interest in birds," said Kaestner, who has written articles for many birding journals.

"I also feel a spiritual bond. I've always felt a real closeness to God when I'm outdoors. Very often I'll say a prayer or thank the birds for being there," he said.

"Being out there in God's wonder and beauty is a way of putting perspective in our lives."

BIRDING BRIEFS

Kirtland's Warbler Festival

The Chamber of Commerce for Michigan's Oscoda County is hosting its first annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival from June 10-19, 1994. The festival will celebrate the beauty of the Kirtland's Warbler and its jack pine forest habitat. Events for all ages are scheduled, including guided tours of the jack pine forest to observe the endangered Kirtland's Warbler. The festival also will inaugurate the forty-eight-mile Jack Pine Wildlife Viewing Tour developed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service. The self-guided tour takes visitors through a variety of habitats with a diversity of wildlife viewing opportunities. For more information, call or write the Chamber of Commerce for Oscoda County, Mio, Michigan 48647 (800-800-6133) or Virgie Purchase, festival coordinator, (517-826-5590).

Interstate Kestrels

American Kestrels typically nest in tree cavities but will also use artificial nest boxes. In the farmlands of Iowa where nest cavities are relatively scarce, researchers discovered a novel way to remedy the problem. They used the backs of highway signs along Interstate 35 as supports for kestrel nest boxes. During a five-year period from 1988 to 1992, the average yearly occupancy rate of the fifty monitored nest boxes was 45 percent, a number that compares favorably with rates in other North American locations. The number of nests producing young was also encouraging with a yearly average of 69 percent. European Starlings were quick to take up residence in boxes unused by kestrels, and there was evidence of kestrels actually evicting starlings from boxes. The highway signs provided strong supports for the boxes, and the signs' height discouraged predators.

—*The Wilson Bulletin*, Vol. 105, No.3.

Banded Piping Plovers

During the summer of 1993, Piping Plovers were banded in Michigan with aluminum USFWS bands and a combination of plastic color bands. All the birds banded in Michigan received an orange plastic band on their right leg in addition to one other band. The banding information is being used to study wintering areas and migration routes. Please report sightings and color combinations to Francesca J. Cuthbert or Laura Wemmer, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, 200 Hodson Hall, 1980 Folwell Ave, St. Paul, MN 55108 (612-624-1756).

A Bird by Any Other Name

The thirty-ninth supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union checklist of North American birds contains several name changes of interest to birders. The Green-backed Heron is now once again called simply the Green Heron, and the Black-shouldered Kite becomes the White-tailed Kite. The Lesser Golden-Plover has been split into two species, the Pacific Golden-Plover and the American Golden-Plover. From the Rosy Finch, birders gain three new species, the Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch, the Black Rosy-Finch, and the Brown-capped Rosy-Finch. Four species added to the North American list due to their confirmed appearance on the continent are the Yellow-legged Gull (recorded in Canada and near Washington, D.C.), the White-chinned Petrel (Texas), the Himalayan Snowcock (Nevada's Ruby Mountains), and the European Turtle-Dove (Florida).

to Page 4B

FLINT JOURNAL

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No place like home: Half-ounce bird unites traditional foes in fight for habitat

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Mio - It's enough to make a spotted owl green with envy: The timber industry, environmentalists and government regulators are working together to try to save an endangered bird called the Kirtland's warbler.

The same groups that have been at each other's throats over the spotted owl's habitat have united to try to save the half-ounce, yellow-breasted warbler, also threatened by a shrinking habitat.

The endangered owl dwells in the Pacific Northwest's old-growth forests, where a 3-year-old logging ban cost thousands of jobs. A federal judge lifted the ban Tuesday.

By contrast, the warbler lives near young trees, nesting in the thick underbrush beneath stands of jack pines just 5 to 15 years old.

"They're very picky," biologist David Case said.

The pines start dying when they reach 16 to 20 feet, but by that time, they have choked the undergrowth.

Historically, wildfires preserved warbler habitat by de-

stroying older trees. Heat from the fire bursts the pine cones and scatters their seeds, giving birth to a new generation of trees.

But as more people moved into the area, they fought the fires, disrupting the cycle and shrinking the bird's habitat.

As of last year, fewer than 1,000 of the warblers were known to exist - all within an eight-county area of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Now, state and federal agencies use controlled burns and clear-cutting to restore the habitat. Private logging companies cut the timber.

"The reason the Endangered Species Act is working in Michigan is one simple word: partnerships," said Charles Wooley, the warbler's project leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"It is nice not to have the kinds of problems they've got in the Pacific Northwest," said Paul Call, raw materials manager for Weyerhaeuser Co.'s mill in nearby Grayling, which buys some of the pines harvested to bolster warbler habitat.

Biologist Rex Ennis of the U.S. Forest Service was among several dozen biologists and volun-

teers who fanned out Friday for the last day of the annual Kirtland's census.

Cupping an ear, he strained to hear the warbler's melodious chirp. Hearing one, he noted its approximate location on a map, then resumed his trek.

Annual Kirtland's counts began in 1971, when a 10-year census showed a sharp drop in their numbers. In 1974, only 167 males were counted.

The 1993 census found 485 males, up 22 percent from the previous year. It will take several days to tally this year's figures.

Meanwhile, the first Kirtland's Warbler Festival, sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce, began Saturday and runs through June 19.

The festival illustrates area residents' evolution from hostility to enthusiasm about the preservation effort, festival chairwoman Vergie Purchase said.

"The more we understood this little bird and the economic impact it could have, we decided we'd better celebrate," said Purchase, owner of the nearby Songbird Motel. "It's a great way to promote tourism."

Michigan



INSIDE:

■ City may divert \$7.5 million to bail out SMART. Page 3, Wednesday, June 8, 1994



SUSAN WATSON

City kids defy odds of turning out OK

The amazing thing about Detroit's children is not, as some would say, that thousands of them wind up in trouble. Heck, given the city's dire straits, that's predictable.

But what is truly amazing — astonishing, actually — is the fact that so many children not only survive, but actually thrive. They grow strong and tall out of the bitter and stingy soil of the city.

In a way, these kids remind me of those brilliant blue and purple wildflowers that spring up between the cracks on the freeway. Despite neglect, despite their ragged beginnings, they bloom.

So it is with our children

LOCAL NEWS

Detroit Free Press

SECTION E
Michigan Dateline, Page 7
Obituaries, Page 7
Call City Desk, 1-313-222-6600

Festival honors warbler

BY MIKE WILLIAMS
Free Press Environment Writer

It seems like only yesterday the Kirtland's warbler was winging its way anonymously toward extinction.

But the half-ounce bird, its numbers now fluttering upward, is about to become a party animal in Oscoda County.

Beginning Friday, the first Kirtland's Warbler Festival gets off the ground in Mio, a town of nearly 1,900 people and a major center of the little chirper's revival. The festival runs 10 days, alongside Mio's long-established Iris Festival.

Embroidered warbler T-shirts and pillows and hand-painted warbler buttons are already on sale.

So are wooden warbler postcards, made from the jack pine trees the songbird needs for its habitat.

"It's a big deal here in Oscoda," said Holly Gomez, cochairwoman of

the festival committee. "Every little town in the county is doing something for the festival."

There'll be a 4-H horse show and an ice cream social, a quilt-in and a bird-watching tournament. And, of course, guided tours to attempt to spot the hard-to-see warbler.

U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is supposed to show up for one of the tours. So are U.S. Sen. Carl Levin and Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director Rolfe Harmes.

The warbler didn't always have such celebrity status. When it first made the federal endangered species list in 1967, few had heard of it and fewer still cared.

No one is sure why that changed. Maybe it was the songbird's close encounter with extinction in 1987, when only 167 singing males were

counted in Michigan, the warbler's summer home.

Maybe it was the growing number of tourist dollars spent by bird watchers from just about every state and overseas. About 1,500 people went on warbler tours in Oscoda last year.

Whatever the reason, the gray and yellow bird has become something of a mascot in Oscoda County.

The birds are found only in Michigan and the Bahamas, where they winter. They nest primarily in Oscoda and seven neighboring counties.

It's tricky to find a warbler. Gomez, a big fan of the bird, has never spotted one.

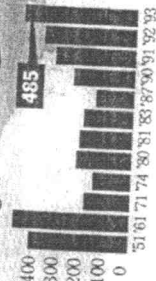
"I went out to see one one day, but it rained," she said. "They don't like to sing on rainy days."

For information, call the Oscoda Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-800-6133, 10-2, Monday-Saturday.

RARE BIRDS REBOUNDING

The number of singing male Kirtland's warblers recorded in Michigan is back up to levels of more than 40 years ago.

Selected counts of Kirtland's warbler in Michigan



Schoolcraft
Oshtemo—3
Alcona
4
34
344
11
4
81
3
Iosco
Crawford
Ogemaw
Roscommon

■ Singing male Kirtland's warblers were heard in these counties in 1993.

Detroit Free Press

REAL LIFE

Sunday

JUNE 12,
1994

Michigan



Kirtland's warblers facts

- Kirtland's warblers: The tiny songbird is an endangered species.
- Size: About 6 inches long, weighs half-ounce. Male has yellow breast, is blue-gray elsewhere, with black streaks and spots. Female has similar but more dull colors.
- Population: A low of 167 pairs were recorded in 1974 and 1987. Last year's census found 485 pairs.
- Habitat: The songbird, which eats insects and ripe blueberries, breeds in the jack pine forests of the Au Sable River. Its only known nesting habitat is in northern Michigan counties: Alcona, Crawford, Iosco, Kalkaska, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Roscommon.
- Migration: The birds migrate in late September to mid-October to the Bahamas, their only known wintering area. They return only to the Au Sable River Valley each spring.

Search for songbird strikes a chord

By Don Ingle
MIO — Federal, state and university recovery teams combing the jack pine forests of the Au Sable River here are hoping to find an increase of Kirtland's warblers. The songbird breeds only in the jack pine forests of the Au Sable River.

"We are hoping that we may find as many as 1,000 warblers this year, the first time we had that large a population since 1961," said Bob Hess, DNR district biologist at Mio, a specialist in rare and endangered species programs.

"We estimate at least one female for every male we hear, and to count the population we make a survey of singing males at this time of the year."

The experts, who began their annual survey June 6, will continue through Friday.

They are not the only ones in search of the songbird, however.

Visitors to Mio, 30 miles east of I-75 in the Huron National Forest in Oscoda County, are recording and photographing active male birds and attending the first Kirtland's Warbler Festival.

The tiny songbird, a migratory species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, was at the brink of extinction and people are usually barred entry to its nesting area.

"The warbler area is under restricted entry from May 15 to August 15 to protect its nesting area, but there are guided tours available for birders and others to go out and listen for and sight the singing males," said Hess.

"The bird is uniquely adapted to the jack pine forest ecosystem and we have been switching to a jack pine ecosystem management for

the bird's habitat and nesting area in recent years, both on state and in Forest Service lands," he said.

"We have been seeing a significant comeback in the past few years of the bird's population, mainly a result of the improved jack pine habitat available for the bird," Hess said.

The bird requires a jack pine habitat with trees from Christmas-tree size to 20 feet as nesting cover. In order to maintain enough of this ideal habitat, the jack pine forests are being managed on a 50-year rotation. That is, the trees will be clear-cut at age 50, mimicking the natural cycle of wildfire that originally kept the bird's habitat prime for its existence.

"It has amazed me how much wildlife there is in jack pine habitat," said Hess. White tail deer, snowshoe hare, grouse, upland sandpipers, bluebirds and many

other non-game species thrive in this type of ecosystem.

"It also shows that managing forests for wildlife doesn't always mean setting aside, preserving forests, but actually managing for a harvest every 50 years to maintain these wildlife values."

"And the public is realizing that now. For the first time the county has gotten together and promoted the wildlands, a remarkable effort for a county with such a small human population."

Entry to the warbler area will be restricted until Aug. 15 when the birds will be grown and flying. The birds migrate in late September to mid-October to the Bahamas, their only known wintering area. They return only to the Au Sable River Valley each spring.

■ Don Ingle is a Baldwin free-lance writer.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12, 1994

MICHIGAN

THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS

Heart of Kirtland's country celebrates battle to save bird

► *The first Kirtland's Warbler Festival runs from Saturday through June 19.*

By John Flesher
The Associated Press

MIO — Pushing past thick strands of jack pine on a cool, clear morning, biologist Rex Ennis suddenly halts. Cupping an ear, he strains to hear the melodious chirp of the endangered Kirtland's warbler.

"Thought I heard one," Ennis mutters. "But those brown thrashers make so much noise you can't ... Wait! There it is again!"

He notes the warbler's approximate location on a map, then resumes his trek through a rolling swath of the Huron National Forest. This is the heart of Kirtland's country, the last refuge on Earth for the half-ounce, yellow-breasted songbird.

As of last year, fewer than 1,000 were known to exist — all within an eight-county area of Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. They migrate to the Bahamas each winter.

Ennis, of the U.S. Forest Service, was among several dozen biologists and volunteers who fanned out Friday for the last day of the annual Kirtland's census.

It is part of a nearly 20-year effort to save the warbler — an effort that has united ornithologists at each other's throats: en-

vironmentalists, the timber industry and government regulators.

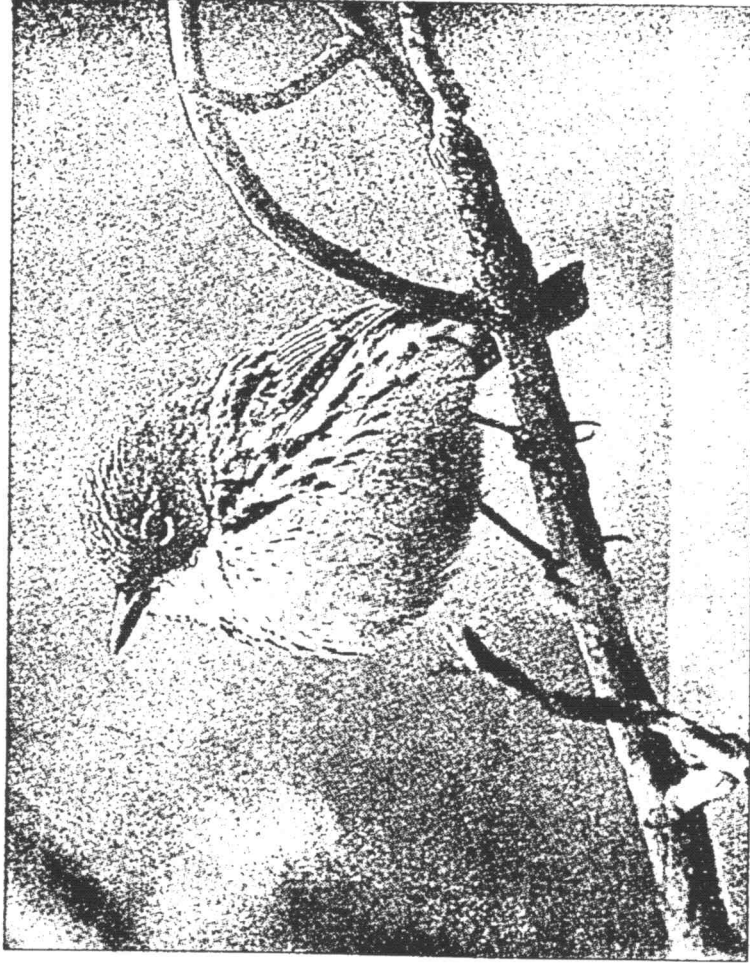
"It is nice not to have the kinds of problems they've got in the Pacific Northwest," said Paul Cali, raw materials manager for Weyerhaeuser Co.'s mill in nearby Grayling, which buys some of the pines harvested to bolster warbler habitat.

With Congress stalled on updating the federal Endangered Species Act, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt had planned a visit Friday to hail the Kirtland's program as proof the act can benefit the economy and environment. He canceled because of business elsewhere.

But a spokesman said Babbitt still hopes to attend the first Kirtland's Warbler Festival, which runs from Saturday through June 19. Sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce, the festival illustrates residents' evolution from hostility to enthusiasm about the preservation effort, festival Chairwoman Vergie Purchase said.

"The more we understood this little bird and the economic impact it could have, we decided we'd better celebrate," said Mrs. Purchase, owner of the Songbird Motel. "It's a great way to promote tourism."

The Kirtland's warbler's biggest problem is loss of habitat, said Gary Boushelle, wildlife biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Another enemy: the brown-headed cowbird, which invades Kirtland's warbler nests. Scientists are trapping and relocating the cowbirds.



AP PHOTO
Saving the Kirtland's warbler: The cheery half-ounce, yellow-breasted songbird feels at home in the northeastern part of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.



**Tom
BeVier**

*There's a county
that's really for the
birds, and that's just
fine with these folks*

The chairman of the first annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival in Mio, which started this weekend and runs through next Sunday, had a confession.

"I'm sorry to have to admit this," said Virgie Purchase, "but I have never seen the bird. Have you?"

I said that I had, that very morning, as a matter of fact.

"Really? Teena, he's seen a Kirtland's warbler."

Her friend, Teena Bruner, a lifetime resident of the area and an Oscoda County commissioner, had stopped by the office of the Pine Acres Campground — which, along with the Songbird Motel, constitutes the Purchase family enterprises — to say she'd be glad to be in the parade.

Teena looked at me askance, much as fishermen do when I tell them I caught a muskie my first time out. Pointedly, she said she has never seen one and that neither have quite a few others of the 7,000 people in Oscoda County.

Her skepticism made me proud, and so at the risk of boring them (and my readers) I told them the story.

I began by telling them I got up at 5 a.m. (rural people respect early risers) so I could be in Mio at 7:30 a.m., the time during the festival when the U.S. Forest Service begins tours through the central Lower Peninsula jack pine, the only nesting place for the 1,000 or so of the birds left in the world.

I was surprised to find a dozen or so birders were already there, tweeting to get started. "In due time," said Sandy Sokolak, an interpretive service specialist with the Huron National Forest, "but first there will be a 10-minute film."

The film informed us the bird was near extinction in the early 1970s because of loss of nesting habitat, a problem that has been remedied through better forest management, that it winters in the Bahamas, and that it migrates 1,400 miles to Michigan every spring.

"The male has a yellow neck and belly," said the film's narrator. "The female is duller. The male's song is jubilant and frequent. The female doesn't sing."

"I've been listening to tapes of its song," said Edward Borowik, an aircraft mechanic. "Jubilant is the right word."

Had I listened to tapes of Borowik's voice before meeting him, I would have guessed (correctly) that he is from Bayonne, N.J. Although most of the birders were from Michigan, Florida, Canada and New York also were represented.

Out in the jack pine, Sokolak advised us to be quiet and listen. The woods were filled with jubilation. Birders scanned the pines with binoculars and telescopes.

"There, there," someone shouted, pointing. Several hundred feet away, perched on a dead branch was a bird, singing. It could have been a Kirtland's, but . . . Sokolak led us to another site.

And this time there could be no doubt. The bird landed on a branch 25 feet from where we stood, with a caterpillar in its mouth, no less.

Virgie and Teena did not seem particularly impressed.

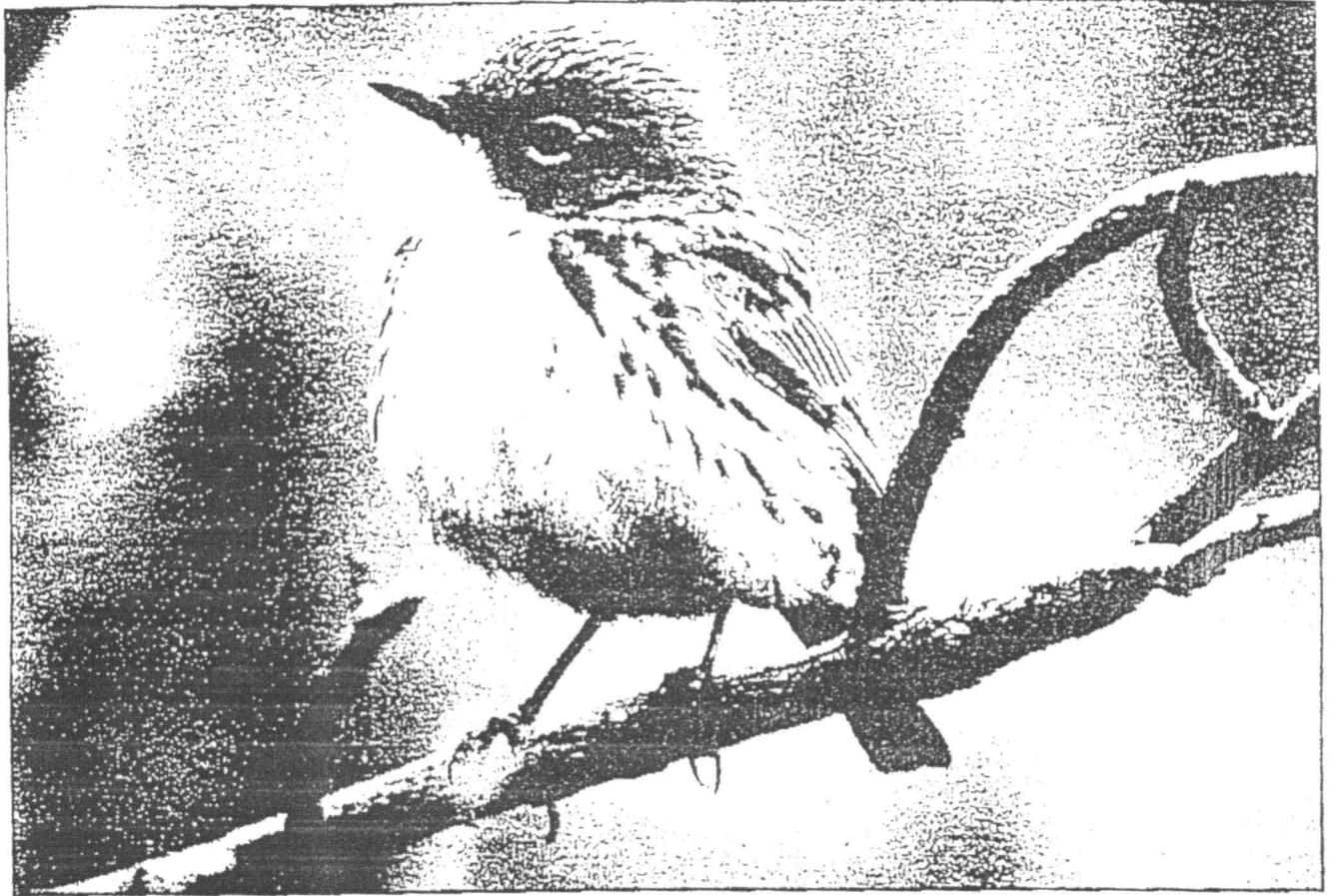
"Well I'll say this," said Virgie. "The bird is good for our economy. We get birders from all over. But we have a lot of other things in Oscoda County besides the birds."

And with that, she told me what the county doesn't have: fast food restaurants (unless you count the A&W in Mio); municipalities (only townships); and stop-and-go lights.

"This county is for the birds," I thought, saying goodbye and wishing them the best for the festival.

■ Thomas BeVier's mailing address is Post Office Box 5145, Traverse City, Mich., 49685-5145.

The nation



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kirtland's warblers live in new-growth forests, a choice that helps ensure their survival.

Rivals bury hatchet to save bird

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIO, Mich. — It's enough to make a spotted owl green with envy: The timber industry, environmentalists and government regulators are working together to try to save an endangered bird called the Kirtland's warbler.

The same groups that have been at each other's throats over the habitat of the spotted owl have united to try to save the half-ounce, yellow-breasted warbler, also threatened by a shrinking habitat.

The endangered owl dwells in the Pacific Northwest's old-growth forests, where a 3-year-old logging ban cost thousands of jobs. A judge lifted the ban last week.

By contrast, the warbler lives near young trees, nesting in the thick underbrush beneath stands of jack pines just five to 15 years old.

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destroying older trees. Heat from the fire bursts the pine cones and scatters their seeds, giving birth to a new generation of trees.

But as more people moved into the area, they fought the fires, disrupting the cycle.

As of last year, fewer than 1,000 of the warblers were known to exist.

Now, state and federal agencies use controlled burns and clear-cutting to restore the habitat. Private logging companies cut the timber.

"The reason the Endangered Species Act is working in Michigan is one simple word — partnerships," said Charles Wooley, Kirtland's project leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"It is nice not to have the kinds of problems they've got in the Pacific Northwest," said Paul Call, raw materials manager for Weyerhaeuser Co.'s mill in Grayling, which buys some of the pines harvested to bolster warbler habitat.

Warbler, visitor numbers on rise

By Bob Dobski
Editor

The Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team got a double barrel of good news in June, with record increases in both the num-

bers of rare, endangered birds and of people who came to see them.

Beginning in mid-May, the U.S. Forest Service conducts Kirtland's warbler tours though

the July 4 weekend.

As of June 29, the guest book registered 945 tour takers. In 1993, 556 bird watchers looked for the Kirtland's warbler.

The weeks of the tour coincide with the bird's busiest time, while male birds are singing to establish summer territories.

The Kirtland's warbler population census is done in the middle of that time, from June 6-15.

Employees of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Service, colleges and universities and bird lovers, combed the Kirtland's warbler's jack pine forest habitat in search of singing male birds.

The census is done in Oscoda, Roscommon, Crawford and Ogemaw counties, the birds' main nesting ground. Teams also check for Kirtland's warblers in possible habitat areas in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula.

The count came up with 637 male birds, each which have a female counterpart, for over 1,200 birds.

Last year's census recorded 485 singing males.

"This is an all-time record year," said Phil Huber, Forest Service wildlife biologist and Kirtland's warbler program coordinator. "And the good news is most of the population increases were in the plantations, where there has been cutting and replanting, which is excellent."

"That is saying what we are doing with management principals is decent - the birds like it."

Since the early 1980s, the Forest Service and DNR have been contracting loggers and having timber sales to remove jack pine trees too tall for the Kirtland's warbler to use for nesting, and then replanting the area with jack pine seedlings.

The man-made habitat replaces what was once done naturally by wildfires.

The Mack Lake management unit, which was made by a wildfire, still leads the four-county area with the most birds, about 300, an increase from last year. But the number does show a decrease in the birds' use of the area.

Yeah Doug!



As the sun breaks over the horizon, truck hoods serve as field desks to plan the census march through Kirtland's warbler habitat.



Once the census hike is complete, the teams huddle to compare notes and pinpoint bird locations.

Less than 50 percent of the Kirtland's warblers found in 1994 are there. Last year, about 64 percent of the birds were counted in Mack Lake.

"That area is still the biggest, but it is getting older," said Huber. "The habitat is becoming marginal and the Kirtland's warbler population will start to decline in the next few years."

"Because they like the man-made plantation habitat, they won't need to stay in marginal areas as long."

To count the birds, two or three team members walk straight lines about a quarter mile apart and parallel to other teams through the habitat, stopping every 300 feet to listen for the Kirtland's warbler song.

If a bird is heard, its direction from the designated trail line is marked for later comparison to other teams' results.

When the teams' maps are compared and results triangulated, the intersecting lines confirm and pinpoint the presence of a bird.

The Kirtland's warbler song can be heard from about a quarter mile away.

A census in 1961 had the most birds counted up until the 1994 count, at 502 nesting pairs or 1,004 in the world.

The recovery team's original goal was to have 750 nesting pairs by the year 2000.

Because the bird population seems to be doing so well, that number has been increased to 800.

Next year will be a telling year for the Kirtland's warbler's increased numbers. The flock migrates to the Bahamas for the winter and some birds are always expected not to make the trip there and back.

HThe Oscoda CountyERALD



Bruce Babbitt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, mingles with Kirtland's Warbler Festival mascots, June 17.

Secretary of Interior: 'County leading nation'

By Bob Dobski
Editor

Oscoda County became a leader in the nation with its week-long First Annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival and 50th Mio Iris Show, according to Bruce Babbitt, United States secretary of the interior.

Babbitt delivered his assessment in person at the Oscoda County Park, June 17.

"This is the best example in the United States of an area and its communities coming together to protect a rare and irreplaceable species because it is an asset to the area. I will spread news of this around and hold it up as the ideal," said Babbitt. "It proves that there is room in the ecosystem for diversity, and people can learn to live more likably on and with the land.

"If more people can develop similar conservation ethics and array economic activities correctly, there is a place for forestry, oil, gas and transportation operations. I'm here to see how it was done."

Babbitt addressed a crowd of about 50 people. He was expected to make the local appearance on June 10 but had to cancel.

Babbitt said he really wanted to make the trip to Oscoda County and the festival. He spoiled the festival invitation local event organizers sent to

his office in Washington D.C. among the couple thousand he receives each month.

"I wanted to know more about it, and my aide thought I had to be kidding because of all the planning that would have to be done," Babbitt said. "But it was something I wanted to do. I believe this is a historic event, and I wanted to be part of it."

"This is not just the first annual festival for Oscoda County, it's the first of its type anywhere."

Babbitt applauded the cooperative efforts of the area residents, Chamber of Commerce for Oscoda County, Oscoda County Road Commission, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The centerpiece of that cooperation has been the Jack Pine Auto Tour, a 48-mile loop in southeastern Oscoda County and western Alcona County which highlights the endangered Kirtland's warbler, its habitat, the management program for the bird, and other natural points of interest along the route.

"In our past, we don't have a strong tradition of working together," Babbitt said. "This shows you can find something



Babbitt accepts festival souvenir shirt.

for everyone. I'd like to bottle that cooperative spirit and take it across the United States so other places and people can get together and work toward similar efforts.

"This area has developed the federal model I would like to see on the entire landscape of the nation and is the message I want to take to every state in the Union."

Babbitt said when hearings soon begin on the national endangered wildlife species act, he would like to invite several of Oscoda County's community leaders to Washington to tell congressional panels how the festival was put together.

Babbitt presented the Chamber a plaque from his office commemorating the area's accomplishment.

Before his presentation at the park, Babbitt and his entourage went on a Kirtland's warbler tour and spotted a bird.

Festival honors warbler

BY MIKE WILLIAMS
Free Press Environment Writer

It seems like only yesterday the Kirtland's warbler was winging its way anonymously toward extinction. But the half-ounce bird, its numbers now fluttering upward, is about to become a party animal in Oscoda County.

Beginning Friday, the first Kirtland's Warbler Festival gets off the ground in Mio, a town of nearly 1,900 people and a major center of the little chirper's revival. The festival runs 10 days, alongside Mio's long-established Iris Festival.

Embroidered warbler T-shirts and pillows and hand-painted warbler buttons are already on sale.

So are wooden warbler postcards, made from the jack pine trees the songbird needs for its habitat.

"It's a big deal here in Oscoda," said Holly Gomez, cochairwoman of

the festival committee. "Every little town in the county is doing something for the festival."

There'll be a 4-H horse show and an ice cream social, a quilt-in and a bird-watching tournament. And, of course, guided tours to attempt to spot the hard-to-see warbler.

U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt is supposed to show up for one of the tours. So are U.S. Sen. Carl Levin and Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director Rolie Harmes.

The warbler didn't always have such celebrity status. When it first made the federal endangered species list in 1967, few had heard of it and fewer still cared.

No one is sure why that changed. Maybe it was the songbird's close encounter with extinction in 1987, when only 167 singing males were

counted in Michigan, the warbler's summer home.

Maybe it was the growing number of tourist dollars spent by bird watchers from just about every state and overseas. About 1,500 people went on warbler tours in Oscoda last year.

Whatever the reason, the gray and yellow bird has become something of a mascot in Oscoda County.

The birds are found only in Michigan and the Bahamas, where they winter. They nest primarily in Oscoda and seven neighboring counties.

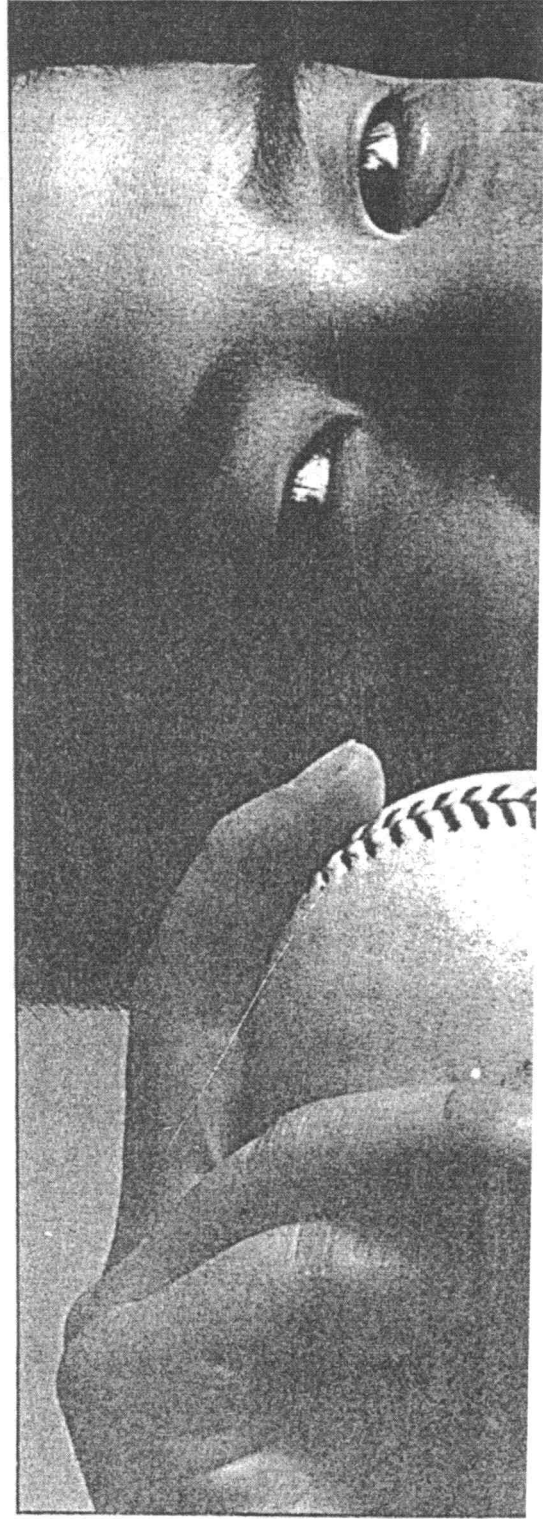
It's tricky to find a warbler. Gomez, a big fan of the bird, has never spotted one.

"I went out to see one one day, but it rained," she said. "They don't like to sing on rainy days."

For information, call the Oscoda Chamber of Commerce, 1-800-800-6133, 10-2, Monday-Saturday.

REAL LIFE

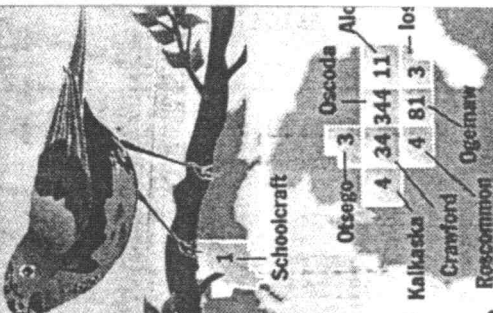
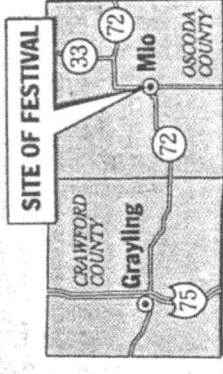
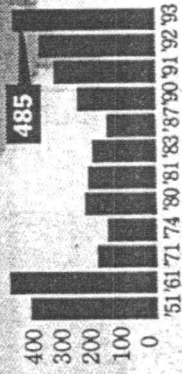
By Roddy Ray



RARE BIRDS REBOUNDING

The number of singing male Kirtland's warblers recorded in Michigan is back up to levels of more than 40 years ago.

Selected counts of Kirtland's warbler in Michigan



■ Singing male Kirtland's warblers were heard in these counties in 1993.

Suicide linked to harassment allegations

Official's joke in his own death

BY ALFRED ADETTANO

Detroit F

RESURRECTION OF A FEATHERWEIGHT

By JOHN FLESHER
The Associated Press

Q 29761

MIO — Pushing past thick stands of jack pine on a cool, clear morning, biologist Rex Ennis suddenly halts. Cupping an ear, he strains to hear the melodious chirp of the endangered Kirtland's warbler.

"Thought I heard one," Mr. Ennis mutters. "But those brown thrashers make so much noise you can't ... Wait! There it is again!"

He notes the warbler's approximate location on a map, then resumes his trek through the Huron National Forest. This is the heart of Kirtland's country, the last refuge on Earth for the half-ounce, yellow-breasted songbird.

As of last year, fewer than 1,000 were known to exist — all within an eight-county area of Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. They migrate to the Bahamas each winter.

Mr. Ennis, of the U.S. Forest Service, was among several dozen biologists and volunteers who fanned out Friday for the last day of the annual Kirtland's census.

Counting by ear

It is part of a nearly 20-year effort to save the warbler — an effort that has united interests often at each other's throats: environmentalists, the timber industry and government regulators.

It's enough to make a spotted owl green with envy.

"It is nice not to have the kinds of problems they've got in the Pacific Northwest," said Paul Call, raw materials manager for Weyerhaeuser Co.'s mill in nearby Grayling, which buys some of the pines harvested to bolster warbler habitat.

With Congress stalled on updating the federal Endangered Species Act, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt had planned a visit to hail the Kirtland's program as proof the act can benefit the economy and environment. He canceled because of business elsewhere.

But a spokesman said Mr. Babbitt still hopes to attend the first Kirtland's Warbler Festival, which runs through Sunday. Sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce, the festival illustrates area resi-



By RON AUSTING, U.S. Forest Service

The Kirtland's warbler, an endangered species, is found only in eight northern Michigan counties. Its numbers are slowly increasing.

dents' evolution from hostility to enthusiasm about the preservation effort, festival Chairwoman Vergie Purchase said.

"The more we understood this little bird and the economic impact it could have, we decided we'd better celebrate," said Mrs. Purchase, owner of the Songbird Motel. "It's a great way to promote tourism."

Problem: loss of habitat

The Kirtland's warbler's biggest problem is loss of habitat, said Gary Boushelle, wildlife biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Another enemy: the brown-headed cowbird, which invades Kirtland's warbler nests. Scientists are trapping and relocating the cowbirds.

Unlike the spotted owl, which dwells in the Pacific Northwest's bitterly contested old-growth forests, the Kirtland's warbler insists

on stands of jack pines 5 to 16 years old. The bird builds nests beneath the trees amid thick underbrush.

"They're very picky," biologist David Case said.

The pines start dying when they reach 16 to 20 feet. By that time, they're choking the undergrowth.

Historically, wildfires have preserved warbler habitat by destroying larger jack pines. The heat bursts the pine cones and scatters their seed, giving birth to a new generation of trees.

As more people moved into the area and fought the fires, they disrupted the cycle and the habitat shrank. Now, state and federal agencies use controlled burns and clear-cutting to restore it. Private logging companies cut the timber. Conservation groups such as the Michigan Audubon Society and the National Fish and Wildlife Founda-

tion help fund the program. "The reason the Endangered Species Act is working in Michigan is one simple word — partnerships," said Charles Wooley, Kirtland's project leader for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Partnership is working

Some of my colleagues in California and Texas have endangered species nightmares," Mr. Wooley said. "When they hear about our situation, ... they're extremely envious."

Annual Kirtland's counts began in 1971, when a 10-year census showed a sharp decline. In 1974, only 167 males were counted. Only the males sing, scientists assume one female for every male they hear.

The 1993 census found 485 males, up 22% from the previous year. It will take several days to

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

■ Facts about the Kirtland's warbler:

□ About six inches long, weighs half-ounce. Male has yellow breast, is blue-gray elsewhere, with black streaks and spots. Female has similar but more dull colors.

□ Only known nesting habitat is in eight northern Michigan counties: Alcona, Crawford, Iosco, Kalkaska, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Roscommon. Birds migrate to Bahamas in winter.

□ Endangered because of habitat loss and invasion by cowbird, which commandeers Kirtland's warbler nests. Population hit low of 167 singing males in 1974 and 1987. Last year's census found 485 males.

□ Builds nests in undergrowth beneath stands of young jack pine. Eats insects, ripe blueberries.

□ Kirtland's recovery team established by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1975 under federal Endangered Species Act. Team oversees research, preservation efforts. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, other agencies help.

tally this year's figures.

But scientists say the warbler will remain endangered until the population stabilizes at 1,000 or more pairs — which probably won't happen until well into the next century, if ever.

"We just have to keep at it," Mr. Ennis, a biologist, says during his walk. He ducks under low-hanging limbs, tinder-dry weeds crunching underfoot, and tries to ignore swarms of tiny black flies.

Again he freezes in his tracks. "The males sit in the branches and defend their territory," he whispers. "Look there!"

A gray-backed, yellow-bellied warbler lands atop the skeleton of a tall red pine that's slowly perished since fire swept through this area in 1980. Cocking its head, the elusive bird chirps a cheery good morning.

Then it is gone.

Warblers fall on hard times

By Angela Ristau

Kirtland warblers are suffering a housing crunch that has cut the number of nesting birds by 20 percent in northeastern lower Michigan. Only 167 male warblers have been counted, compared to 210 last year. This year's population ties a record low set in 1974.

Ironically, man's gains in the area of controlling forest fires is responsible for the decline in prime nesting spots for the warblers.

The tiny, yellow-breasted songbirds are finicky when it comes to nesting, choosing ground under small, eight- to 18-year-old jack pines, said wildlife biologist Larry Robinson of the Department of Natural Resources.

"It takes eight to 10 years before the newly planted jack pine reach the age where it meets the warbler's needs," said Gary Boushelle, DNR regional wildlife supervisor. "This time lag is what accounts for the habitat bottleneck which faces the birds right now."

Efforts to keep proper age pines in abundance for warblers have been ongoing since experts predicted a shortage of nesting areas for the birds in 1979.

Through jack pine plantings, controlled burns and a \$100,000 federally-funded management plan, experts predict warbler counts will

soar again in the next few years.

Robinson is confident that this year's shortage is temporary and that the DNR will reach its goal of having 1,000 nesting pairs in the area.

"Our efforts to re-create the bird's natural habitat are working....we even saw some of our early plantations being used this past spring near the Ogemaw County Refuge," Robinson said.

The management plan to keep numbers of the endangered birds flourishing includes a planting rotation so that every five years there is about 1,000 acres of prime age jack pine available for the birds.

The trees are planted in a special pattern to recreate natural openings which are usually made by wild fires.

The rotation is set up in a checkerboard pattern across Oscoda, Crawford, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Kalkaska and Alcona counties - the only area in the nation where warblers have been found nesting, Robinson said.

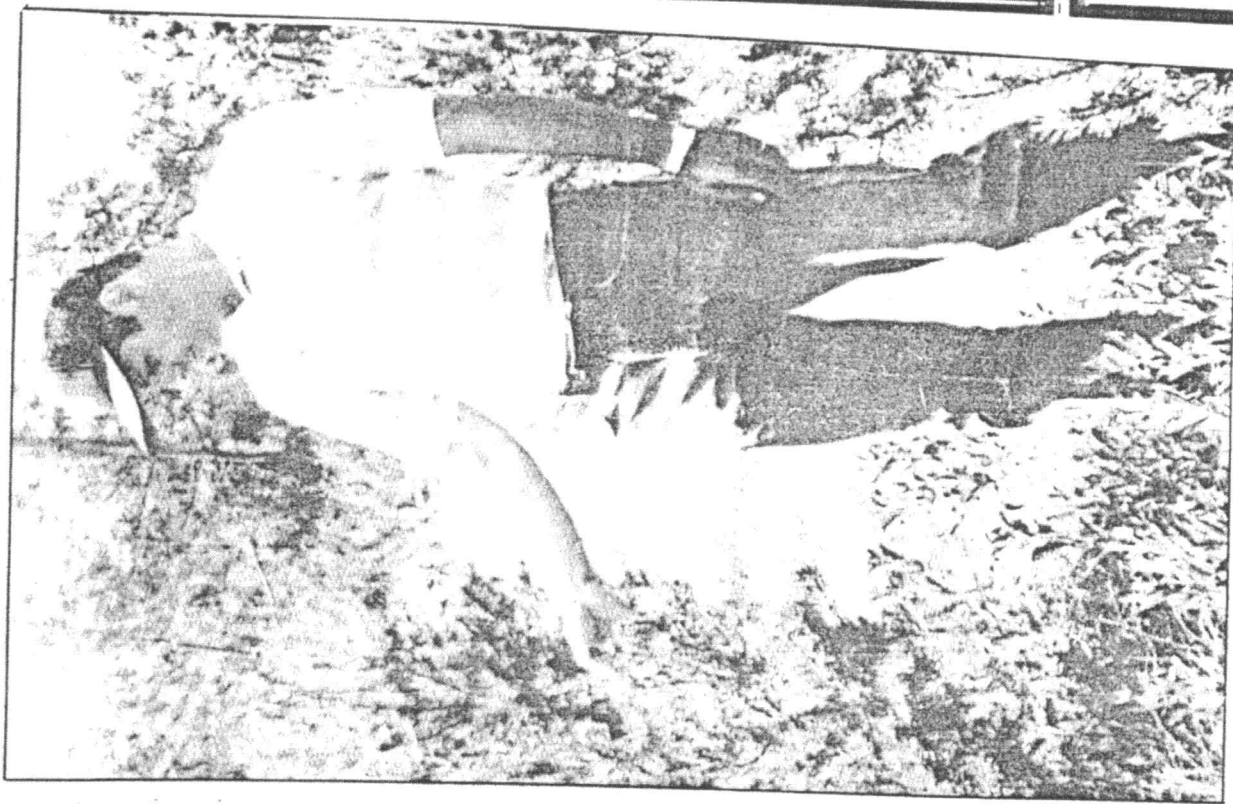
"We actually don't do anything different than what we do when we replenish a forest. Some people think we are doing something special for these birds when actually the same habitat type can be used by a variety of animals," Boushelle said.

Exercise: A way of life, not a boring pastime

Aerobic exercise can control high blood pressure in some individuals, but to keep blood pressure at a normal level, exercise must become a way of life.

"In certain individuals, aerobic ex-

ercise is effective, behavioral methods of controlling high blood pressure (such as aerobic exercise) appear to have distinct advantages over medication alone," says Martin. High blood pressure



Potential habitat

Wildlife biologist Larry Robinson checks some newly planted jack pine trees which in a few years will be "prime habitat" for Kirtland warblers to nest in.

Application now by Administrator position include: Interpret zoning issue building, electrical permits. Must be available. Apply at Town of Roscommon 48653 or p.m. for more information.

NOTICE Surplus

Sealed bids will be received at the Roscommon Michigan 48653 on the following equipment: Auctioneer: Roscommon Auctioneer's Office, 1000 S. Main St., Roscommon, Michigan 48653. The equipment will be sold at the Roscommon Public Auction, 1000 S. Main St., Roscommon, Michigan 48653. The equipment will be sold at the Roscommon Public Auction, 1000 S. Main St., Roscommon, Michigan 48653. The equipment will be sold at the Roscommon Public Auction, 1000 S. Main St., Roscommon, Michigan 48653.

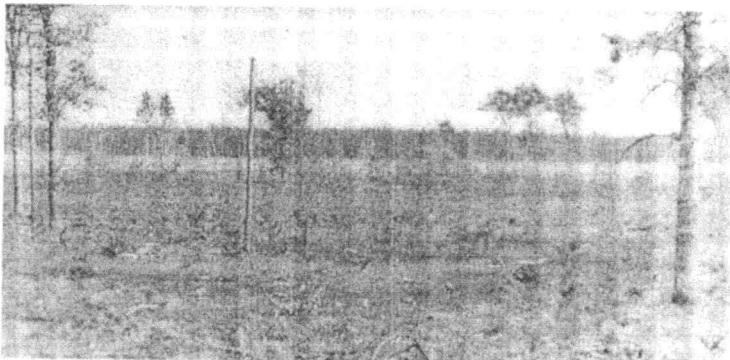
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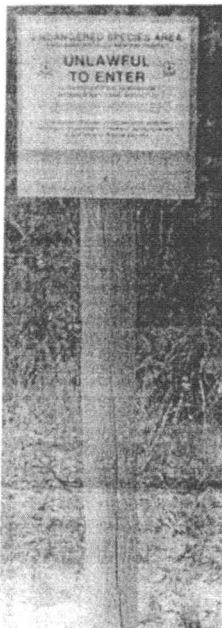
TIN Department of STATE

Notice is hereby given that the following described lands are being sold by the State Forest Manager, State Forest, for the following described lands:

BLOCK 449 - T22N, R01W, Sec 10



LEAR-CUT FOR BIRDS -- The U.S. Forest Service said this 300 acre clear-cut along Bissonette Road in western Oscoda Township is being clear-cut in order to encourage the growth of jack pine -- considered as nesting habitat for the endangered Kirtland's warbler. Some area residents are not happy about the cutting of the forest or the planned regeneration to the fire volatile pine. They also question the proximity of the logging activity to a warbler closure area. -- NHP PHOTO



FOREST CLOSED -- About 80 acres of the Huron National Forest, along Bissonette Road, has been closed for Kirtland's warbler protection after a number of endangered birds were sighted here. -- NHP PHOTO

Four-pound bass wins MBAA tourney in Wixom Lake

OSCODA -- A single bass weighing 92 pounds helped Craig Delaney of aginaw win more than \$250 in cash and prizes in Sunday's Military Bass Anglers Association (MBAA) tournament.

It gave him three fish weighing a total of 9.29 pounds for \$137 first-prize money and trophy, \$70 cash and \$50 worth of Yamalube motor oil.

Both second and third place finishers came in with four fish apiece, but with lighter totals.

Randy Barnes of Mikado was second with 8.89 pounds, good for \$75 in cash and prizes.

Lynn Davis of Oscoda was third with 1.45 pounds, winning \$50 in cash and prizes.

Fourth place, worth a \$15 prize, was taken by Dallas Vance of Whittmore with two fish weighing 4.69 pounds.

All of the fish came out of, and went back into, Wixom Lake.

The 15 entrants caught a total of 21 fish weighing 45.87 pounds, or an average of 2.18 pounds.

Next MBAA tournament is July 24 on Sage Lake, with registration from 4:30-5:30 a.m.

It is not necessary to be connected with the military to belong to the MBAA, for which annual dues are \$20.

Also, it is not necessary to own a boat to participate in tournaments, which are open to members-only for \$25 entry fee. Non-boaters will be placed with boaters.

Forest closure for bird protection nets criticism

OSCODA -- Recent closure of land in western Oscoda Township and the clear-cutting of adjacent U.S. Forest Service (USFS) property has drawn the ire of some area residents and visitors.

According to U.S. Forest Service Tawas/Harrisville District Ranger Charles Andrina, both the cutting and the closure are part of the agency's efforts to protect the endangered Kirtland's warbler.

Approximately 80 acres along Bissonette Road, just west and east of McArdle, has been posted as closed. The area involves about a half mile of frontage on either side of the road.

This action was taken after survey found a number of the warblers in the jack pine stands of the area, according to Andrina. The ranger said, as a practice, only warbler-occupied areas of the forest are closed to public use.

No additional closures are anticipated this year, Andrina noted, but next year the zone could be extended further along the south side of Bissonette, due to a warbler sighting.

The land is closed to any entry between May 1 and Aug. 15. This includes pedestrian use.

The measures were taken within the portion of the Huron National Forest known as the Pine River Opportunity Area -- a 27,851 acre management zone of which 13,800 acres are designated in long range plans for warbler management.

Kirtland's warblers seek young stands of jack pine and annually migrate to northern lower Michigan to find such habitat. The rest of the year they live in the Caribbean.

This preferred habitat is the reason for the logging being done about 1,000 feet west of the closure zone, Andrina said.

Known as the Chambers West sale, the forest service awarded the logging contract to Payless Ag Products of Lake City. It calls for the clear-cutting of 311 acres specifically for warbler management, plus 41 acres for red pine and a 17 acre site where jack pine is being cut out.

Such forest management practices concern many local residents, both be-

cause of the aesthetics, also the forest fire danger inherent with jack pine growths.

Andrina acknowledged both complaints, noting the Chambers West sale is not a clear-cut in the full sense of the term, with a few mature trees left standing. This reduces the visual impact of the cut. As for the fire danger, the forest service has attempted to create quarter mile hardwood buffer zones around the management area.

Nearby resident Ron Sims enjoys walking in the forest and, finds the closure ridiculous. "If by my walking in the forest disturbs the bird, what is all that logging equipment doing?"

"I have older neighbors who need firewood but aren't allowed to go into the forest and get it. But they'll sell to big companies who tear up the woods with heavy equipment."

Sims alleges the management practices have more to do with the money the forest service gets from logging contracts, than for resource management.

"The Forest Service doesn't listen to the people in the local area. Nor do they care about the people in the local area," Sims claims.

Sims and others point out that the warblers do not seem to be as fearful of humans as the resource agencies believe. When the warblers settle in the area, they say, it is during times when the forest is open to use.

"Many people pick blueberries in that area. I'm sure they are not there to harm the birds," he added. "It seems to me the forest service would be more concerned about the natural predators running around -- the coyotes, skunks, wildcats and raccoons. It's just not logical."

An effort was made to discuss the Kirtland's warbler habits and needs with the forest service biologist in charge of the warbler management. He could not be reached.

Andrina noted that, as part of the Pine River Opportunity Area plan development, the public was notified of the warbler management plans. Additionally, all area units of government were sent notices of the Chambers West logging sale for input. No comment was received.

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Dr. Timothy Burg and the staff of the Tawas Animal Hospital are pleased to announce the re-opening of our Oscoda office and the addition of Dr. Rhoda Clark to our staff.

The Oscoda Veterinary Clinic will re-open July 27
for outpatient services please call 739-8278 or 362-4601 for an appointment

We would like to thank our clients for their understanding and cooperation during the brief time our services to the Oscoda area were suspended.

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Oscoda County Herald
July 18, 1994

Forest timber revenue up

The Timber Sale Program Information Reporting System, or TSPIRS, is the measure used by the U.S. Forest Service to look at the costs and benefits of the agency's timber sale program.

Fiscal year 1993 figures were released July 5 and look similar to last year for the Huron-Manistee National Forests.

Total expenses increased by \$37,000 while revenues also increased by \$55,000. The expenses for the year were \$2.7 million and the revenues were \$2.4 million. The harvest volume was about 80 million board feet each year.

The state of Michigan is entitled to 25 percent of the gross revenues. For FY 1994, \$595,452 was returned to the

state by the Huron-Manistee National Forests.

The expectation for FY 1994, which ends Sept. 30, is extremely bright. The trend for this year is that revenues are considerably higher than in the previous two years. In fact, as of April, the revenues from timber sales are almost \$1.7 million.

Timber stumpage values have increased significantly over the past year on the Huron-Manistee National Forests. The significant reductions in harvest in the Pacific Northwest and Southwest have affected prices nationwide. At the same time, the timber on the Huron-Manistee is increasing in quality and value as it grows.

Tour visitors hit record high

The United States Forest Service Mio District office cracked 1,000 visitors for the Kirtland's warbler guided tour for the first time.

The tour logged 1,001 people coming to the area between mid-May and early July to learn

about the endangered Kirtland's warbler songbird and hike through a habitat management area to view the bird.

Visitor attendance for this year was an 80 percent increase from 1993's 556 record.

"The increase is due to the ad-

vertising the community did for the Kirtland's warbler and the festival it sponsored," said a Forest Service spokesman.

Bird watchers came to Oscoda County from 20 states and several countries.

Oscoda County Herald
7/18/94

Kirtland's warblers on rebound

Endangered bird's numbers are at 633 males, up 30 percent from 1993 count and the highest in the 33 years of census.

By Dave Richey
The Detroit News

LANSING — The 1994 Kirtland's warbler census indicates that Michigan's current population of the endangered bird is the largest recorded since the annual census began 33 years ago. The count conducted in June indicated 633 singing male birds throughout the state, and it is assumed that for every male, a female warbler is nearby.

This year's count is a 30-percent increase from the 1993 count of 485 males, and it surpasses the previous record of 502 singing males in 1961. The numbers, DNR endangered species coordinator Tom Weise said, have increased yearly since the record low of 167 in 1987.

"This is great news, and it shows that the Endangered Species Act can and does work," DNR Director Roland Harmes said. "It is a testament to scientific wildlife management and the cooperation among the DNR biologists, U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in restoring the warblers' needed habitat."

Weise said that 52 percent of the warblers counted this year were found in Oscoda, Ogemaw and Crawford counties.

"The number of singing males found in nine northern Lower Peninsula counties were Alcona (23), Clare (two), Crawford (46), Iosco (16), Kalkaska (three), Ogemaw (153), Oscoda (381), Otsego (two) and Roscommon (five)," Weise said. "One singing male warbler was reported in Baraga County and one in Schoolcraft County."

He said Upper Peninsula sightings are rare. One warbler was

found in Marquette County in 1981 and '82, and one was seen in Schoolcraft County last year.

The Kirtland's warbler — a small, blue-gray and yellow, sparrow-size bird — nests only in jack pine stands in northeast lower Michigan. A ground nester, it selects stands of trees between five and 20 feet high with branches that extend to the ground.

"Historically, these young jack pine stands were maintained by naturally occurring wildfires that frequently burned through northern Michigan," Weise said. "Fire-suppression programs altered this natural process, and that reduced the Kirtland's warbler habitat."

He said that wildlife biologists from state and federal agencies now conduct a combination of clear-cutting, burning and replanting to mimic the effects of wild fires. This year, under the warbler management program, nearly 4 million trees were planted on 3,380 acres of state and federal land to provide additional habitat for warblers in the next six to 10 years.

These techniques appear to be successful. DNR wildlife biologist Jerry Weinrich of the Houghton Lake Wildlife Research Station said that this year, the plantations showed a dramatic increase in the number of Kirtland's warblers using them. Fifty percent of the warblers counted in this year's census (314 males) were found in areas planted for the warblers' nesting habitat.

The Kirtland's warbler survey is conducted over a 10-day period each year in early June. The 1994 survey was a joint effort of the DNR, U.S. Forest Service, U.S.

Fish & Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Military Affairs and citizen volunteers.

Classes

A number of hunter-education courses will take place over the next six weeks. Wayne County Sportsman's Club, 18102 S. Inkster, Romulus will have clinics Sept. 24-25, Oct. 8-9 and 22-23, and Nov. 5-6. Preregistration is mandatory, and the cost of the course is \$6.

Bill Miller, spokesman for the club, said the training is open to anyone who will be 12 years old on or before March 31, 1995. It is available as well to adults who wish to enroll. Certain states or Canadian provinces such as Colorado, Wyoming and Ontario require safety training before a license can be issued.

Registration forms are available at the club or by calling Miller at (313) 532-0285. Leave your name, address, city, state, zip code and phone number, so a registration form can be sent. All equipment will be provided for training, and lunches will be available for a \$2.50 fee.

Another class will be Sept. 12, 14, 16, 19 and 21 at Western Wayne County Conservation Club, 6700 Napier, Plymouth Township. Bill Scherer, instructor coordinator for the club's hunter-education program, said a fee of \$4 will be charged to cover ammunition and range fees.

"The course is open to anyone 12 years or older," Scherer said, "and students must attend all classes to earn enough credit to take the examination."

Anyone desiring information on the Western Wayne County clinic should call (313) 453-9843.