

HENRY T. WIGGIN
151 TAPPAN STREET
BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS 02146

Jan 5 1984

January 16, 1984

Henry T. Wiggin
151 Tappan Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02146

Dear Mr. Wiggin,

Thank you for your kind words about my Kirtland's Warbler paper.

We have not considered capturing young Kirtland's Warblers and holding them over the winter to deliver in the spring safe and sound at good nesting sites. There are a couple of reasons that deter us from such a bold effort. Insectivorous, migratory birds are notoriously hard to keep in captivity, and in the only attempt I recall to keep this species over winter, the birds lasted only a few weeks. However, some people are very clever at this kind of thing, and I regard it possible that these warblers might be preserved as cage birds even though no one has done it. The other obstacle is that the Recovery Team which is charged with steps to preserve this species is very reluctant to approve any molestation of individual birds for experimental purposes. There are so few of the birds that the responsible people are unwilling to risk even a handful for experiments where the outcome is not highly predictable and favorable.

For example, we have talked seriously about attaching tiny transmitters to a few birds and then flying these birds by airplane to the Bahamas in order to find them and study them in their winter quarters, where we do not seem able to find them otherwise. Yet here we have not seriously considered doing the preliminary work on the Kirtland's Warblers themselves. Instead we would like to work out all the bug in the system first by using substitute species that are abundant, like the Palm Warbler or Prairie Warbler (which also winter in the Bahamas), and even here we would use something else, perhaps juncos, to try out radio tracking at its easiest on the nesting ground in northern Michigan. So we are a long way from capturing and holding Kirtland's Warblers.

We have also talked about transporting a few eggs over to surrogate parents located in the jack pines of Wisconsin (perhaps using Chipping Sparrows as surrogate parents) in order to establish a separate breeding population and not have all our eggs in one basket. However, this idea is fraught with many difficulties too that I will not enumerate, even though the cost to our warblers would be negligible, since the removal of eggs would ordinarily be followed by prompt replacement and no ultimate loss in production of young. But note that this too is just talk. We are not about to do it.

At present we are doing just two significant things to help the species: (1) We are continuing to remove cowbirds from the nesting sites, and we are getting a marvelous yield of fledglings; and (2) we are trying to enlarge the area of suitable habitat so that the birds have adequate room for nesting and also have a bigger target to find in their migration to the nesting ground.

Any other ideas will be welcome. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,



Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team

JOHN BYELICH, Leader
Mio, Michigan

NELS I. JOHNSON
Mich. Dept. of
Natural Resources

HAROLD F. MAYFIELD
Waterville, Ohio

ROBERT E. RADTKE
U. S. Forest Service

GEORGE W. IRVINE
U. S. Forest Service

WESLEY R. JONES
Hudson, Wisconsin

WILLIAM J. MAHALAK
Mich. Dept. of
Natural Resources

RICHARD O. WINTERS
U. S. Fish and
Wildlife Service

February 24, 1984

Mr. Harvey K. Nelson
Regional Director (SE)
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

Dear Mr. Nelson:

At the Recovery Team meeting held in Lansing, Michigan, on February 22-23, 1984, the Team was requested to provide guidance on Kirtland's warbler research contemplated by the Service. It is our understanding the Region has \$25,000 this fiscal year to initiate a post-fledging study and that starting in FY 1985, the Service is committed to at least a three-year study of the warbler on its wintering grounds. Further, a transmitter has been developed which may be suitable for birds the size of the Kirtland's warbler, and this has undergone preliminary tests on captive surrogate species with positive results. Questions remain, however, on approaches research should take in implementation and use of the transmitter on warblers.

The Team recommends the following:

1. Prior to the post-fledging study, the transmitter should be field tested in Michigan on surrogate species.
2. The Service Research Team working with surrogate species should coordinate all efforts with Mr. Gary Boushelle from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Roscommon.
3. Should indications prove positive on surrogate species, up to six fledged Kirtland's warblers should be radioed this coming summer.
4. The Patuxent Wildlife Research Center proposal (copy enclosed) for determining wintering range and limiting factors should be initiated as soon as possible to assure all aspects proposed for the first year are accomplished.
5. Results from the post-fledging work and data gathered to date on the first year's winter study should be submitted to the Team prior to July, 1985, so that we may provide further guidance to you on future winter work and/or post-fledging studies.

Mr. Harvey K. Nelson

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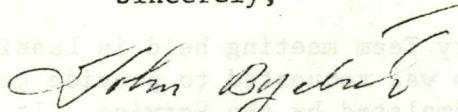
February 24, 1984

6. Additional work in the Bahamas is to be contingent on results obtained from the post-fledging study and data gathered in the first year of the winter study.

The Team wishes to express the need for accomplishing both studies as outlined above. We are concerned over the possibility the post-fledging work could possibly dilute the efforts of the first year's winter study, and we urge that the Service devote adequate resources to the two studies. We understand there have been discussions on assigning the post-fledging work to Craig Faantes of the Jamestown Wildlife Laboratory with support from the laboratories in Patuxent and Denver. We offer our support in proceeding in that manner and concur Mr. Faantes would be an excellent candidate.

If we can be of further assistance, please advise.

Sincerely,



John Byelich
Leader

JB:JE:mh
Enclosure



The Ohio State University

Department of Zoology

1735 Neil Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1293
Phone 614-422-8088

August 29, 1984

Mr. Harold Mayfield
9235 River Road
Waterville, OH 43566

Dear Harold,

Thank you for your immediate reply to my Kirtland's Warbler proposal. I seem to recall years ago hearing someone say that if you wrote to Harold Mayfield you would get a reply faster than seemed possible. Apparently that's still true!

I think you're probably right that captive programs of the kind I mention couldn't substantially augment the population, though if the species bred easily in captivity and if spring releases were feasible, it's at least conceivable that we might make a significant difference over several years. The method might also be of benefit in colonizing new sites and perhaps in elucidating some aspects of the species' biology; but basically I agree with you.

I appreciate your point about the arrival times of cowbirds and will make that correction (if I get the chance - it's not certain that I'll be allowed to make revisions due to time pressure).

Regarding double broods, I must admit with some embarrassment that in the 8 days I had to investigate this issue and prepare my report, I was unable to find a copy of your monograph. Our library doesn't have a copy (to my amazement), I looked all over Columbus, I checked the Patuxent library when I was there, I even considered calling the van Tyne library (but it was too late by then). I made my comment based on Ryel's (1981) statement "early workers felt Kirtland's Warbler was single brooded (Mayfield 1960)." In any case, this is one of the things I should look into more thoroughly and revise if I get the chance.

I also agree with you that cranes don't tell us much about Dendroica and we shouldn't be tempted to think they do. I put those portions in because Patuxent has the final say on funding (from what I can tell) and I didn't want them to be miffed. Also, because Jim Engel stressed that he wanted the work to have implications for other species than warblers.

Thank you for the report by Richard Brewer which I read with considerable interest.

I've talked with Ron Refsnider in Twin Cities, and he has agreed to talk with John Byelich and perhaps other members of the Team about the proposal. It doesn't seem necessary, therefore, for me to call.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jon'.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

IN REPLY REFER TO:

WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE
1405 South Harrison Road
Room 310, Manly Miles Building
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

Michael E. DeCapita
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1405 South Harrison Road
Room 310, Manly Miles Building
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

December 13, 1984

Dear Mike,

Please note my new address.

Mr. Harold Mayfield
9235 River Road
Waterville, Ohio 43566

Dear Harold:

Just a quick note to ask your advice on a small matter. Len Schumann and Jack Lord (Forest Service, Mio) have agreed on the 1985 KW tours. They will start May 15, 1985. We are preparing the announcements and Len mentioned that you had some suggestions at the July meeting about where to send them. (Apparently, the July minutes are not done yet!)

I would appreciate your sending us a list of the publications or other concerns you believe should receive the announcement. We will attend to your list here, and our regional office will make the usual general news release.

I hope you are well and wish you Happy Holidays!

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael E. DeCapita
Wildlife Biologist

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

WILDLIFE ASSISTANCE

1405 South Harrison Road

Room 310, Manly Miles Building
East Lansing, Michigan

December 18, 1984

Michael E. DeCapita
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1405 South Harrison Road
Room 310, Manly Miles Building
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

December 13, 1984

Dear Mike,

Please note my new address.

The most important place for a notice about the Kirtland tours is the magazine BIRDING, Editor Ron Naveen, 2378 Rte. 97, Cooksville, MD 21723.

Other possibilities are:

AUDUBON
950 Third Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10022

AMERICAN BIRDS
950 Third Avenue
New York, N. Y. 10022

JACK-PINE WARBLER
Editor, Thomas Howes
7379 S. Vassar
Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439

Best regards,

Sincerely,

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Mike

Michael E. DeCapita
Wildlife Biologist