



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Dear Cooperator

The 1992 search for singing male Kirtland's warblers has been completed. With your assistance, the effort in Wisconsin was the most intensive and extensive survey ever conducted. We thank you for your part in this quest; the validity of this survey depends entirely on the participation of individuals such as you.

In 1988, the survey in Washburn County located a Kirtland's warbler in a rather unlikely piece of mixed habitat. It was basically a jackpine site, but with many other species interspersed. Pockets of popple were abundant, and red pine predominated in some portions that were being utilized by the warbler. Most unusual from a Kirtland's warbler management viewpoint was the fact that a non-commercial thinning had been conducted during the previous winter, and the understory consisted primarily of the debris from this operation. No longer was the average jackpine height within the normal range for that selected by this species in Michigan, but nearer 30 feet or more. There was no record of fire in the management history of this stand, although the boundary of a major recent burn was only a half-mile away. It was difficult to envision why this site was selected over the thousands of acres of apparently ideal habitat so near. In one sense, this may be further support for the suspicion that it is the female Kirtland's warbler that selects the specific nesting territory!

The above paragraph is included here because this same block contained the only singing male Kirtland's warbler to be found in Wisconsin in 1992, although another bird was reported that could not be confirmed that same day nor in succeeding days. The bird was located by Terry O'Halloran (National Park Service - Trego) on his assigned survey block. It was not banded at the time, but color-marking was achieved later. This male maintained a clearly-defined territory that could not produce a female sighting in spite of many days of observation.

Assigned search areas encompassed 63 habitat blocks totaling 24395 acres, about a 6 % increase from last year. Areas in Adams, Burnett, Douglas, Eau Claire, Jackson, Juneau, Monroe, and Washburn Counties had approximately the same search areas with minor deletions, except for a substantial decrease in the areas searched at Fort McCoy. Areas added this year included the Moquah Barrens of Chequamegon National Forest in Bayfield County, and State, Nicolet National Forest, and private lands in Vilas County. These additions were of special interest because they include some new jackpine plantations and natural regeneration just attaining the height suitable for Kirtland's warbler nesting.

The Wisconsin survey for singing male Kirtland's warblers has become an increasingly prodigious task made possible only by a dedicated volunteer field staff. Many of you have participated for several years now, and your previous experience forms a valuable foundation for succeeding surveys. As there was increased geographical coverage this year, it was necessary to seek out some persons not previously involved. There were 67 listed field surveyors this year (compared to 54 last year), and I know that there were other family members and friends that also helped but were not listed. My thanks to all of you on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as personally.

The census report from Michigan continues the trend of the last two years with a total of 396 singing male Kirtland's warblers. This is about a 14% increase over last year. Again it has been shown that the current habitat is productive and that there can be no unusual losses to the population during migration and on the wintering ground. The only negative aspect is that 250 of these birds were found on the large Mack Lake wildfire tract that is not reproducible through management.

As usual, there are no definite plans for a repeat survey next year, however, at the June meeting of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, members unanimously supported a continuation of the Wisconsin survey. Your name will be retained on file as a potential surveyor in 1993.

Sincerely,

Wes