

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER STUDIES

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It was April 1931. The American Ornithologist's Union was to meet in October at Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan. Dr. Josselyn Van Tyne and Norman A. Wood were Curators of Birds at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology. Richard E. Olsen was a Senior Medical Student there. I had been out in practice nearly two years and was beginning to overcome the early effects of the depression. Richard Olsen wrote, "Would I be able to go 28-31 May with him and A.D. Tinker to Lovells?" The mission was to work on a Kirtland's Warbler colony. We met at Lansing Friday night and in my little Model T Ford coupe I ate dust all through the night as Richard drove ahead of me with his Ford touring car, loaded with camping equipment, a huge tent, blankets, a large milk can for water, food, etc. The morning was cold as often happens when May cold fronts pass through and the sky was draped with a mass of gray clouds. We passed through Grayling and reached Frederick at 4 a.m. stopped for a few minutes then headed east away from US 27, covering the last 20 miles of our Lovells trip in a short time. There we filled our milk can with water then drove the 4 miles south to the Kirtland's Warbler colony. We pitched the huge tent in a clearing right in the midst of the colony, started a fire large enough for a logging camp and cooked breakfast (I never had another fire on a Kirtland's Warbler colony.). We rested a little but soon were all in the field. I was interested in studying the birds, searching for a nest if possible and for photography later. Before the week end was over and time for me to go south I found my first Kirtland's Warbler nest. The female was rather tame and was building. As I lay sprawled out amongst the low blueberries, I watched her carry beakful after beakful of grasses to the new site.

Now we knew where there was a new nest we must return to see if it was successful. With Richard Olsen, ~~and~~ his brother Humphrey and the N. T. Petersons we were back 16 June for a few days, my only vacation that ~~my~~ summer. The warbler nest had been finished and now contained a single egg but it was deserted. We surmised the reason but never could prove it. We began a new search and soon found another nest with five young $\frac{1}{2}$ -grown. There we took several photographs with a little Graflex camera Richard had borrowed from the Medical School. Our 1931 Lovells field work was over.

But Kirtland's Warblers were like a magnet. Memorial Day week end 1932, Clara (Clara Cartland and I were married 19 October 1931) and I were back at Lovells. We began searching for new colonies and shortly found two large colonies near Red Oak in Oscoda County. Both were less than two miles from the village. In the latter part of June that year Clara and I stayed in a large Forest Service tent at Red Oak, eating with the Max Laage family. Although black fly bites limited Clara's field work we found another Kirtland's Warbler nest. It contained one warbler egg and two Cowbird eggs. I removed the Cowbird eggs and the female did not desert. She was so tame I caught her by hand and banded her—the first one of that species to be banded. (Dr. Van Tyne banded another one week later). Before we left the warbler egg had hatched and I had some photographs ~~XXXX~~ but we never knew whether the nest was successful.

Four men from Ohio, Dr. Brody, Mr. Baker, Grant Cook and Vincent McLaughlin went to Roscommon in 1933. They found a Kirtland's Warbler nest northeast of Roscommon and wrote me of their find. Alfred G. Dowding and I stopped to examine it but they had removed two Cowbird eggs and the birds had deserted their own two. We found another nest at Red Oak. It contained only a half grown Cowbird. We then searched the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin, without success.

On 13 May 1937 I found a male Kirtland's Warbler in a new colony just west of Lake Margrethe, west of Grayling, Crawford County. The Michigan Audubon Society

