

January 9, 1979--Allan's Cay group, Exuma Islands, Bahama
Approximately noon

Upon landing on the largest cay of the Allan's Cay group, I started up to the crest of the narrow island and along the east side. The island has rather dense vegetation along its central ridge. I noticed some iguana trails going off into the brush and followed them. (There are small clearings among the vegetation and, if one isn't fussy about what way he wishes to go, one can get from one clearing to another by crawling through spaces in the vegetation).

I heard some soft bird calls and just waited near the edge of a small clearing, perhaps 300 yards south of an old, deserted building which can be seen from the water west of the island. Picture 1 shows this clearing. The warbler moved into the edge of the clearing, wagging its tail and picking at something along the twigs. I could see the white undertail area, the dark streaks along the sides of the yellow breast, and a few short dark streaks in the central anterior portion of the breast. The split white eye-ring was obvious. Picture 2 shows the bird, though in moving my camera I frightened it and it moved farther away. I had originally seen it at quite close range, perhaps 7 to 10 feet. The bird moved away through the vegetation, and my attempts to follow were unsuccessful. Unfortunately, the only film I had was 400 Kodacolor, instead of the slide film I usually use.

Upon crossing back to the bay where we had landed with our dinghy, I found that a large boat, the New Shoreham (Picture 3) had landed its passengers for a chance to look at conches and other "wonders" of tropical islands. The people didn't seem interested in going through the vegetation, but some were fascinated by the iguanas, which were out on the beach at this point. Picture 4 shows a shot along the beach, looking south of the New Shoreham. Pinkish objects on the beach are conch shells. Picture 5 is a shot of vegetation on a nearby cay, just west of the larger one where the warbler was seen. Vegetation shown seems typical of the Exumas. I will have some other pictures of vegetation among some slides, if you're interested.

Laddie Elwell

ATTACHMENT B



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

IN REPLY REFER TO:

P. O. Box 845
Bemidji, MN 56601

February 5, 1979

Mr. John Byelich, Leader
Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team
Wildlife Division
Mason Building
Lansing, Michigan 48926

Dear John:

KW. I think the enclosed photographs and the documentation by Laddie (short for Adela) speak for themselves. However, the events leading up to her trip to the Bahamas are worth reiterating. Last fall I presented a slide presentation to the Bemidji Audubon chapter and Laddie was present. A few weeks later she told me she was planning a trip to the Bahamas and would be sailing among the islands with her niece who owns a sailboat. I told her not to come back without a picture of a Kirtland's Warbler in its "typical winter habitat". I half-heartedly went over the specific characteristics with her the day before she departed. The day or two after she returned to Bemidji she sheepishly told me that she had indeed seen a Kirtland's Warbler and was quite certain. She said she had taken a picture but was not at all optimistic because the bird was in a dense tangle of brush and the lighting was poor.

I think the resulting photograph is quite good considering the conditions she was shooting under.

I feel certain from the photograph and her description of the faint wing bars, white belly and undertail coverts and tail-wagging behavior that this is a Kirtland's.

Incidentally, Laddie is a professor at Bemidji State University and teaches ornithology among other courses. She is an excellent observer in my opinion.

If you need more information, let me know.

Sincerely yours,

James P. Mattsson
Wildlife Enhancement Biologist