

July 8, 1980

TO: Nels I. Johnson, Chief - Wildlife Division
FROM: Jerry Weinrich, Endangered Species/Wild Turkey Biologist
SUBJECT: Determination of Kirtland's Warbler Activity and Habitat Preference After Nesting

Although the behavior and habitat preferences of adult Kirtland's warblers are fairly well known during the nesting period, not much is known of their activities after nesting. Similarly, little is known of the activities of immature warblers for the period between fledging and southward migration.

It is possible that the period after nesting and before migration could be critical for both adults and young, and improved knowledge of where these birds go and of what they do during this time could suggest possible measures for improving chances for survival until migration (maybe even during and after migration).

The problem is that both adult and immature warblers are not very conspicuous during this time and, hence, they are very difficult to locate and observe. The idea I am proposing may sound a little crazy but I think it may work. Several other species of warblers have frequently been reported to associate closely with chickadees for feeding, and in most of the observations Elaine Carlson and I made of Kirtland's in August of 1977, these warblers were moving with one or more chickadees. Since I would not suggest using telemetry equipment on Kirtland's, perhaps a small number of resident chickadees could be outfitted with telemeters so that they and hopefully the warblers associating with them could be observed during late July, August and early September. This depends of course on the availability and cost of transmitters which are small enough so that attachment would not prevent or greatly alter the normal behavior of the chickadees carrying them. (Telemeters could probably be removed after the warblers leave).

Even if Kirtland's only occasionally associate with these chickadees, the chances for locating them should be much improved for the person(s) trying to observe warblers during late summer.

Please consider this and let me know if you think it might be worth trying.

JW:leg
cc/Byelich ✓
Taylor
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Jerry

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