

Preserve 2650

Mr. Pommerening: You may not have seen this item. It is a gratifying bit of national publicity for your efforts on behalf of the Kirtland's Warbler.

I hope that by efforts like these we can enlist the interest of a larger segment of the public not only in the Kirtland's Warbler but in other species that might become endangered.

Harold Mayfield

To Save a Single Songbird

A unique experiment in bird conservation was dedicated with appropriate ceremonies June 1 at the town of Mio, Michigan. The occasion called public attention to the setting aside of substantial tracts of state forest and national forest lands for the purpose of preserving a single species of songbird, the rare Kirtland's warbler.

The Kirtland's is perhaps the rarest of the wood warblers, which Roger Tory Peterson calls the "butterflies" of the bird world. It breeds only in the north central part of Michigan and requires extensive groves of young jack pine, a habitat created and re-created in the past by periodic forest fires. The total surviving population is believed to be not more than 1,000 birds.

As the chairman of the Kirtland's Warbler Preserve Committee of the Michigan Audubon Society, Harold Mayfield has pointed out, "the slightest alteration of conditions holds instant threat to the existence of the species." Modern forestry brought fire control, and present logging and planting tend to eliminate the jack pine.

The Michigan Conservation Department has already planted more than a quarter-million jack pine seedlings on the preserve areas it has established. The U. S. Forest Service will use cutting and controlled burning to reproduce and maintain different-age stands of the essential habitat on 4,010 acres in the Huron National Forest.

We congratulate Harold Mayfield and the members of his committee, some of whom have been working with him on this project since 1955. We commend the Michigan, Detroit and Pontiac Audubon Societies, which have provided sustained public support.

The Michigan Conservation Department and the U. S. Forest Service deserve universal applause; indeed, conservationists the world over will be watching the experiment. Some people of narrow outlook, no doubt, will scoff at the effort as holding no material or economic benefit for mankind. But most people will discern, if all cannot articulate it, a deeper meaning in it.

Comment by Carl W. Buchheister, President of the National Audubon Society, in Audubon Magazine, July-August, 1963, Pg. 211.

