

Plan 2nd Fire to Aid Warbler

SPECIAL TO THE DETROIT NEWS

MIO, March 13.—All for the benefit of Michigan's unique bird, the Kirtland's warbler, a crew of loggers is in the woods near here already preparing for a second planned forest fire in the spring of 1966.

The first controlled burn, called Project Pop Cone, attracted world-wide attention last May when a square mile of the Huron National Forest, southeast of here, was deliberately burned.

The purpose of the burning was to open millions of heat-resistant jack pine cones, causing them to release billions of tiny seeds to generate new young pines.

The Kirtland's warbler, one of the world's rarest birds, nests only in a few counties in northeastern Michigan. It will nest on the ground only under jackpines of a medium height. The birds apparently evolved to fit into a niche which only follows forest fires. Since forest fires have been so well controlled by man in recent years, the needed young jackpines stands are becoming scarcer, and there were fears that the estimated 1,000 Kirtland's warblers left on earth would eventually disappear without help.

Charles Willobee, logging contractor of Luzerne, is now logging off the second square mile of forest to be set on fire more than a year from now. The estimated 3,000 cords of jackpine to be harvested is being hauled to the

Packaging Corporation of America plant at Filer City for manufacture into pulp and paperboard.

Eventually the 4,000 acre Kirtland's Warbler Management Area within the national forest will be covered with the staggered controlled burns. It will take more than 30 years to complete present plans, but the result will be a huge area with new nesting areas for the birds constantly developing.

Alcona County Herald 1/21/65
(similar article in Alcona Review 1/21/65)

COUNTY C. OF C. PLANS TO STAGE SHOW IN MARCH

The Alcona County Chamber of Commerce held its monthly meeting at the Dyna Cafe in Harrisville, preceded by a chicken dinner.

Principal speaker of the evening was Steve Harper, district forest ranger, U. S. Forest Service. Harper showed colored slides and talked on the habitat of the Jack Pine Warbler, and what the forest service has done to increase its nesting area. The department recently burned over 500 acres near Mio to provide a continuing supply of habitat for the rare Kirkland Warbler.

At the meeting a discussion was held on a spring tour and a color tour in the fall. The spring tour would be held the first part of May and the color tour in the fall.

A fund raising project was studied by the members, and it was agreed to put on a talent show with funds received going toward payment of proposed projects. Ray Ruhl, owner of the theatre in Harrisville, offered use of his theatre at very small rental to put on the show. Plans are now under way to carry out this project which will be the first week of March just before lent.

The next monthly meeting will be held on February 10.

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Warbler Fans Start A Big Visiting Year

Kirtland's warblers, the rare birds that nest only in a small section of the northern lower peninsula, are due to arrive from their wintering grounds in the Bahamas early in May and birders are already scheduling visits to the bird's headquarters in Oscoda County.

The Detroit Audubon Society, according to Homer Roberts, a member, will visit the management area on May 31. Between 160 and 180 members, holding an annual spring campout near Hale, have requested a tour, according to John Byelich, of Roscommon, Region II game section supervisor of the Conservation Department. Mr. Byelich said that last year the birds started arriving on May 6.

The U. S. Forest Service Mio Ranger District office will begin issuing permits to visitors to the Mack Lake warbler management area on May 1.

The service had hoped to have a rustic center including pictures of the bird, a tape recording of the song, and a brief taped recording of its history and habits in operation early this summer, but plans are running behind schedule, according to Ken Adams, Mio district ranger. The management area is near Mack Lake where last year the service conducted a 500-acre burn to promote jack pine regrowth. The approximately 1,000 warblers demand young jack pine for nesting habitat.

A 500-acre jack pine cutting started in January to clear 10-12 ft. trees from the management

(Continued on Page Eight)

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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

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continued from page one

Warblers To Draw Crowds

area of the Huron National Forest which will be burned in 1966 to speed up regeneration of the pine seeds. Last year's burned area is already showing good new growth.

Requests for information on the warbler nesting area are coming in from as far as Connecticut and Kentucky, according to Phillip S. Baumgras, of Mio, Conservation District 7 game section supervisor. Entry permits are needed until August 15.

An historic jack pine, the

one under which the first warbler nest was found on July 8, 1903 by Norman A. Wood, the famous University of Michigan ornithologist, may already be lost. A timber cutting on private land at the site, Sec. 31 T27N R-E on the Oscoda-Crawford County line, is in progress.

Dr. Nicholas Cuthbert, of Central Michigan University, has resumed his studies in the Mack Lake area, of the impact the cowbirds have on warbler nesting success. The large flocks of cowbirds have already moved in. When the warblers nest, female cowbirds lay their eggs in the warblers' nests and as a result warbler nestlings are lost due to the presence of the larger cowbird young which crowd them from the nest and get the major portion of food brought by the parent warblers.

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