

*The*

# MICHIGAN AUDUBON

*Newsletter*



Volume 19 Number 5

Published by The Michigan Audubon Society

September-October, 1971

## Why So Few?

### Kirtland Warbler Decline Noted

Widespread concern is being voiced following the completion of the decennial census of the Kirtland Warbler. Results, as compiled by census chairman Harold Mayfield, show a drop of 60 percent in the number of male birds seen, as compared with the count made in 1961.

The census was made this past June by a team of 49 persons drawn from the Michigan Audubon Society, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the U. S. Forest Service. The count covered an area from Ogemaw County north to Presque Isle County and from Lake Huron west to Kalkaska County.

In 1961, 502 male warblers were found in 86 square sections of ten counties. This year, 201 males were located in only 27 sections of these six counties: Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Otsego.

#### WHY THE DROP?

In mid-August, Harold Mayfield wrote, "At the moment I have no explanation for this decline." John Byelich, a wildlife biologist for the Department of Natural Resources, suggests that a major cause may be the loss of favorable habitat. Other factors which may have contributed to the decline are insecticides, activities of the National Guard, and the nesting interference of cowbirds.

Disturbed both by the results of the count and by the inadequacy of available information, the Michigan Audubon Society's Board of Directors, at its September 18 meeting, issued a call for an annual census of this rare bird, which is unique to Michigan, its only nesting grounds.

In 1958, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, with the cooperation of the Michigan Audubon Society, set aside three separate tracts of state-owned jackpine lands in Crawford, Oscoda, and Ogemaw counties where management work has been keyed first and foremost for the benefit of the Kirtland's Warbler.



Photo by Robert Harrington  
Mich. Dept. Natural Resources

In 1963, in a ceremony that attracted nationwide attention, the U. S. Forest Service dedicated a 4,000-acre block of Huron National Forest lands in southeastern Oscoda County as a special management area. Here, too, Michigan Audubon Society was a party to the project. That same summer, on the lawn of the Oscoda County courthouse in Mio, a four-foot high replica of the warbler — possibly the world's only monument to a song bird — was erected. Present at the dedication was Roger Tory Peterson. Management of the warbler preserve includes restricted access to visitors, and planned burnings, cuttings and plantings to assure new growth of Jack Pine of the proper height for nesting.

The story began May 13, 1851, near Cleveland,

(Continued on Page 2)

