

June 19, 1974
North Woods Call 21 (28) p.3

pressure at the mouth of the river, in Lake Charlevoix, where it is legal to keep the fish. Fishermen at the river's mouth have been

fresh water. If its native habitat, Atlantic are not spooky as steelhead in Michigan rivers. They strike streamer and wet flies and, sometimes, dry flies. WPK landin

Cowbird traps continue to assist bid to save warbler

Nearly two dozen traps have been set by U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologists in an effort to keep cowbirds out of the nests of the endangered Kirtland's warbler in its only remaining nesting area of Michigan.

Lynn Greenwalt, Director of Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, said, "This is the third year a cooperative effort with the U.S. Forest Service, the State of Michigan, and the National Audubon Society has been mounted to aid the small bird. We are now optimistic that the species can be saved from extinction, which was dangerously near in 1971 when its population dipped to an all time low of only 400 survivors in the wild, after a 60 percent population drop over the 1961-1971 decade."

There are an estimated 432 of the warblers breeding in Michigan, and that number is expected to increase with the breeding season now underway.

The declining warbler population puzzled biologists for years. This bluish-gray small bird, renowned for its constantly bobbing tail, breeds only in the lower peninsula of Michigan and winters in the Bahamas. It nests almost exclusively in young jack pine trees, so the U.S. Forest

Service and the State of Michigan set aside over 4,000 acres of forest in the 1960's to be managed solely for the Kirtland's warbler's benefit, primarily by selective cutting and burning to encourage new jackpine growth.

Despite these efforts, the bird's decline continued, prompting a cooperative Federal-State-private study which singled out the brown-headed cowbird as another major culprit threatening the warbler's precarious existence.

The female cowbird, slightly larger than the warbler, doesn't build a nest of her own. Instead, she removes eggs from other bird nests, lays hers, and leaves her young to be hatched and fledged by foster parents.

This piggy-back cradling of cowbird eggs in Kirtland's warbler nests had a devastating effect on warbler nesting—nearly 80 percent of warbler eggs were being lost. The Kirtland's warbler usually lays five eggs, and roughly only one of five wear hatching.

A three-pronged program, starting in 1972, called for cowbird control, managing forest areas to provide young jack pine trees, and setting aside additional forest lands for the Kirtland's warbler.

That spring 15 decoy traps baited with sunflower seeds, fresh water, and live cowbirds were set on seven warbler

Williamsburg v in cross-fire v

The Dept. of Natural Resources is attempting to maneuver itself out of a cross-fire between angry Williamsburg area citizens and Amoco Oil Co.

DNR geologists want Amoco to deepen a vent well near the company's well that is blamed for the disastrous Williamsburg

nesting areas. Over 2,200 cowbirds were trapped and warbler egg losses dropped on three of the areas from 65 percent to 6 percent. The number of young warblers reaching the wing that year nearly tripled.

In 1973, 19 traps were set in the seven warbler areas. A separate one was established outside the known warbler nest areas to see how extensively cowbirds were moving into the general vicinity. Over 3,000 cowbirds were removed from the warblers' areas last spring, and a nest survey showed that not one warbler nest had been invaded in three of the seven areas. A population increase of eight percent was recorded.

This year the number of traps has been increased to 23. The National Audubon Society has a study underway of the Kirtland's warbler wintering areas in the Bahamas to see if as-yet-unknown factors there can be manipulated in the bird's favor.

gas eruptions in t 1973. The geologists deepened to ble potentially danger may have escape original well and st in underground for

If this isn't don say, the possibilit disaster will remain

The vent well th deepened will never ing oil or gas wle DNR deputy dir Harris explains. W gas has been bled will be permanentl

However, some area residents who venienced or suffe damage by the e want the DNR to fo pay them off for a before the depart deepening the ven people, DNR officia ently do not under vent well must be their own protect Amoco's profit.

Further, Harris p the DNR has no pressure Amoco citizens claims, or Amoco because of The law, he exp allows for indivi pursuing these ma The controversy

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