

## Kirtland's Warbler Committee Meets

The nesting success of the Kirtland's Warbler has been good for the last three years. Why, then, was there such a sharp decline in the bird's numbers as reported in the 1974 census?

The Kirtland's Warbler Project Committee met September 6, 1974, at the Ralph McMullen Conservation School at Higgins Lake, to hear reports on 1974 research on the Kirtland's Warbler, to consider possible causes for the decline in its numbers, and to propose the course of action for 1975. 21 field workers, government officials, Audubon representatives and observers were present.

Lawrence Walkinshaw, who has done major research on the warbler's nesting, noted that the number of birds fledged the past three years has been about the same. Of the 63 nests observed in 1974, 47 were successful, producing 258 eggs. Of these eggs, 200 hatched and 181 young were fledged. 162 young were banded. Most of the pairs rear two broods per year.

It was noted that if 160 pairs of the warbler (nearly the entire known 1974 population) were to have such nesting success, that 640 young would hatch. If only one half should survive, that would add 320 birds to the warbler's population. One female, nesting near the Lovells area, raised 25 young in two years!

When the various hypotheses were advanced to explain the low count, a number of gaps in knowledge about the bird came to the fore. How many birds are lost in migration or on the wintering ground? What effect have hurricanes and pesticides had? How much effect has the habitat limitations had? These and other questions were discussed at length.

### EFFECT OF NEW U. S. LAW

The passage of the Endangered Species Act will have a profound effect on future activities toward protecting the Kirtland's Warbler and encouraging its increase. The new rules provide that the Secretary of the Interior shall appoint a "Recovery Team", which in turn will formulate a "Recovery Plan." All activities must fall within this plan. As of mid-September, the "team" had not been appointed, and the plan is not due until June, 1975.

The new law also provides that "harassment" of an endangered species is prohibited, as is the "taking" of one of such a specie. This could be interpreted as prohibiting some activities until now legally pursued, including some birdwatching and banding. However, otherwise prohibited activity may be allowed when done under permits issued by the designated government agency.

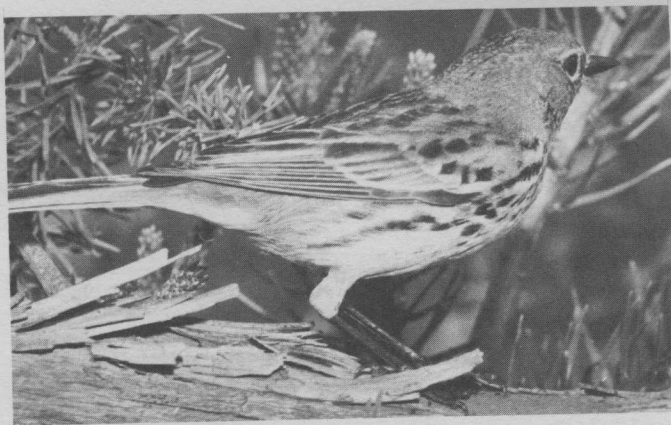
## New Exhibit at Seven Ponds

A recent donation of 76 mounted songbirds and waterfowl will form the nucleus of a Michigan Birds exhibit to be placed in the Interpretive Building of the Seven Ponds Nature Center. The gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Cohan of Grosse Pointe Shores was reported to have been collected in the Algonac area, and was probably mounted between 1880 and 1900. The prize item is an unusually fine specimen of Passenger Pigeon, extinct since 1914.

Florence Skae Smith, long-time volunteer worker at Seven Ponds, passed away in September, 1974. In her memory, her family has established the Florence Skae Smith Memorial Fund, to be used in purchasing furniture for the children's library corner. Contributions are being accepted at the Nature Center.

In September, 1974, Seven Ponds lost one of its most generous supporters. H. Randall Wickes of Saginaw passed away at age 85. Founder of the Wickes Foundation, he made possible much of the building and facilities at Seven Ponds.

The Interpretive Building of the Center will be closed from December 15, 1974, to February 15, 1975. The grounds will be open to Nature Center members for winter walks, however.



Michigan DNR Photo

In the light of damage done in 1974, and because of the new law, the consensus was that (1) no tape recorders be employed except by permit, and then only in areas where the warbler's occupancy is not certain; and (2) there be a one-year moratorium on handling the birds, except by permit to capture previously banded birds for identification.

The value of the cowbird control program has been firmly established, and the program will be somewhat expanded in 1975. The interpretive program as expanded in 1974 is to be continued. State and Federal officials outlined their management plans for 1975.

In view of the new law, and of the pressures already existent upon the warbler, no one should attempt to photograph the bird or use recordings of its song in the nesting areas. Research is to be done under permit. Birdwatching in management areas is limited to roadside viewing or viewing under guidance of authorized personnel. Information on such activity is available from the U. S. Forest Service or the Michigan DNR. Slides of the bird, its nest and its habitat are available for purchase from the Michigan Audubon Society.

## Whales and Snow Geese

In international news: The efforts at saving whales is being narrowed to a boycott of Japanese-made goods, since it is reported that Russia will cooperate with the International Whaling Commission if Japan will do so. So far, the Japanese government has not acceded to the world-wide call for whale conservation, but reports indicate that some major Japanese industries are feeling the pinch of declining exports.

On the other side, United States and Russian wildlife scientists have launched a cooperative program to study the Lesser Snow Goose, which summers in Russian Siberia and winters in California's Sacramento Valley. Geese were marked by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service last winter. Soviet banding just prior to the Fall migration was scheduled for this year. This project is part of the US-USSR Agreement of Environmental Protection signed last fall in Washington.

The Michigan Audubon Society Board of Directors, at its September meeting in Traverse City, added its support to the moratorium on the taking of whales, and recommended that whenever possible individuals refrain from buying Japanese products until Japan joins in the moratorium.

The July, 1973 issue of *Audubon* magazine cited the Michigan-published *North Woods Call* for its fine record of environmental news coverage. Early this year the N.A.S. called attention to the need for this weekly to enlarge its subscription list to survive the pressures of rising costs. We would suggest that you find it well worth the annual fee of \$7.00/year. Write editor Glen Sheppard, R. 2, Box 195, Charlevoix 49720.