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serious allegations were raised about
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not even the sound of one hand clapping.

JUNE 18, 1975 DET. FREE PRESS
Reprieve for Kirtland's Warbler

POSTPONEMENT of National Guard tank maneuvers on the nesting grounds of the vanishing Kirtland's warbler is the least the state can do to ensure the survival of this unique and priceless species.

The Grayling area is world famous as the last breeding place of the critically endangered Kirtland's, whose total adult population of 334 individuals would weigh no more than 20 pounds.

But without this 20 pounds of lemon-breasted, black-masked bird, the five Michigan counties where it currently nests no longer would have a resource unmatched anywhere else on earth. Too often the value of such a resource is realized only after it's gone.

An important portion of the Kirtland's very particular habitat is on the Michigan



Kirtland's warbler in life-and-death struggle

National Guard's Camp Grayling. The state Department of Natural Resources' John Byelich, who heads the recovery team for preserving the species, reports 44 pairs nesting at the camp this year—the same number as last year. That's a fourth of all the Kirtland's warblers in existence.

After Dr. Lawrence Walkinshaw, in his monumental studies of the birds, discovered they sometimes mate a second time if undisturbed, the DNR directed the Guard to delay its three-state tank training exercises at the camp for one month, until Aug. 15.

Under the circumstances of the Kirtland's literal life-and-death-struggle, the directive was clearly necessary and wholly logical. The situation is reminiscent of the recent Air Force decision to terminate its bombing practice on an island off the Texas coast of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, the winter home of the threatened whooping crane.

Bombing runs and tank maneuvers can be conducted in a variety of places, but there's only one habitat that will support the respective populations of the whooping crane and the Kirtland's warbler.

Take away the Kirtland's from the jack-pine forests of the northern Lower Peninsula where it dwells, and the North Country will have lost an important ingredient of what makes that region a national treasure.

Preserve the Kirtlands — as the DNR would help do with its directive—and this generation will have won the unceasing gratitude of the next.

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