

Harbor Light

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Harbor Springs
Mich.

THE OUTDOOR LIFE

A Word For The Birds...



By Kendall P. Stanley

The dollar reigns supreme. That becomes evident as one reads a story in Tuesday's Detroit Free Press, when two members of the Grayling business community, one of whom heads the city's Chamber of Commerce, took a sad, from my point of view, outlook about the Kirtland's Warbler.

It seems the National Guard will not move into the Grayling area until late August, so that the warbler may nest on five acres of tank range, at a time when they are mating. The decision by the Guard, according to the one member of the business community, will cost Grayling \$1,000,000.

"If I could buy them for a million, I would, and ship them away," he said. The other businessman, being bolder, indicated that if he could, he'd shoot 'em all.

He later pointed out that he didn't know what they looked like.

The people in Grayling must be doing something wrong. The Texas area where the almost extinct whooping crane nests makes millions each year - people travel from afar to see such a rare bird.

Although not as critical as the whooping crane, nevertheless the Kirtland warbler population hovers below 100, with 44 pairs nesting in the Guard location.

They have never seen a Kirtland's warbler, even though Grayling is but 70 miles away; after the diatribes against the little bird (the entire population is estimated to weigh less than 12 pounds), I feel I should head south to see it.

Man has eliminated many native species from the face of the planet, a number of which used to reside in Michigan. To eliminate one more specie, which only nests in the Grayling area of Michigan, wintering in the Bahamas, for money that could be raised elsewhere, is absurd.

Fortunately, many agencies, both federal and state, are trying desperately to save the Kirtland's; indeed, the National Guard has rearranged their schedule for the protection of the birds during the mating season. They are to be applauded, the two businessmen should receive slings and arrows.