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# National Guard Held at Bay by Rare Warblers

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The tiny blue and yellow Kirtland's warbler has stood off the Michigan National Guard's 45-ton tanks — at least until Aug. 1.

Brig. Gen. John Taylor said Tuesday that the Guard would curtail its tank training at Camp Grayling, in the north central portion of lower Michigan, the favorite nesting area for some 44 pairs of the rare birds.

THE GUARD bowed Tuesday to the arguments of the Department of Natural Resources director Howard Tanner, who said driving the noisy tanks through the birds' nesting area would discourage breeding and perhaps harm some of the birds.

The DNR wants peace and quiet in the nesting area until Aug. 15. The guard has agreed to hold off only until Aug. 1.

Wildlife experts claim only 334 of the rare warblers are still in existence, and one-fourth of them nest at Camp Grayling.

The warbler invaded Camp Grayling about 10 years ago, according to Taylor. At that time the DNR mapped off a small area where the warblers were living and restricted tank maneuvers there.

"Now the DNR has increased the restricted area (to approximately five square miles) where it makes tank maneuvers virtually impossible," said Taylor.

"We've asked them to take another look at the size of the area or to remove the restriction by Aug. 1," he said.

In past years, maneuvers have been curtailed until July 15 to allow the warblers time to nest, breed and raise their young. Now wildlife experts say some of the birds are breeding two times a summer, so the warblers need additional time to raise their broods.

John Byelich, a DNR biologist, said the warblers need at least one week to learn how to fly after they are hatched.

"The birds hang around (the Grayling area) until the latter part of August and September, then migrate to the Bahamas."

"We don't want anyone there," he said. "Every bird is important. They have a better chance if we leave them alone."

