

Oscar



Nominations for best performance this year's Oscar Awards will be announced Monday in Los Angeles. Top left, "Lenny;" Al Hoffman, top left, "Lenny;" Al

Oscar sn

By TERRY BOEDGIEFF
State News Special Reviewer
Director Ingmar Bergman's film, "Scenes From a Marriage," will not be on the roster of movies considered for Academy Award recognition this year.

The critically acclaimed film has garnered as much controversy as it has praise in the past month, on the grounds of its eligibility in this year's Oscar race.

Originally the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences declared Bergman's film ineligible for Academy Award consideration because of a technical bylaw.

According to the Academy's rulebook, an eligible film may be presented in another medium such as television, but it must be exhibited for at least one week during the same calendar year as it plays its qualifying engagement in the Los Angeles area.

The board rejected "Scenes" because it was shown on Scandinavian television in 1973 and not in the qualifying year of 1974. The bylaw was not specifically established to exclude "Scenes," but when a rule change was proposed last fall

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SN photo/Bob Kays

Biologists rescuing Kirtland's warbler

By JEFF MERRELL
State News Staff Writer

The robin may be Michigan's official bird, but it is the Kirtland's warbler that has attracted the national spotlight.

This unique Michigan bird (it breeds only in a small section of the Lower Peninsula) has suffered drastic drops in population over the past few years.

Only 167 pairs remain.

So the federal government declared the Kirtland warbler an endangered species and named two state Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) biologists to a recovery team.

John Byelich and Nels Johnson are part of the seven-member team responsible for assisting the bird's flight from extinction and have come up with a five-point recovery program.

Their plan calls for a study of the bird's winter range in the Bahamas, an improvement of the breeding range habitat, long-range expansion and improvement of that habitat, monitoring the bird's population and protection for the Kirtland's warbler from cowbirds and people.

Lack of knowledge

One of the biggest problems, according to the two DNR biologists, is the lack of knowledge of the winter range.

"We don't know what the restricting factors are in the Bahamas," Byelich said. Johnson added that those unknown factors could be responsible for the bird's plunge in population.

"From what evidence we have we sent a pretty good number of birds south in 1973, but we didn't get them all back," he said.

Another problem, more closely tied to Michigan, is the bird's specific breeding habitat requirements.

"The bird breeds only in the young jack pine stands in the neighborhood of eight to 18 feet tall, that have branches low to the ground," according to Johnson, the DNR regional biologist for the northern Lower Peninsula, where the Kirtland warbler nests.

Johnson said the bird's specific breeding requirements, which limit its growth, began because of the frequent natural fires in Michigan, which cleared jack pine forests and provided room for the necessary young trees.

"There is always this type of habitat available because of the natural fires. They just evolved to fit that niche," Johnson said.

Controlled fires

But modern fire-prevention methods have stopped that cycle. Johnson and Byelich are using controlled fires in an attempt to artificially recreate a high quality habitat.

"We've done this before and have been quite successful," Byelich said.

He also said that the control of cowbirds, which parasitize Kirtland's warbler nests, has been successful in the past.

"But cowbird parasitism can become a very immediate and potent threat," warned Johnson.

Another threat, one that plagues most wildlife programs, is disturbance by people.

"We can trap cowbirds, but we don't know how to handle people," Byelich said.

1975

National Guard Held at Bay by Rare Warblers

BY JANE BRIGGS AND SARA RIMER

Free Press Staff Writers

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."

