

Hunters supporting Kirtland's warblers

Hunters, who have historically paid for all wildlife restoration, have bought a lion's share of posters, patches and decals in the Department of Natural Resources' first annual Living Resources Program.

Dick Lehman, Information and Education Division chief, says hunters bought about two-thirds of the \$1 posters and decals and \$2 patches during September, October and November with applications clipped from hunting season guides.

THE PROGRAM, kicked off with a \$1,000 donation from the Michigan United Conservation Clubs in August, has raised about \$17,000 for Michigan's endangered Kirtland's warbler. MUCC also processed some \$600 in sales to members.

Lehman says he hopes the program will catch on with schools. The Groves Ecology Club of Groves High School in Birmingham contributed \$460.80 from a November paper drive — asking only \$49 in patches, decals and posters for the club's members.

With sales of the black and white poster of the Kirtland's warbler admittedly lagging, Lehman initiated printing of a 16x20 four-color reproduction of a Kirtland's warbler by Bob Harrington, the department's wildlife photographer.

"**WE ORDERED** 100 and sold them and are into our second hundred of the limited edition, which sells for \$20," he explains. "But we've raised an extra \$2,400 thus far."

Sales of the color photo have been kept low-key not only because of the \$20 cost but the delicate nature of the prints, which cause shipping problems, he points out. Word of the color print has been by word of mouth thus far.

Lehman says he hopes to step up the living resources effort in schools during the next few months before the cutoff date — the return of

the Kirtland's warblers from their wintering grounds in the Bahamas.

"**WE HOPE** to present a check for at least \$20,000 to John Byelich of our Wildlife Division, chairman of the National Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, to buy additional habitat improvement for the birds," says Lehman.

Meanwhile, he says about 1,200 of the tiny birds went south again last fall — about the same as 1974.

"But 358 birds — 24 more than 1974 — returned last year," he adds. "We're hopeful there will be another increase in breeding pairs this year."

BIOLOGISTS ARE still trying to learn the reason for the high mortality between the time the birds leave Michigan in the fall and return in the spring," he points out.

The Kirtland's warbler nests only in the so-called "Grayling sands" area of northern Michigan in jack pine stands a minimum of 80 acres six to 18 feet tall — 8 to 20-year-old trees — with numerous openings to keep low limbs exposed to sunlight so that they remain alive. They have been found nesting in artificial plantings of Christmas tree-sized red pine in similar conditions.

Doty Native Flower Garden Association, endowed by the late Miss Iva Doty, Battle Creek and California teacher, has voted to donate \$1,500 to the Living Resources program.

Mrs. Mabelle Isham of Bellevue, chairman, says the association hopes the donation can be used to benefit endangered plant species. The Doty donation is the largest lump sum yet received.

LEHMAN SAYS it is the hope of Dr. Howard Tanner, DNR director that this donation may help to save some "islands of rare plant habitats for Michigan's future as well as present."

