



Bird Watchers' Notebook

The highlight of February's birdwatching in Michigan was reported by Vic Janson, DNR wildlife biologist. "Saturday, February 23, 1979, seemed rather ordinary at Sault Ste. Marie. It was cold, snowy, overcast. The unusual thing was the strange gathering of 50 or more humans, who began gathering at the power plant along the St. Mary's River at dawn. They came from all over Michigan, and some adjoining states. Who were they? They were birders who had come to see rare winter birds reported in the area. Most everyone saw the Great Gray Owls, the Hawk Owl, and the Harlequin Duck (a male in dazzling adult plumage). Carloads of birders kept building up, reaching a peak by 3 p.m. It was not an organized venture, rather it was a spontaneous movement. All wanted desperately to glimpse the rare Gyrfalcon which had been spotted at this site. It was not seen that day, but a few did get a fine view of it the day following."

During January 13-27, a nation-wide survey of wintering eagles was conducted. John Lerg, DNR, reports that the results for Michigan show that 30 Bald Eagles and two Golden Eagles were observed during that period. They were distributed all across Michigan, but mostly near open water. In the Upper Peninsula, there were eleven adults, and one immature Bald Eagles, while the northern LP had thirteen adults and one immature. The Golden Eagles (one adult, one immature), along with three adult Bald Eagles and one immature, were found in the lower half of the Lower Peninsula. Six different agencies, including Michigan Audubon, cooperated in the effort, with results going into the National Wildlife Federation's Raptor Information Center.

Warbler Tour Schedules Set

Nesting areas of Kirtland's Warblers in Michigan will be closed and posted against public entry during the 1979 nesting season. Warbler watchers may see the bird and view nesting areas only by participating in guided tours.

Free guided tours to the nesting areas will depart from the DNR Field Office in Grayling, and from the U.S. Forest Service Ranger office in Mio. The tours begin May 13, and will be offered every day at 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. from Grayling, and at the same times every day except Wednesdays from Mio. Grayling tour schedules will end July 7, and the Mio tour will end July 27. One guide noted that the best period for seeing the warbler is during late May and the month of June.

Tape recorders will not be allowed, and tour guides will not be able to make special efforts for photographers.

The Michigan Audubon Society contributes financial aid to make these tours possible.

No reservations are necessary, except that large groups are urged to contact the field offices for reservations. In Grayling, P. O. Box 507 49738, phone 517-348-6371. In Mio, U.S.F.S. District Ranger, Mio 48647, phone 517-826-3717.

The **Jack-Pine Warbler** listed 18 Christmas counts for 1949. For 1978, it reports 51 different census tallies.

Dr. Michael Hamas has expressed disappointment at the less-than-expected response to the call for participants in Michigan Project Loon Watch in 1978. We would join him in asking that many more of you assist in this effort (which also involves five other states and Ontario). Write (quickly) for instructions to Dr. Michael Hamas, Department of Biology, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI 48858. (See May, 1978 issue of *Michigan Audubon*.)

We wish we had room to print the tally sheet here, but the 1978 annual Hawk Watch at Holiday Beach (a joint effort of the Oakland and Detroit Audubon Societies) recorded fourteen species of hawks, plus Turkey Vultures, with a grand total of 50,804 individuals. As usual, the largest number (23,250) were Bread-winged Hawks. Joseph Kleiman, Hawk Watch chairman, notes that Marsh Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Osprey were down (in varying amounts). Most notable increase was the 37 Golden Eagles seen, about double those on previous counts. All these hawks are migrants, just passing through from the vast northern regions enroute to their winter "vacation." The watch extends through August-November.

You just can't keep Frank Kangas out of schoolhouses. He received an injured Red-tailed Hawk December 7, and on the 21st took it with him to Portage (Kalamazoo County), where he exhibited it in every classroom of the Woodland Elementary School. Since the bird cannot at present fly, it is now "happily" teaching visitors at the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

It took an ancient form of transportation, the Carrier Pigeon, to help doctors in Devon, England, overcome delays caused by modern traffic jams. Creep-and-crawl traffic had added hours to transporting blood and tissue samples to nearby Plymouth for urgently needed lab tests. Then someone thought of flying the samples by Carrier Pigeon. The light-weight samples went speedily by the birds, and now the feathered delivery team is on regular schedules. If the successful flights continue, other hospitals may also turn to "pigeon power." Example of another bird service. (From *The Avian Tattler*, Petoskey Regional Audubon Society, March, 1979.)

K. W. in the U.P.?

In 1978, Kirtland's Warblers were found in Wisconsin, eastern Ontario, and Quebec. Since there are jack pine stands in the Upper Peninsula comparable to those in known warbler nesting territory, the question has been asked, are there Kirtland's Warblers in the U.P.?

Dr. Lawrence Ryel, Chief of Surveys and Statistical Services, DNR, writes that "we would encourage anyone with knowledge of jack pine areas in the Upper Peninsula to spot check suitable appearing habitat for warblers this coming nesting season, and to let me know immediately if they find any. Call (517) 373-3750.

For such a check in the U.P., tape recordings may be used. "If a male responds, however, one should not continue to play the tape," he said. "We are unsure of how much this disturbs the birds, and we don't want to take any chances."

DNR staff in the field offices could assist in advising of jack pine distribution. Offices are located in Baraga, Crystal Falls, Escanaba, Newberry, Norway, Gwinn, Sault Sainte Marie, and Manistique.

Ryel has prepared a three-page set of instructions for inventorying Kirtland's Warbler habitat. Those wishing to spot check may obtain a copy by contacting him at DNR offices, Stevens T. Mason Building, Box 30028, Lansing 48909.