

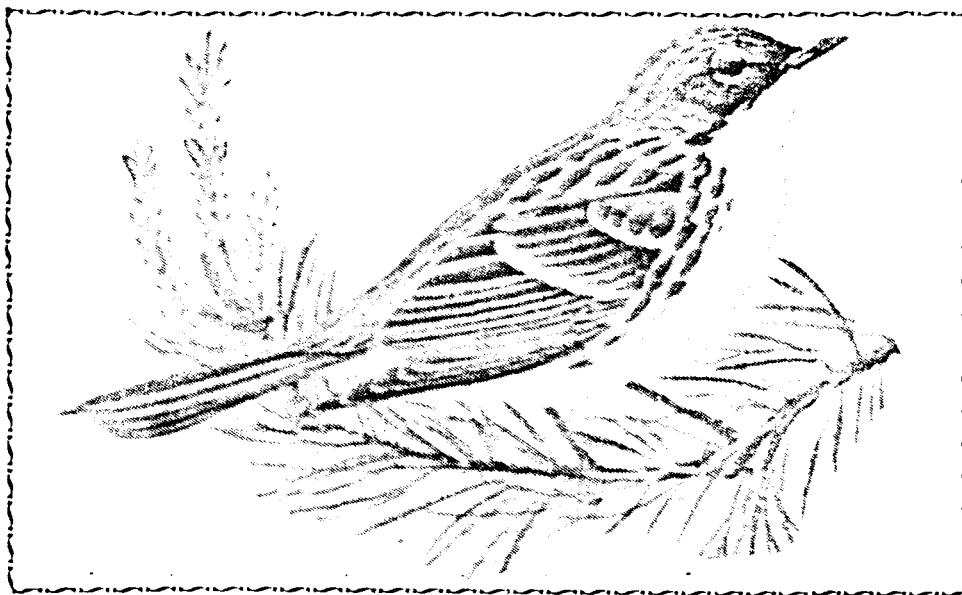
The SPECIAL REPORT *Kirtland Warbler:*

The Fight To Save A Vanishing Species

There are a number of birds classified as rare in the U.S. Some are spectacular, such as the huge California Condor, and the snowy Whooping Crane. By establishing preserves, species about to disappear like Hawaii's Nene Goose, have been able to reestablish themselves. Michigan has the singular distinction of being the summer home of one of these feathered rarities, the Kirtland warbler. A sparrow-sized, bluish-gray bird with a lemon-yellow breast, it has a characteristic habit of "bobbing" it's tail up and down. With their nesting grounds not even discovered until the early 1900's, it's extremely limited range and the small population both contribute to it's scarcity.

After spending the winter as tourists in the Bahamas, they head for just 3 or 4 countries in Michigan for the summer. The center of their entire world is Camp Grayling in Crawford County!

The odds are against the Kirtland warbler. Many are lost at sea during migration. Hawks and owls probably get their share. They will only nest in young jack pines, 5 to 18 feet high, with low branches. The Cowbird, a feathered sneak whose young instinctively push out other eggs and fledglings, lays it's eggs in Kirtland warbler nests. And for years, tanks and soldiers of the Michigan National Guard tore through the breeding grounds.



In 1957, an all-out effort to save this species, now on the endangered list, was begun. The Department of Natural Resources set aside over 4,000 acres for controlled burning so more young jack pines could sprout. A trapping program to remove the Cowbird threat was had good results. When the nesting grounds were put "off-limits" to Michigan's Guardsmen, artillery pointed their guns elsewhere and tanks ceased to rumble down the old trails.

The future of this diminutive species still isn't secure. But it's brighter than it was a few years ago. Still, questions like "Why all the fuss over one little bird?" are still heard. There's something majestic about the

buffalo, or the Bald Eagle, that we don't see in the Kirtland warbler. But we can't help but admire the tenacity for life that this spunky feathered mite displays. We don't know if tomorrow's children will be able to catch a glimpse of this bird as it flashes through the evergreen heart of Michigan. If man, with all his technology, cannot respond to the plight of this little creature, is there any hope for any of the inhabitants of this planet? Perhaps it is not only a study in how to save an endangered bird, but a not so subtle message about understanding the rightful place on this earth of both the bird and the man, from the Creator of both.



NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the many new Engineers who have enlisted recently.

Private Allyn Finkbeiner receives the oath of enlistment from 1LT Rudy Hornus, as he joins the 1432nd Engr Co.



The Guard belongs.