

### Forest's wounds healing

MIO — A U.S. Forest Service official says the burned-out forest area near Mio appears well on the road to recovery.

District Ranger Ven Bosman said a good summer with even rainfall helped the growth of young trees in the Mack Lake area, which was devastated by fire last May.

One fireman was killed while battling the blaze, which destroyed 25,000 acres of timberland.

The fire was intentionally set by the Forest Service to improve the habitat of the Kirtland's warbler, an endangered bird species, but raged out of control. Bosman said the fire caused minimal loss to wildlife and soil may have been improved with higher nitrogen content.

*Detail Area Press  
2-7-81*

## Environmental Officials Fear For Rare Michigan Songbird

Special to The New York Times

MIO, Mich., July 11 — The population of the nearly extinct Kirtland's warbler has slipped a little since last year, but Federal and state officials are more concerned about the next few years, when the bird's habitat will be temporarily reduced.

John Byelich, chairman of the Kirtland Warbler Recovery Team, which was established by the Secretary of Interior in 1975, said that a census completed in June found 230 pairs of the tiny songbirds, down from 240 last year. The population is figured by counting the singing males in the region, which is considered a reliable approach because the birds are monogamous. But Mr. Byelich said weather on an error in counting could account for the smaller number recorded this year.

Little is known about the yellow-breasted bird, which is often called the jackpine warbler, other than that it winters in the Bahamas and returns May 12 to 14 to build nests on the ground beneath the jackpines in a small area in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

This region, the only known place where the Kirtland's warbler breeds

has been made a sanctuary supervised by representatives of the National Forest Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Services, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and regional and local Audubon Societies.

The warbler is also called "the bird of fire" because fire creates the heat necessary to pop the seeds from the jackpine cones for reseedling. The bird apparently nests only under jackpines that are eight to 10 years old and 15 to 20 feet high.

Mr. Byelich said that a program of controlled burning was started in 1975 to insure a supply of jackpines of the proper size for the warblers. But the new habitat will not be ready for another two to three years.

"We will be running out of habitat before then and we don't know what the birds will do," Mr. Byelich said. "Will they crowd into the smaller area? Will they scatter, or just not nest at all?"