

Quick Takes

RECORDS SET IN KIRTLAND'S WARBLER STUDY. The 1985 **Kirtland's warbler** singing male census in **Michigan** revealed 217 males, which is translated into pairs as 438 adult breeding birds; this is about the same number of Kirtland's warblers censused last year. The records? These were set in the first intensive study of the birds on their wintering grounds in the **Bahamas**. Project Leader Craig Faanes and Paul Sykes, wildlife research biologists, both of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stationed at the University of Georgia's School of Forest Resources, **Athens, Georgia**, with assistants Paul Siebert and Chris Haney, discovered 11 of these birds on certain lightly populated islands in the Bahaman archipelago last February. Eleven Kirtland's warblers found on their wintering grounds is ten more than anyone has found during the winter in the 20th century! From fragmentary information dating back to before 1885 and up to last year, Faanes figured that the northern islands in the archipelago are mainly used August-November, and March-May, when the birds are island-hopping during spring and fall migration; the deep winter months, December-February, he surmised, are spent in the southern islands of the chain. His conjecture proved correct. The islands where the birds were found were New Providence (1), Paradise (1), Eleuthera (1), Great Inagua (2), South Caicos (1), Grand Turk Island (4), and, the southernmost wintering place known for the species and a new record, the northwest coast of the **Dominican Republic** (1). One Kirtland's, netted and banded on Eleuthera, was the third one ever banded away from the breeding grounds in Michigan, and the first ever color-banded away from there; *it was seen again on the breeding grounds in Michigan this past summer.*

For the first time ever, complete habitat studies of the wintering grounds are underway on islands that have habitat Faanes describes as desert scrub—reminiscent of the Sonoran desert of Arizona—mainly acacialike scrub trees and cacti. Surprisingly, this harsh environment supports more birds per acre than wetter, richer areas. Found in the dry scrub areas were 1,500 birds of all kinds per acre, compared to 400-500 individuals of all species present in richer, wetter habitats. Wintering warbler companions of the Kirtland's warblers were **Cape May, palm, prairie, and yellow warblers**. For the first time it is being learned where the wintering birds are, where and how they are foraging (probing in the bark of bushes in the manner of black and white warblers), and what types of food they require. Plans for this winter include continuing study with the assistance of Sykes and others. The researchers hope to fit six of the birds with radio transmitters, the best tool available for tracking them. Harold Mayfield, who for long years has studied Kirtland's warblers, said: "In three months we have learned more about their winter ecology than we had learned throughout the entire 20th century!"

SIX CALIFORNIA CONDORS REMAIN IN THE WILD, of which four are males, according to Dr. Mike Scott of the **California Condor Research Center**. Twenty-one birds, 8 males and 13 females, are in captivity in zoos at the present