

July 19, 1955

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Dear Van:

At the risk of filling your mail basket today, I am going to outline an idea that has been simmering in my mind for several weeks. Please tell me what you think of it.

I am wondering if we ought to try to stir up interest in Lansing in the management of a reserve for the Kirtland's Warbler. I have in mind setting aside an area of otherwise nearly worthless land, probably in Crawford or Oscoda counties, and possibly as small as one to four sections, where pines and other conifers be encouraged by various means to grow in the configuration we believe most favorable for this purpose. For example, the trees could be maintained at, say, four different size levels in different portions of the reserve. The plantings, of course, would not be solid as when done for forestry purposes, but would inter-spere clearings according to our understanding of the preference of this bird.

I would expect that the planting efforts and the clearing efforts would be done by present forestry crews, but the routine maintenance would require little or no care.

One of the aspects that might be hardest to sell to the forestry people would be the destruction of trees at the maximum size for Kirtlands. They are too small for pulp and probably too large for Christmas trees - although it is interesting to note the preference in Christmas trees swinging to red pine in recent years.

I am sure the arguments for doing something of this kind will be apparent to you. One of the strongest of them it seems to me is an appeal to State pride. After all, the Kirtland's Warbler is uniquely Michigan's bird. Already, dozens of people travel long distances each year to see the bird. Conceivably the day will come when hundreds of people will do so each summer, particularly if the opportunity were publicized. It is one of the authentic attractions of Northern Michigan to a growing number of people.

With increasingly effective means of fighting forest fires, it is conceivable that suitable breeding territory may be pressed to the vanishing point at some future date.

*Several letters written to J.V. on this subject. I don't know if you have seen them. H.M.*

