



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

APR 13 1972

Dear Mr. Bartell:

This responds to your letter regarding the Kirtland warbler. I agree with you that nesting birds may be unduly disturbed by inquisitive people. We know, too, that sometimes those people most interested in an animal may, by intrusion, unknowingly constitute a threat to its welfare.

Evidence with which you are probably familiar indicates that two of the more obvious problems with the Kirtland warbler are nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds and a shortage of suitable jack pine habitat. We had not been aware heretofore of a problem caused by too many people visiting the nesting area.

I am bringing your concern to the attention of people who are directly concerned with management of the Kirtland warbler. We are not inclined to take unilateral action in closing or limiting access to the Kirtland area for two reasons: Most of the land on which the warblers nest is owned by the U.S. Forest Service and the State of Michigan, and the Department of the Interior has no authority for its management. Secondly, I would not want to deny public access to the nesting area so long as no harm is done to the warblers themselves. You can be sure that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service, the agencies which are most concerned with the protection of the warbler nesting area, will not allow excessive public access that would threaten the birds.

We hope to see, in the near future, a full-scale management program for the Kirtland warbler, with assistance from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in this Department. The good work of the State Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service is the key to the success of that program. This year the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Audubon Society, will attempt to control cowbirds in the Kirtland nesting area in an effort to relieve this form of critical competition.

Supervisor, Uron National Forest

January 31, 1972

John Byelich - Lansing

G. W. Irvine - Cadillac

Dear John and Bill:

One of the matters left hanging fire at the last Kirtland's Warbler committee meeting in Ann Arbor was how much the Michigan DNR and the National Forests were willing to put into the Kirtland preservation efforts next summer in materials and manpower to build and service the traps. Have you talked this matter over with your own administration yet?

A part of the program for the Michigan Audubon meeting at Alpena on March 17-18 (actually, 1:30 p.m., March 18) is being set aside for a consideration of the Kirtland's Warbler. We ought to have something to say by that time. I will be there and hope you will too.

Since you may not have been talking with each other about this lately, I suggest you each cover the other in replying to me.

Best regards.

Sincerely yours,

Harold F. Mayfield

9235 River Road
Waterville, Ohio 43566

P.S. My formal report on last June's census will appear in the Auk in April, but reprints will not be available to us probably before May.

Soon I will be writing all of last year's captains to ask if they are willing to participate again in a census in June, 1973. I don't think we need to search again a lot of the outlying areas that did not seem to hold promise last year, do you? We can just ask last year's crew to pinpoint spots that did not have warblers but looked good and therefore ought to be examined again. Any other suggestions?

Regional Director WS
Twin Cities, Minnesota

February 4, 1972

Assistant State Supervisor
Lansing, Michigan

Kirtland's Warbler Management Program

The Kirtland's Warbler Advisory Committee met on November 9, 1971. The purpose of the meeting was to establish an objective management program for the Kirtland's Warbler. It was determined that the United States Forest Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources programs for providing additional and maintaining nesting habitat were progressing adequately. It was then decided that the main priority for enhancing Kirtland's warbler populations was to reduce cowbird parasitism during the nesting season. Earlier data show a significant reduction of parasitism when cowbirds are trapped on the nesting areas.

I have met with personnel from the Michigan DNR and we have established a tentative list of responsibilities for a trapping program.

The KWAC has established detailed data on cost and logistics for a cowbird trapping program. It was felt a total of 15 traps would be needed on the seven major nesting areas. Two traps are presently usable, so a total of 13 will need to be constructed. Estimated costs for trap materials is \$70/cage or \$910 for 13 traps. Michigan DNR has lumber and hardware available and has agreed to build the traps. Sunflower seeds have proven to be the most effective bait; it is estimated that 300 pounds of seeds are needed per trap per season, estimated cost \$12 per 100 or \$360 per season for 15 traps. An undetermined smaller amount will be needed for water containers. Costs of these materials may be absorbed by several of the organizations involved in the KWAC.

It was agreed that the operational part of the trapping program should be from May 1 through July 15. The cost of labor to run the traps will be the major portion of the program. It was felt that two men would be necessary to handle daily trap tending because the areas are separated by considerable distances. If local persons were hired to tend traps, an estimated cost at \$3.00 an hour would be \$50.00 per day, or \$3,750.00 a season. If Division of Wildlife Services personnel were used, expenses excluding mileage and salaries would vary between \$10.00 and \$10.50 per day. The Michigan DNR has a bunk house at their Mio office which would be available to our people tending traps. This type of arrangement could double our expense man-days. Members of the KWAC were approached concerning this type of arrangement where Wildlife Services personnel would tend traps and were in agreement. They did indicate, however, that they may *have*

Feb. 4, 1972

a representative who lives in the nesting area who would be interested in tending traps. This could be worked out in the final plans.

Presently, this program hinges on the availability of money for labor. If \$1,000.00 were available to this district for expense, we could proceed with present plans. These monies would cover per diem expenses for two persons if lodging were provided by the State. Mileage and salaries could be covered by district offices participating in the program.

Hopefully, a decision concerning the availability of these monies can be made in the very near future so we can proceed with program plans.

William F. Shabo

WFS:lb

