

1158 Humboldt, #7  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

18 March 1983

Dear Dr. Mayfield:

I met you in 1980 at a conference on censusing birds in Asilomar, California. You probably donot remember me, although I questioned you at length one evening about Kirtland's Warblers. That is why I am writing. My wife and I plan on being in the Twin Cities area in June for a wedding(a friend), and when free of that we plan on driving up to Kirtland's Warbler country to see the bird.

Can you tell me the best place to find them, and some tips on problems related to disturbance? I noticed some information on finding them in Pettingill's newest edition of the eastern bird finding guide. Do you have a copy of it? If so, is that information sufficient? Any information you can pass on will be appreciated.

While browsing through a book on Birds of the Bahamas(1975) recently and was struck by the similarity between the Olive-capped Warbler (Dendroica pityophila) and the Kirtland's Warbler. Assuming that the ancestral stock is common to both species, do you think that the Olive-capped Warbler's evolution resulted <sup>from</sup> lack of functional genes in wintering immature Kirtland's Warblers that did not permit them to return to their natal areas to begin breeding, thus forming a nucleus of an isolated population necessary for speciation? I would be curious about your feelings on this. Perhaps it has been suggested and in detail in some publication of which I am not aware? I find it interesting that James Bond, in his book on Birds of the West Indies(second ed.1981), placed the Kirtland's Warbler just before the Palm Warbler and the Olive-capped Warbler just before the Pine Warbler, with some phylogenetic separation between the Olive-backed/Kirtland's Warbler. How do you feel about that sequence? Have you seen the Olive-capped Warbler? Is the similarity to the Kirtland's Warbler real in terms of habitat, song, other types of behavior? I understand that the Olive-capped Warbler prefers pine barrens as well.

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours truly,



Jon Winter

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Santa Rosa, CA 95404

18 March 1983

March 25, 1984

Mr. Jon Winter  
1158 Humboldt, #7  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Dear Mr. Winter:

The Kirtland's Warbler is very easy to see, and the chances are overwhelming that you will see and hear several at any time in the month of June. However, all parties into the nesting grounds (The party may consist of just you and your wife.) are escorted by a guide. The hiking required will be minimal. That is, you see the bird virtually from the roadside. The enclosed sheet explains the system.

If you are interested in exploring the literature on the Kirtland's Warbler, I strongly advise that you get a copy of Huber's bibliography described in the attached review.

I have no real inspiration about the taxonomy or phylogeny of the Kirtland's Warbler. I believe all of us have long suspected it is a close relative of the Pine Warbler. Also I have talked with James Bond some years ago about its probable close relationship with pityophila in the Bahamas, but I have no clear understanding of this situation. This is a difficult question because the warblers--indeed, most of the passerines--are very closely related to one another. Take off a few feathers and many warbler species would be very difficult or impossible to tell apart. Such matters as song and habitat may be convergent features rather than ancestral traits. So, you see, I do not even have a good speculation to offer on your question about the Kirtland's relatives and origins. However, if you would enjoy reading further on this general question, you may want to lay hands on the 1964 LIVING BIRD, where Robert Mengel published "The probable history of species formation in some northern wood warblers" 3:9-44. On page 30, he discusses the Kirtland's and Olive Capped Warblers briefly, and others at much greater length.

Good luck.

Sincerely,

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours truly,

Jon Winter

