

Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team

Care of: Huron-Manistee National Forests, 1755 S. Mitchell,
Cadillac, MI 49601

February 13, 1996

Mr. Bruce Babbitt, Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
Main Interior Building
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Babbitt:

The Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team (Team) and its public and private cooperators are deeply concerned about potential developments that could negatively affect a program given national recognition by your visit to Mio, Michigan in June, 1994. It is the understanding of the Team that budget cuts imposed by Congress on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) may be allocated disproportionately to Service Regions by the Service Director. We understand that the Service's East Lansing Field Office would face serious budgetary difficulties that could affect the Service's ability to maintain its longstanding commitment to the cooperative Kirtland's warbler recovery effort.

The Recovery Team recognizes two key actions necessary for the survival and recovery of the Kirtland's warbler: 1) habitat management and 2) brown-headed cowbird control. Kirtland's warbler productivity prior to initiation of cowbird control in 1972 was less than one young per pair per year, with nearly 70% of nests parasitized. Service data show that the cowbird population returns to normal levels each year following the previous year's control. In the absence of cowbird control, productivity of warblers can be expected to drop immediately to pre-1972 levels. This level of reproduction is not sufficient to maintain the warbler population, given its documented annual rates of survival and mortality. Projections indicate that the warbler population would drop from its 1995 level of 765 pairs to about 100 pairs in 7 years without cowbird control. It is clear that the endangered Kirtland's warbler would not survive without cowbird control. This would be true even with the intense and costly efforts for habitat restoration and management by the U.S. Forest Service and Michigan DNR. Elimination or curtailment of the Service cowbird control program "would adversely affect" the warbler and would in time nullify the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars for habitat management.

Kenneth Rex Ennis
U. S. Forest Service

Philip W. Huber
U. S. Forest Service

John R. Probst
U. S. Forest Service

Thomas F. Weise
Mich. Dept. of Natural Resources

Gary Boushelle
Mich. Dept. of Natural Resources

William J. Mahalak
Mich. Dept. of Natural Resources

Ronald L. Refsnider
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Michael E. DeCapita
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cameron B. Kepler
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Service's public tour for viewing Kirtland's warbler may not be biologically necessary for the specie's survival, but is vital in other important ways. The tour helps educate the public, meets public demand to see a rare songbird otherwise not accessible, and provides economic benefit to rural communities. The tour is a longstanding benefit that the public and the communities have come to expect and depend upon it. Elimination of the tour will likely have a negative effect not only on the Kirtland's warbler recovery effort, but on the overall endangered species program.

The Recovery Team strongly encourages you to make every possible effort to help the Service meet its Kirtland's warbler recovery responsibilities. The Kirtland's warbler was one of the first species listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The cooperative recovery effort by many partners, often held up as a national example, has been underway for more that 25 years. This program has realized its greatest success in the last 3 years. This program has generated increasing local goodwill and support for the endangered species program, but we believe it has national significance as well. The Service's role is critical to the continued success of the recovery effort. Planning and preparation necessary for the Service's activities this year have been put on hold and are well behind schedule, but the arrival of cowbirds and tourists in northern Michigan this spring will occur as usual.

The Recovery Team looks forward to your response to our concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth Rex Ennis".

KENNETH REX ENNIS, Team Leader
Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team

cc: Regional Director, FWS, Twin Cities, MN
Director, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Regional Forester, Eastern Region, U.S. Forest Service
Forest Supervisor, Huron-Manistee National Forests



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
1 Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056

IN REPLY REFER TO

FWS/AES-TE/112363

March 28, 1996

Mr. Kenneth Rex Ennis
Team Leader
Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team
Huron Manistee National Forests
1755 S. Mitchell
Cadillac, Michigan 49601

Dear Mr. Ennis:

This is in reply to your February 13, 1996, letter to Honorable Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of the Department of Interior, concerning potential budget impacts on recovery efforts for the Kirtland's warbler in Michigan.

At this time, although the realities of receiving our Fiscal Year 1996 funding through multiple continuing resolutions makes a firm answer impossible, it appears that funding for our Region 3 endangered species program will be reduced approximately 25 percent from the Fiscal Year 1995 level. This reduction would be the result of Congressional actions as well as reallocation of funds within the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

This degree of reduction would severely limit funds available for intensive management and outreach efforts such as those targeting the Kirtland's warbler. Additionally, such reductions would impact staffing levels at Ecological Services field offices. Consequently, since October 1995, this Region has been undertaking voluntary internal staff, workload, and organizational restructuring steps to limit impacts as far as possible. We must emphasize, however, that until final Fiscal Year 1996 budget figures are available, the exact level of impacts to the Kirtland's warbler recovery program is uncertain.

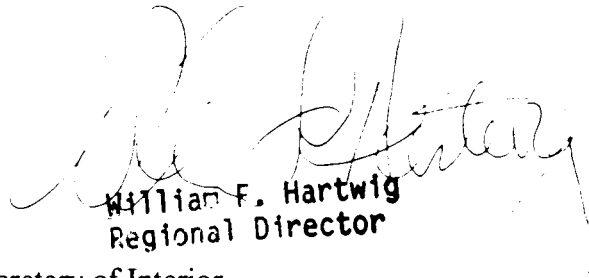
Let us assure you that we share your concerns about the proposed budget cuts, and that in this Region we will do everything we can to carefully examine our priorities and apply our limited funds in the most effective way.

Mr. Kenneth Rex Ennis

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Thank you for your efforts as leader of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team; our staff has indicated the highest regard for your work, and that of the team, in the name of the warbler. Together, we hope that we can make it through these difficult budget times and preserve this most valuable program.

Sincerely,



William F. Hartwig
Regional Director

cc: Honorable Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of Interior
Director, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Regional Forester, Eastern Region, US Forest Service
Forest Supervisor, Huron-Manistee National Forests

United States	Forest	Huron-Manistee	616-775-2421 (VOICE)
Department of	Service	National Forests	616-775-5551 (FAX)
Agriculture		1755 S. Mitchell St.	616-775-3183 (TTY)
		Cadillac, MI 49601	

"CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE"

Reply to: 2670

Date: April 5, 1996

Mr. John P. Debo, Jr., Superintendent
Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area
15610 Vaughn Road
Brecksville, OH 44141

Dear Mr. Debo:

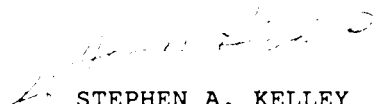
The Huron National Forest and parts of northern lower Michigan are the breeding grounds for one of the rarest neotropical songbirds in North America, the federally endangered Kirtland's warbler, Dendroica kirtlandii. Each year since 1971, a census of the population has been completed under the guideline of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Plan. To complete the census, a highly skilled group of individuals is required to identify and locate each singing male Kirtland's warbler. Jim Bull's skills and assistance in accomplishing the census is needed. We request your consideration in assisting us in meeting our census requirements this summer.

Jim's skills and capabilities to accomplish this task are unique and he is one of the few remaining census members that are veterans at this. He began assisting the Forest in 1977 with a group that many are no longer able to participate due to health and age factors. Jim is also one of the very few individuals who are well acquainted with lesser known vocalizations of the Kirtland's warblers whisper song and chatter call. People who possess all these skills are highly sought. They assist us in being able to cover the required areas within the specified timeframes, make a very accurate population estimate, and allow us to train additional individuals for future censuses.

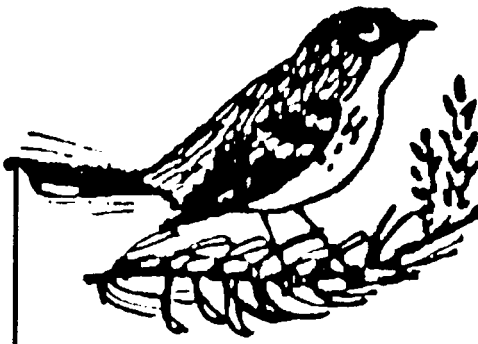
Jim has been a mainstay in our census program. We are requesting that he be detailed to the Huron-Manistee National Forests so that we can utilize his skills again this year. The Recovery Team has set the dates of June 6 through June 15 for the 1996 census. We could even utilize Jim for a portion of this period. Because of federal budget cuts, we are unable to pay all of the salary, travel, and per diem costs during this period. However there is the possibility of covering a minimal amount of the detail costs.

We see this as a great opportunity to extend the interagency cooperation between the National Park Service and Forest Service. It would further exemplify the ongoing cooperation between multiple agencies such as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Military Affairs, and other highly skilled volunteers.

Sincerely,


STEPHEN A. KELLEY
Forest Supervisor

cc:Mio Ranger District
Kenneth Rex Ennis



Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team

Care of: Huron-Manistee National Forests, 1755 S. Mitchell,
Cadillac, MI 49601

April 29, 1996

William F. Spinner, Forest Supervisor
Hiawatha National Forest
2727 North Lincoln Road
Escanaba, MI 49829

Dear Mr. Spinner:

The Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team (Team) continues to be extremely interested in the recent occurrence of Kirtland's warblers, *Dendroica kirtlandii*, in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan, including sightings of females in 1995. At the 1995 summer meeting we learned that eight male Kirtland's warblers were found in four counties of the UP. This level of occupancy represents a continued increase from two in 1994 and one in 1993, as predicted from population increases in the main breeding range. Additional efforts by UP biologists during the summer determined that at least two mated pairs were present and nesting likely occurred. This is the first well-documented occurrence of mated Kirtland's warblers in the UP and the first ever found outside the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. It highlights the continued growth of the Kirtland's warbler population which reached a record high of 766 males estimated in 1995. The Kirtland's warbler is clearly responding to ecosystem management practices. Much of the recent population response was related to wildfire created habitat, yet the 1995 census found 439 singing males (57 percent of the total) in areas specifically planted and managed for warbler habitat. The Team recognizes that challenges remain to ensure adequate nesting habitat occurs within appropriate ecosystems if we are to meet and sustain the recovery plan goals.

The presence of this endangered songbird in the UP presents additional opportunities to incorporate its habitat requirements into your xeric ecosystem management prescriptions for timber, wildlife and recreation. These objectives can be achieved through the application of ecosystem management principles with small or moderate alteration to existing practices while continuing to provide benefits to a wide variety of wildlife, plants and humans. We recognize

Kenneth Rex Ennis
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John R. Probst
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Cameron B. Kepler
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

that the UP contains a substantial amount of xeric systems located across a variety of ownerships and that an existing group of partners exists to address these ecosystem management opportunities through Eastern UP Partner in Ecosystem Management (EUPPEM). As is the case in the Lower Peninsula, a cooperative and collaborative ecosystem management approach is needed to ensure a sustained and coordinated habitat condition across a broad landscape.

The xeric systems in the UP could represent an important component to the Kirtland's warbler recovery efforts. They would provide additional breeding habitat, they would act as potential buffers against catastrophic events in the Lower Peninsula, they would help maintain species genetic diversity, and they would provide habitat to mitigate habitat loss from global warming. The Team is encouraged by the natural immigration of the Kirtland's warbler to the UP and believes that its habitat requirement can be met there within the context of xeric ecosystem management. We encourage you to work with the Team to ensure that these habitats and their future populations become sources of Kirtland's warblers for sustained periods of time and not act as sinks which would decrease population levels.

The Team recognizes that two key actions are necessary for the survival and recovery of the Kirtland's warbler: 1) provide adequate breeding habitat and 2) control brown-headed cowbirds. breeding habitat and cowbird parasitism have been the primary limiting factors affecting Kirtland's warbler recovery. The population response that occurred in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan during the last eight years clearly reflects this. There has been a greater than 20% per year growth in the population during this eight year period, after having a stable population of around 200 pair for a 20 year period. Management opportunities in the UP need to recognize these two factors. A large landscape approach using a hierarchical classification system, including pre-European settlement maps, existing landsat imagery, and ecological classification systems, could be used to identify potential Kirtland's warbler habitat. Within these areas, managers should address habitat patch size, adjacency and connectivity of habitat, and suitable tree stocking densities. Recent research with Kirtland's warbler habitat in the Lower Peninsula shows that size of breeding habitat affects the age in which it is first occupied, densities of warbler pairs, and longevity of occupancy. Large areas greater than 500 acres appear to best meet these requirements.

Kirtland's warblers generally do not occupy breeding habitat until it becomes 6-8 years old and then it becomes unsuitable after 18-24 years. Managers must also consider adjacency and connectivity opportunities within an area. Kirtland's warblers and their offspring return to the same patches of habitat year after year, thus requiring the consideration of sustained habitat within areas over long periods of time. Within these sites dense tree stocking is critical to successful breeding. Stem densities generally greater than needed for normal Jack pine reforestation are required for Kirtland's warblers. Current jack pine reforestation efforts for Kirtland's warbler include stocking densities of 1600 trees per acre, with 75% of the area

stocked, leaving many small medium openings scattered across the area. In addition to adequate breeding habitat, control of brown-headed cowbirds is critical. Prior to initiation of cowbird control less than one young per pair per year was produced, with nearly 70% of nests parasitized. This level of productivity is not sufficient to maintain the warbler population given its documented annual rates of survival and mortality. With cowbird control, nest parasitism is very low and levels of production are nearly three (3) young per pair per year. This production level has been adequate to assure survival and allow the population to expand as available habitat increased. We endorse efforts within the UP to implement cowbird control in areas occupied by Kirtland's warblers and to continue census efforts for Kirtland's so that you will know where to implement these control measures. At this time, based upon the number of Kirtland's warblers, we are not recommending implementing any area closures as is being done in lower Michigan.

The Recovery Team views the continued existence, the increasing number of individuals occupying suitable breeding habitat, and the documented occurrence of two mated pairs in the UP as very encouraging signs for future Kirtland's warbler occupancy. We encourage and support your consideration and implementation of Kirtland's warbler habitat needs into your broader ecosystem management strategies within xeric systems in the UP. Through these efforts, we believe that additional areas will support warblers and contribute to the successful recovery of an endangered species found only in Michigan and ecosystems largely influenced by humans.

We continue to be available to assist UP managers in understanding these ecosystem management strategies needs and invite interested parties to view conditions and management strategies being implemented in the Lower Peninsula. Through cooperative efforts such as these, we believe that a more rapid and successful recovery effort for the Kirtland's warbler will be achieved, while addressing a wide variety of ecosystem values.

Sincerely,



KENNETH REX ENNIS

Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, Team Leader

cc: E.Meadows

F.Opolka

J.Theide, MDNR

G.Burgoyne, MDNR

Ottawa National Forest

Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Ottawa
National
Forest

2100 E. Cloverland Drive
Ironwood, Michigan 49938
(906) 932-1330 FAX 932-0122
TTY (906) 932-0301

File Code: 2600

Date: June 12, 1996

Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team
Huron-Manistee National Forest
1755 S. Mitchell Street
Cadillac, Michigan 49601

Dear KW Recovery Team:

We have received your letter of April 29, 1996 and pledge our support for continuing the recovery efforts for the Kirtland's warbler in the Upper Peninsula. Enclosed please find a report from one of our biologists who confirmed the presence of a singing KW male on Michigan's Copper Country State Forest within 1/2 mile of the Ottawa. We will continue to search for KW in this area in the future and will report to you and MDNR, Baraga, any new findings.

The Ottawa is presently planning jack pine salvage sales in the area and will facilitate and encourage your participation in the Environmental Assessment for these projects. We will not be revisiting the known nest site, and we will not be promoting visits by others to this site. Please contact Jerry Edde at (906) 667-0261 if you have further questions.

Sincerely

PHYLLIS GREEN
Forest Supervisor

je

Enclosure

cc: Rob Aho, MDNR Baraga
J. Edde, USFS, Bessemer



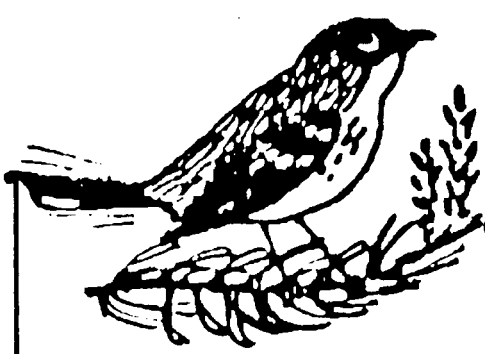
Kirtland Warbler Sighting, June 1, 1996

On 6/1/96, Jerry Edde, Tom and Joyce Ellenbecker found a Kirtland's warbler singing male at Tn.49, Rg.34, Sec 30. We had traveled .3 miles along the pipeline south of FR 2245. As soon as we got out of the car, we heard the singing male just east of the pipeline. We followed the sound into the jack pine stand, but the warbler just seemed to be moving away from us. We challenged once with the tape but the bird did not move closer. After returning to the vehicle, we drove .2 miles further south and again, as soon as we got out of the vehicle, we heard a singing male. At first I thought this might be a second male, but after discussing this with Rob Aho later in the week, I decided this was probably the same bird. This time we challenged the bird with the recorded song without leaving the pipeline and this bird came quite close. Tom Ellenbecker got him in the binoculars at about 50 feet and I got to see the bird as it flew across, then back, over the pipeline corridor, apparently looking for the (recorded) "bird".

We traveled .2 mi further down the pipeline to where the young jack pine abuts a mature jack pine stand and in a small opening there we found a cowbird trap with 12-14 cowbirds in it. There were no other birds in the trap. The trap was signed MDNR with Rob Aho as the contact person. In the same area we found brown thrashers, Nashville warblers, bluebirds, and flickers were very common.

One of the Nesbit Bird Census plots, #68, is nearby on Forest Service Lands (the above birds and trap are located on Michigan State Lands). At site #68, one of the groups, after listening to the tapes later, believes there may have been a singing male at site #68. We should be alert to the possibility of KW nesting pairs throughout this area during the BBC and at other times. There is some excellent KW nesting habitat on Forest Service lands in the area, however, these stands are all limited to <40 acres. According to the KW Recovery Team, larger areas of 500 acres or more are preferred.

Jerry W. Edde
6/6/96



Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team

Care of: Huron-Manistee National Forests, 1755 S. Mitchell,
Cadillac, MI 49601

June 18, 1996

Stephen J. Sjogren
Hiawathia National Forest
Manistique Ranger District
499 East Lake Shore Drive
Manistique, MI 49854

Dear Mr. Sjogren:

We are encouraged to learn about the number of male Kirtland's warblers being located in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan this year. It appears that occupancy of specific areas is recurring. Your letter requests the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team to approve of additional monitoring to determine matedness, breeding success, and banding of individual UP Kirtland's warblers. The specific area identified in the request is 8-Mile, located 20 miles north of Manistique. It is also our understanding that Carol Bocetti, National Biological Service, has offered to conduct the banding and assist with the additional monitoring efforts.

The Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team was surveyed and supports these efforts to gain additional information about Kirtland's warbler in the UP. This support extends to efforts related to banding male Kirtland's warblers in this area and to assist in determining if males are mated. To date, we have not discussed the protocol and methods for determining breeding success and are not addressing this issue at this time. Further discussion should occur relating to this aspect of information needs before any actions are undertaken. The protocol for data collection being applied in lower Michigan should be used for work in the UP also. We recognize the data from this effort will assist managers and researchers in their continued evaluation of the Kirtland's Warbler recovery effort. It will also broaden our perspective on colonization and dispersal patterns.

Kenneth Rex Ennis
U. S. Forest Service

Philip W. Huber
U. S. Forest Service

John R. Probst
U. S. Forest Service

Thomas F. Weise
Mich. Dept. of Natural Resources

Gary Boushelle
Mich. Dept. of Natural Resources

William J. Mahalak
Mich. Dept. of Natural Resources

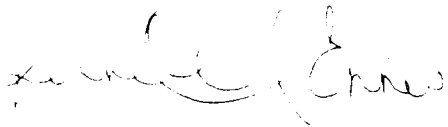
Ronald L. Refsnider
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Michael E. DeCapita
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Cameron B. Kepler
U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

You should contact Carol Bocetti and make the necessary arrangement to conduct these activities. If we can be of further assistance, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth Rex Ennis".

KENNETH REX ENNIS
Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, Team Leader

cc:Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team
C.Bocetti, NBS

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Hiawatha National Forest
2727 N. Lincoln Road
Escanaba, Michigan 49829

Date: June 19, 1996

File Code: 2600

Subject: Xeric Ecosystems/Kirtland's Warbler

To: District Rangers

By now, you should have all seen the April 29, 1996 letter from the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team recommending actions to perpetuate xeric ecosystems and in particular to improve habitat for Kirtland's warbler on the Forest. The Team believes the xeric systems in the Upper Peninsula could represent an important component to the Kirtland's warbler recovery effort, providing buffers against catastrophic events in the Lower Peninsula and habitat to mitigate loss from global warming, and helping to maintain genetic diversity. The Recovery Team noted that many of the individuals located during the 1995 census in the Lower Peninsula were found in areas specifically planted and managed for warbler habitat, but believe Upper Peninsula habitat requirements can perhaps best be met in the broader context of xeric ecosystem management.

The Forest biologists are currently working on incorporating the Recovery Team's recommendations into the program of work. Three cowbird traps provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have been placed on the Forest and are being monitored for activity. Hiawatha biologists are also in the fourth consecutive year of population census on suitable Forest Kirtland's warbler habitat. In addition, biologists are developing a proposal to describe and map xeric ecosystems across the Forest (incorporating information from other large landowners across the Upper Peninsula) and to develop a conservation strategy for rare species of fire-regulated systems. This work is intended to tie to and compliment the ongoing Great Lakes Assessment and provide information directly into the Forest Plan revision process.

Given the anticipated Kirtland's warbler habitat shortfall in Lower Michigan shortly after the turn of the century, it is critical that the Hiawatha understand our role in the recovery effort and be prepared to implement appropriate management strategies. I encourage you to review the Recovery Team letter with your biologists to determine how the recommendations may best be applied to your district. In addition, we will be discussing Kirtland's warbler recovery and the Forest xeric ecosystem analysis proposal at an upcoming Leadership Team meeting.

Page Two
District Rangers

In the interim, when planning large projects in xeric systems, please take some time to consider spatial and temporal species requirements and the effects of management activities on a landscape scale, as we discussed at the recent Monitoring and Evaluation meeting.

Questions regarding Kirtland's Warbler or management of xeric systems should be directed to Steve Sjogren at St. Ignace.

/s/William F. Spinner

WILLIAM F. SPINNER
Forest Supervisor

HAROLD E. MAYFIELD
1614 GRONLUND CIRCLE
TOLEDO, OHIO 43614

June 25, 1996

Kenneth Rex Fennis
USDA-Forest Service
Huron-Manistee National Forests
1755 South Mitchell Street
Cadillac, MI 49601

Dear Rex,

I regret that I will not be attending the Kirtland meeting on July 11 in Mio. Reluctantly, I have decided the trip and the meeting attendance requires a little more effort than I can muster. Actually, I am not as bad off as that sounds, and I keep thinking that the next meeting will be possible for me; so I hope you will keep me on your mailing list.

Also I always look forward to your minutes and other mailings. Of course, my greatest regret is not seeing you and my other good friends of the Kirtland crowd.

Please note my new address. My wife and I moved this spring to a retirement village, where our "villa" looks out into a view of the swamp forest and a meandering stream. Also we have no grass to mow or maintenance problems.

I am holding my breath to hear the report on the annual census.

With warmest regards to you and the rest of the Kirtland crew,

Sincerely,

Good news!

We received permission from regional office last week to hire 4 temporary employees to conduct cowbird trapping AND the tour according to the plan I described in a 3/21 message to you. One temp will start tomorrow, 4/11. Jean Richter is beginning to set up CB traps this week. As I mentioned, with one less temp than we have had in the past, we'll have to make some alterations in how we run traps; specifically, we will not be able to check every trap daily. For the first 2 - 3 weeks, traps may be checked daily, since we can use the tour guide as a trapper. We intend to operate a full tour schedule from May 15 to July 4 as in the past.

Our ability to conduct this program comes at a cost in our region. Seven people in our division throughout the region were given directed reassignments in late March. One of those was Bob Adair, our regional endangered species chief. 5 of the 7 are field office bios who will have to relocate, 2, including Bob, are regional office who move to fisheries jobs in the same RO. This office will lose Jean Richter in early May, no one in this office was directed since Jean is leaving voluntarily. The loss of Bob Adair is painful for our already bare bones T/E program in this region. But these reassignments help free up money for field programs such as KW.

There is still a possibility that some assistance from HMNF checking outlying traps, ie Iosco Co. would be helpful. We can discuss later.

Steve, I haven't confirmed with Jean, but I believe cowbird traps were sent to the UP yesterday with Jim Wethy of Seney. We will talk soon about setting them up. It might be worthwhile for you to consider coming down to Grayling area to see how a trap is set up in the field.

Thanks to all of you for your support, especially Tom and the DNR for providing funds to get new traps built!

Looks like we've "dodged a bullet" for this year, although we are still on continuing resolution and anything could happen.

I'll keep you posted on any new developments.

Mike