



Michigan Audubon Society

PRESS RELEASE

2-4-64

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MIDLAND- If the Kirtland's warbler becomes Michigan's official bird, it will be unique among the feathered representatives of the 50 states.

It would, the Michigan Audubon Society notes, be the only warbler so honored. For the uninitiated, warblers are tiny but bright-colored insect eaters which have been dubbed "the butterflies of the bird world" by famed naturalist Roger Tory Peterson.

Too, the Kirtland's warbler would be the smallest of all the state birds. One of these friendly songsters from Michigan's jackpine country weighs only about a half ounce.

But it would not be the rarest on the list. The official choice of Hawaii is the Nene goose (pronounced nay-nay), a specialized cousin of the Canada goose which lives only high on the volcanic slopes of the 50th state. There are just 135 Nene geese on two of the Hawaiian islands, while an estimated 1,000 Kirtland's warblers exist today.

That's about 30 pounds of Michigan warblers, equal to the weight of four of the Pacific honkers.

State Audubon Society officials have proposed that the Kirtland's warbler replace the robin as the official bird of Michigan. It nests only in this state, they emphasize, and the world's only monument to a songbird stands on the Oscoda County courthouse lawn at Mio, in the heart of the famous bird's territory.

-more-

