



NORTH CENTRAL REGION NEWS

For Immediate Release

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MICHIGAN COUNT OF KIRTLAND'S WARBLER POPULATION ENCOURAGING

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced that its 1980 census of the Kirtland's warbler population in Michigan was up 30 pairs from last year's census. The inventory revealed 242 pairs of Kirtland's warblers in the six-county survey.

The Kirtland's warbler, a Federally endangered species, is dependent on Michigan's jackpine habitat for nesting. The tiny bird winters in the Bahamas and returns to Michigan each year to nest.

Thomas Sheldrake, an endangered species biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in Minneapolis, said that although the 1980 census was good news, the Kirtland's warbler population is still precariously scant in total numbers.

"Our cooperative goal for the Kirtland's warbler is 1,000 pairs," he said. "This target population level can only be achieved by increases in the nesting habitat."

Sheldrake said biologists conclude that it will take roughly 36,000 acres of prime nesting habitat to achieve a population of 1,000 pairs. Currently the warbler population in Michigan has around 17,000 acres of nesting habitat.

The FWS said the recent Mack Lake fire did not affect the warbler population. The birds simply left the area for other sites when a large scale fire swept through the Mack Lake area.

The breakdown of the DNR's 1980 census by county is reflected in the following table. The figures are based on counts of singing males. It is generally acknowledged that the singing male has a mate, hence the count of singing males is an estimate of pairs in an area.

Kirtland's Warbler Census Results

Crawford County	93	Singing Males
Oscoda County	58	" "
Iosco County	3	" "
Roscommon County	4	" "
Kalkaska County	38	" "
Ogemaw County	46	" "
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