

Habitat Utilization of Post-Breeding Kirtland's Warblers

The objective of this study - a pilot study - was to describe the habitat utilized by Kirtland's warblers during the post-breeding period. We were only able to spend a total of 27 person days (actually "person partial days") from the beginning of August to early September, 1982. Methods used to locate Kirtland's included "spishing", following black-capped chickadees, and simply being within territories of Kirtland's warblers as observed from census work.

We checked 8 different geographic areas but concentrated on the Damon and St. Helen areas because of our familiarity with these areas. On 20 of the 27 "person partial days" we located one or more Kirtland's warblers, and our most consistent success was through the month of August. Some days we were able to locate as many as 7 individual Kirtland's. By September, the frequency of locating the birds dropped. We did have the impression of a peak of migrational activity during the third week of August.

Besides Kirtland's warblers, the "spishing" attracted at least 32 other bird species and at least 1 mammal (a young coyote). Kirtland's warblers were commonly seen in association with black-capped chickadees and least flycatchers, and often with yellow-rumped, Nashville, and black-and-white warblers and chipping sparrows.

We located Kirtland's warbler adults, both males and females, and immatures within known breeding territories. In several areas, even through the month of August, juveniles were found in association with adults. We heard vocalization in the form of low volume "chirps" between adults and juveniles many times during our field work.

Even with the limited time spent on this project last year, it was encouraging to find that we could, fairly consistently and with minimal disturbance, locate Kirtland's warblers during the post-breeding period.

Other
species,
not K.W.

Increased effort, incorporating the use of tape recordings of Kirtland's warbler "chirps", and the calls of chickadees, screech owls, and possibly other species, should improve our efficiency in locating post-breeding Kirtland's warblers again this year. Placing telemeters on individuals of some of the species Kirtland's frequently associate with would also be helpful. Besides providing needed information about habitat use by post-breeding Kirtland's warblers, these techniques might also have application in efforts to locate Kirtland's in the Bahamas.

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