KW NOTES

A Summary of Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Efforts

Tour Information

Free guided tours to Kirtland's warbler nesting areas will leave from the Holiday Inn in Grayling, and from the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Office in Mio.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Grayling Tour Schedule
Tour Origin: Holiday Inn, Grayling
Dates: May 15 - July 4
Days and Times: Daily, 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Contact: (517) 351-2555

U.S. Forest Service - Mio Tour Schedule
Tour Origin: U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station, Mio
Dates: May 15 - July 3
Days and Times: Weekends and Holidays - 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays - 7:00 a.m. only
No tours will be offered on Mondays or Tuesdays.
Contact: (517) 826-3252. Groups of five or more should call for reservations. Groups can also arrange for special tours.

Information/Education

Third Annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival

The Kirtland's Warbler Festival is now a regional event. Expanded from its original base in the Mio-Fairview area of Oscoda County, the Festival now encompasses activities in a four-county area with Kirtland Community College serving as the focal point for the event. Chambers of Commerce, community organizations, schools, and local, State, and Federal agencies in Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda, and Roscommon counties will participate. The dates of the expanded Festival are May 18-19, 1996 which coincide with the opening of the Kirtland's warbler guided tours conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Grayling and the U.S. Forest Service in Mio. Education is a major goal of the expanded Festival. Speakers on a wide variety of natural history topics, from butterflies and Kirtland's warblers to bears and wolves, will be featured.

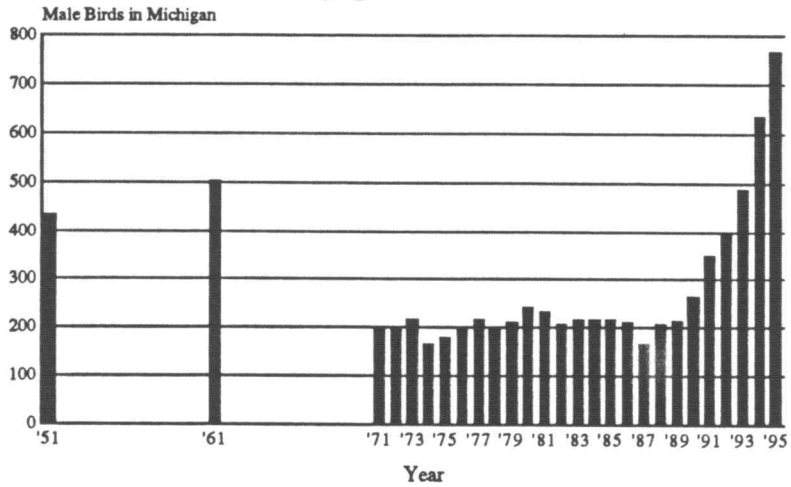
Jack Pine Wildlife Viewing Tour

In this, the third year of development of the self-guided auto tour, emphasis will be on evaluating the tour and its impact on the local economy; improving the ruffed grouse site; adding an interpretive site on the Au Sable River, at the Kirtland's warbler monument in Mio, and a jack pine ecosystem site on County Road 604. Tour brochures and maps are available at many businesses in Fairview, Mio, Glennie, and Luzerne and also from Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service, and Chamber of Commerce for Oscoda County offices in Mio.

Singing Male Census

Biologists are gearing up for the 26th annual singing male census, June 6-15, 1996. Last year, researchers, biologists, and volunteers counted 766 singing males during the official census. The count represents a 21 percent increase over the record number of 633 singing males established in 1994. The numbers of singing males has increased every year since the record low count of 167 in 1987. The Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Forest Service are seeking volunteers with birding experience to assist with this year's census.

Kirtland's Warblers in Michigan
Singing Male Counts*



*No counts made 1952-60 and 1962-70

Cowbird Control

Unfortunately due to Federal endangered species program funding shortages and uncertainties, the cowbird trapping program will be scaled back this year. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has hired 4 temporary employees for the 25th year of the cowbird control project. 59-60 cowbird traps will be operated for 10-11 weeks this season. Decoy cowbirds are being gathered for the traps by USDA-Aphis Animal Damage Control biologists at Sandusky, Ohio.

Habitat Management

Habitat Management Strategy Update/Revision

U.S. Forest Service and Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologists are revising the long-range habitat management strategy for the Kirtland's warbler. This revision is benefited by the Geographic Information System (computerized mapping). It includes a review of land management practices and designated acreages on the public forest lands in the jack pine ecosystem. To date, a draft management plan has been completed. The goal is to present another draft at the summer Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team meeting.

Habitat Management (con't)

Jack Pine Planting and Regeneration

This summer, Michigan Department of Natural Resources will plant 2,735 acres with 3,223,750 trees, as follows:

- Big Creek Management Unit in northwest Oscoda County - 610 acres.
  300 acres of this will be fill-in hand planting of 1995 acres.
- Crapo Lake Management Unit - 783 acres
- Down River Road Management Unit - 195 acres
- Damon Management Unit -1,147 acres

The U.S. Forest Service, Huron-Manistee National Forest, will plant 1,326 acres in 1996, as follows:

- Big Creek Management Unit - 150 acres
- Eldorado Management Unit - 215 acres
- McKinley Management Unit - 59 acres
- Mack Lake Management Unit - 60 acres
- Pine River Management Unit - 842 acres

Due to budget concerns, the Forest Service is not planning to do any fill-in planting within the machine planted areas in 1996.

In 1995, the Forest Service sold 1,088 acres of timber. 1,068 acres of timber will be made available for sale in 1996.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge will direct seed 109 acres on two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service tracts. In addition, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources will plant 147 acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands in conjunction with their adjacent plantings.

Research

University of Michigan

Landscape Ecology and the Kirtland's Warbler

Dan Kashian, Wayne Walker, and Burt Barnes are studying the range of areas currently and historically occupied by the Kirtland's warbler and hope to relate the components of landscape ecosystems to warbler occurrence. Such an understanding will help explain when, where, and why warblers occur in a given area. After a successful field season in 1995, the researchers plan to continue plot sampling, temperature studies, and transect sampling this field season.

Regeneration of the Stephan Bridge Fire

Susan Lambrecht is studying regeneration of the Stephan Bridge fire area. The objective of the study is to evaluate trends in wildfire areas that have had timber salvaged versus unsalvaged areas. Data will be presented at the summer Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team meeting.

Kirtland's warbler by
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