



# Michigan Audubon Society

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Michigan Audubon Society  
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Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the first major move to save Michigan's Jack-Pine Warbler from extinction, the Michigan Audubon Society has issued a set of ten color slides that show the bird and its habitat.

The species, officially called Kirtland's Warbler, nests only in a small part of the jack-pine barrens in northern lower Michigan and nowhere else in the world. Even today, only about 400 birds are estimated to have survived.

It was in 1958 that Michigan's Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Michigan Audubon Society, designated three tracts of state forest land as Kirtland's Warbler management areas. Five years later about 4,000 additional acres in the Huron National Forest were included in the management program.

"This commitment by government and private agencies, made 25 years ago, to save a species uniquely associated with Michigan is a landmark in sound conservation justice," said Robert A. Bradburn, president of Michigan Audubon Society.

"These slides are not only beautiful in themselves, but also a reminder of what good forethought and planning can accomplish." Mr. Bradburn pointed out that several conservation groups have actively participated in the program, such as Detroit Audubon, Oakland County Audubon (one of the 26 chapters of Michigan Audubon,) and the Michigan Natural Areas Council.

Further help has been given by the Bureau of Sports, Fishes and Wildlife, particularly from the office of Endangered Species and the Division of Wildlife Services. Help has also come from the Department of Agriculture through the U.S. Forest Service.

Under natural conditions, the bird's habitat results from forest fires. So, one of the dramatic aspects of the management program has been controlled burning. The Kirtland's Warbler requires a habitat of small jack pines, about 6 to 18 feet tall, with numerous openings to keep the lower limbs exposed to sunlight. The lower limbs thus stay alive and reach down to the thick ground cover in which the nests are built. When the trees get too big the birds do not nest.

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First the timber is harvested. Then a controlled burn clears the land. And this burning is the key to the regeneration of the area because intense heat is needed to pop open the jack-pine cones and scatter the seeds from which the new trees grow and thus provide new nesting sites. Habitat also has been created by direct planting.

The adult male is bluish-gray with a striking lemon-yellow breast. The song has been described as "the most beautiful of any warbler...wild and clear."

The bird was first collected in 1851, on the farm of a naturalist, Dr. Jared P Kirtland, near Cleveland, Ohio. Subsequently, it was learned that it winters in the Bahamas. But no one knew where the Warbler nested until 1903, when the nesting area was discovered near Michigan's AuSable River by a pair of trout fishermen.

The set of ten slides may be ordered from Michigan Audubon Society, 7000 N. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007. Price is \$2.50, including tax and handling. Proceeds from sale of the slides will go to Kirtland's Warbler Management Fund.