



GREAT LAKES REGION NEWS

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KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS SPOTTED IN WISCONSIN

Two male Kirtland's warblers observed in early June seem to be prospering in central Wisconsin, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The bird, which has been listed as an endangered species since 1969, is known to nest only in the north central portion of lower Michigan. Less than 500 are known to exist anywhere.

It has been several years since anyone has reported seeing the bird in Wisconsin. Only five previous sightings have been recorded.

The Wisconsin sighting was made by an employee of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources while on reconnaissance of potential habitat sites for the warbler. Nancy Tilghman, wildlife ecologist, made the find on her last visit to a potential warbler site.

The sighting of the two male warblers was confirmed by Michigan experts who live trapped one of the birds and discovered it was banded in Crawford County, Mich., in 1972.

This warbler's nesting requirements and unusual lifestyle have lead to many problems for the bird. Its breeding habitat is tied to young jack pine stands where nests are concealed by heavy ground vegetation.

Wintering in the Bahamas, the Kirtland's warbler faces added risks during its long migration.

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Cowbirds also pose a unique threat to the Kirtland's warbler. Cowbirds, lay their eggs in warbler nests and the young are hatched by parent warblers. Newly hatched Kirtland's warblers cannot compete with the cowbird fledglings.

In Michigan, a joint effort at cowbird control by the Department of Natural Resources, Audubon Society, Forest Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service, is helping to reduce this loss. Cowbird control began in Michigan in 1972.

No other birds or nests have been located at the Wisconsin site, but biologists speculate that one of the males has mated.

Wildlife officials will consider the possibility of a land management program for Kirtland's warblers in Wisconsin if indications continue to be favorable.

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