

1158 Humboldt, #7
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

18 March 1983

Dear Dr. Mayfield:

I met you in 1980 at a conference on censusing birds in Asilomar, California. You probably donot remember me, although I questioned you at length one evening about Kirtland's Warblers. That is why I am writing. My wife and I plan on being in the Twin Cities area in June for a wedding(a friend), and when free of that we plan on driving up to Kirtland's Warbler country to see the bird.

Can you tell me the best place to find them, and some tips on problems related to disturbance? I noticed some information on finding them in Pettingill's newest edition of the eastern bird finding guide. Do you have a copy of it? If so, is that information sufficient? Any information you can pass on will be appreciated.

While browsing through a book on Birds of the Bahamas(1975) recently and was struck by the similarity between the Olive-capped Warbler (Dendroica pityophila) and the Kirtland's Warbler. Assuming that the ancestral stock is common to both species, do you think that the Olive-capped Warbler's evolution resulted ^{from} lack of functional genes in wintering immature Kirtland's Warblers that did not permit them to return to their natal areas to begin breeding, thus forming a nucleus of an isolated population necessary for speciation? I would be curious about your feelings on this. Perhaps it has been suggested and in detail in some publication of which I am not aware? I find it interesting that James Bond, in his book on Birds of the West Indies(second ed.1981), placed the Kirtland's Warbler just before the Palm Warbler and the Olive-capped Warbler just before the Pine Warbler, with some phylogenetic separation between the Olive-backed/Kirtland's Warbler. How do you feel about that sequence? Have you seen the Olive-capped Warbler? Is the similarity to the Kirtland's Warbler real in terms of habitat, song, other types of behavior? I understand that the Olive-capped Warbler prefers pine barrens as well.

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours truly,



Jon Winter

1158 Humboldt, #7
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

18 March 1983

March 25, 1984

Mr. Jon Winter
1158 Humboldt, #7
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Dear Mr. Winter:

The Kirtland's Warbler is very easy to see, and the chances are overwhelming that you will see and hear several at any time in the month of June. However, all parties into the nesting grounds (The party may consist of just you and your wife.) are escorted by a guide. The hiking required will be minimal. That is, you see the bird virtually from the roadside. The enclosed sheet explains the system.

If you are interested in exploring the literature on the Kirtland's Warbler, I strongly advise that you get a copy of Huber's bibliography described in the attached review.

I have no real inspiration about the taxonomy or phylogeny of the Kirtland's Warbler. I believe all of us have long suspected it is a close relative of the Pine Warbler. Also I have talked with James Bond some years ago about its probable close relationship with pityophila in the Bahamas, but I have no clear understanding of this situation. This is a difficult question because the warblers--indeed, most of the passerines--are very closely related to one another. Take off a few feathers and many warbler species would be very difficult or impossible to tell apart. Such matters as song and habitat may be convergent features rather than ancestral traits. So, you see, I do not even have a good speculation to offer on your question about the Kirtland's relatives and origins. However, if you would enjoy reading further on this general question, you may want to lay hands on the 1964 LIVING BIRD, where Robert Mengel published "The probable history of species formation in some northern wood warblers" 3:9-44. On page 30, he discusses the Kirtland's and Olive Capped Warblers briefly, and others at much greater length.

Good luck.

Sincerely,

Looking forward to your reply.

Yours truly,

Jon Winter

Sent back ad 2/6/84

Group P O Box 140, R R #1
Whitby, Ontario L1N 5R4
Canada

November 15, 1983

Dr. Harold Mayfield
9235 River Road
Waterville, Ohio 43566
U. S. A.

Dear Dr. Mayfield:

Re: Kirtland's Warbler Wintering Grounds

I am writing in request of information pertaining to the wintering territory of the Kirtland's Warbler. I am familiar with your 1960 work entitled THE KIRTLAND WARBLER, courtesy of a mutual friend - Dr. J. Murray Speirs in Pickering, Ontario.

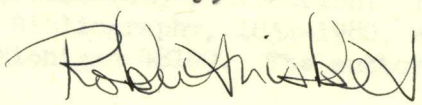
From the contents of this book, I can see that the species is relatively widespread throughout the Bahamas. I gather that little work was completed in the field in this area between 1915 and 1960 - save the two individuals cited in your book.

I am curious about several points. Have Kirtland's Warblers been sighted or collected from areas other than the Bahamas? What is the nature and extent of field work pertaining to their wintering territory which has been conducted between 1960 and the present? Do any "preserves" exist for this species on any of the Bahamas Islands? Is there any legislation in this country affording them special status and protection?

If these questions can be answered by reference to recently published papers, please feel free to refer me to the same. Incidentally, I realize your publication (1960) is long out-of-date, but if you ever hear of a second-hand copy being made available....I would be indebted to your bringing it to my attention. Price will not be a consideration.

Thank you for your help in this matter, and I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,



J. Robert Nisbet

JRN/mlw

Group P. O. Box 140, RR #1
Whitby, Ontario L1N 5R4

November 28, 1983

J. Robert Nisbet
Group P. O. Box 140, RR #1
Whitby, Ontario L1N 5R4

Dear Mr. Nisbet:

First I will answer your questions in order as you have listed them.

There is only one credible record of Kirtland's Warblers outside the Bahamas (and Caicos) in winter. This was on the east coast of Mexico (reprint enclosed) and since it was not supported by photograph, specimen, or confirmation by other observers, there is a shadow of doubt about it. Also I see little significance in the record, since birds fly and a stray does not indicate an extension of range.

I am writing in request of information pertaining to the wintering territory.
At least three people (including me) have made deliberate extended searches for the bird in the last two decades. In addition a number of ornithologists have visited the Bahamas on other projects or vacations, and several of these have reported Kirtland's Warblers--all on different islands! I published a paper on the wintering of this bird in 1972 (Wilson Bulletin, 84:347-349), and a slightly more recent and complete account appeared under the authorship of Bruce Radabaugh in 1974 (Wilson Bulletin, 86:374-383). Both papers give you other pertinent references. However, there have been good sight records since 1974, but I do not believe they add measurably to the information in these two papers, except to confirm that the birds occur on several, perhaps all, of the islands and probably occur singly in winter.

There are no special preserves for this bird in the Bahamas. In fact, we have not identified any area or special habitat on which to focus preserve efforts. However, the Bahamian government is quite "preserve-minded" and would probably respond favorably to any suggestions conservationists might make. In any case, the bird does not seem threatened by man's activities in any of these islands.

I am not aware of any special legislative efforts in Canada aimed at preserving this bird, but it falls under the umbrella of laws protecting all migratory songbirds. The recent leader in Canadian interest in finding the bird in summer in Ontario and Quebec as well as taking special steps to protect it is Dr. Paul L. Aird, Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A1.

If you are interested in searching the literature on this bird more fully, I strongly urge you to get this paperback (\$5) publication: The Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) an Annotated Bibliography, 1852-1980, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109. The author is Kristina Ruth Huber.

As you have noted, my book is out of print, but I see it listed occasionally on second-hand advertisements from booksellers specializing in nature or ornithology. The price is usually about \$25. I'll keep you in mind if I see it listed soon. Probably a dealer who makes searches could find one for you.

If you have other questions, do not hesitate to write again.

Sincerely,