



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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To Kirtland's Warbler Survey Volunteers

This letter is being sent to those persons that participated in the 1991 search for Kirtland's warblers in Wisconsin, or that expressed an interest at that time but were unable to survey because of other commitments. I have contacted most of you either personally or by telephone concerning your interest in participating this year. We are again approaching the time when specific survey blocks must be assigned, and a definite commitment will be necessary.

As last year, we are interested in two periods of field work -- the primary period being coordinated with the "world-wide" annual census on the nesting grounds in Michigan during June 6 to June 15. These dates are identical to those of 1990 and 1991. In addition, another goal is to enable an attempt to uniquely color-mark any Kirtland's found prior to the census. It is suspected that these birds may wander more in Wisconsin than on the nesting grounds in Michigan. Marked individuals can be differentiated if they move during the census.

This preliminary period can start upon the species arrival (May 15?-- May 20 in Douglas County in 1989 -- May 13 is the traditional Kirtland's warbler day in Michigan), and continue until the census begins on June 6. I wish to stress that this preliminary period is almost as important as the census itself. Although a female Kirtland's warbler has never been reported for Wisconsin, maybe this is the year for that. If a pair should be located, we would be concerned about protecting a nest from cowbird parasitism. Early reporting would be crucial to the timely initiation of a cowbird control program. Also, in the past rainy and windy weather has hampered the early season search, pointing out the desirability of scheduling search days early in case you are "weathered out". Another factor pointing to an emphasis on an early search is the opportunity that might be offered to capture and color-mark birds that may be transient.

Orientation sessions will be held for most participants. An exception would be where there will be no changes in the survey blocks and the previous surveyors are participating again. An example of this occurrence might be the Crex Meadows area. The meetings will be at locations central to the bulk of those persons involved, and I am proposing that these meetings be held again this year in Spooner, Black River Falls, and Solon Springs, plus additional sites if advantageous. "Veterans" of last year's search will find these meetings desirable for discussing search block assignments with fellow surveyors, as most survey areas will have some consolidations as poor habitat continues to be excluded. I will be contacting you regarding specific meeting times and places.

Please return the enclosed postcard within three days of receipt. Indicate if you would prefer to repeat the search in the area assigned last year, provided that major block boundary changes have not been made. For obvious reasons, it will be difficult for me to get together with everyone at combined meetings. Final scheduling and block assignments for a few of you will be by telephone. The worst scenario (from my viewpoint) would be a one-to-one meeting, but it is recognized that time conflicts are inevitable. I will try to be flexible to your needs to the extent possible.

Many of the surveyors are employees of various conservation agencies, and it is hoped that these agencies will permit use of an assigned vehicle. Others, however, are privately employed, retired, or office-bound, and will have no such opportunity. A limited budget will be available for reimbursement for private vehicle mileage and a procedure for submission of claims for reimbursement will be included in the orientation. A monetary cap will be established for each, and claims must be submitted prior to June 30. Please indicate on the postcard if you might be claiming reimbursement.

Following a 1992 North American census figure of 348 singing males -- the highest in 30 years -- and a productive breeding season in Michigan last year, we can be optimistic that the Kirtland's warbler search in Wisconsin will reflect this increase in population. Hope to be greeting you at an orientation meeting.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Return-addressed postcard