



# NORTH CENTRAL REGION NEWS

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Bird-watchers in Wisconsin asked to exercise caution during spring migration of the rare Kirtland's Warbler

## LOOKING FOR A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

It's a little like looking for a needle in a haystack. In this case, the needle is a half-ounce bird whose haystack is jack pine stands of particular age, density and soil type. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) will be looking for this needle - the rare Kirtland's warbler - during intensive surveys this spring. The songbird is endangered on both state and federal listings.

Kirtland's warblers are very sensitive to disturbance by humans, particularly during new attempts at nesting. Bird-watchers are asked to stay away from potential Kirtland's warbler habitat until mid-July, the end of nesting season.

"The establishment of Kirtland's warbler colonies in Wisconsin could greatly improve the bird's chance of survival and eventual

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removal from the endangered species list," says Ron Refsnider, Region 3 Service biologist in the Endangered Species Division. "With the entire species in danger of extinction, we can't afford to unnecessarily disturb even one bird."

During the survey, biologists will walk through habitat thought to be suitable for Kirtland's warblers, and listen for the easily identified songs of the male birds. Though surveys over the last four years have located male birds in this way, only one male was found last spring. Biologists hope female warblers and evidence of nesting will also be found this spring.

"The females do not sing on the nesting grounds and are frequently hidden in thick cover," says Randy Jurewicz, non-game program supervisor for WIDNR. "We normally can determine if females are present only by closely watching the male birds."

Bird-watchers wishing to hear, and perhaps see, Kirtland's warblers, are invited to join one of the guided tours offered daily in Grayling and Mio, Michigan by the U.S. Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service. These tours provide bird-watchers with an excellent opportunity to hear a singing Kirtland's warbler, yet they avoid disturbing the warblers or their habitat. Tour information can be obtained by calling 517/337-6650 (Grayling) or 517/826-3252 (Mio).

During the spring nesting season, law enforcement officers will be patrolling potential habitat areas. Disturbance or harassment of endangered species is a violation of both Federal and Wisconsin law.

As an agency of the Department of the Interior, the Service protects, preserves, enhances and restores fish and wildlife resources throughout the Nation. Region 3 has responsibility for 31 National Wildlife Refuges, 5 National Fish Hatcheries, 8 fishery resource offices, 8 designated wilderness areas, 9 fish and wildlife enhancement offices and an Environmental Management Technical Center in the states of Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Missouri.

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