

HAROLD F. MAYFIELD
1614 GRONLUND CIRCLE
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419-867-1867

June 3, 1996

Mr. Phil Huber
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mio, Michigan 48647

Dear Phil,

I have a deep sense of guilt that the Kirtland pictures by Ron Austing that I got from you did not get back to you, although I had promised their return. My alibi is that there were many fingers in the soup, and some of them were working independently of me.

It seems that the publisher (BIRDING magazine) dealt directly with the photographers and paid them without my playing any part in the transaction. So I would assume Ron got the slides back from them, and you can get copies by asking Ron. If you have any difficulty, let me know.

Also I assume you saw my piece on the Kirtland in winter. I did not have reprints, but sent a copy to Rex so that it could be copied for the Recovery Team members. I have had no confirmation.

While I am on the line I would like your considered opinion about the reasons for the phenomenal spurt in Kirtlands in the last couple of years. We can start with the assumption that several factors have worked to produce this result. If you were placing these factors in order of importance, how would you rank them: Mack Lake Fire of 1980, planting of jack pines by several public agencies, control of cowbirds, and what else?

I had been intending to attend the Recovery Team meeting at Grayling, but have just about given up on the idea because of the effort entailed in driving and sitting through the sessions. But I have not given up the possibility of meeting the group somewhere sometime.

With best personal regards,

Sincerely,

Harold



THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT
FLINT MICHIGAN 48502-2186

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

June 1, 1996

Doug Munson
U.S. Forest Service Ranger Station
Mio, MI 48647

Dear Doug:

Thanks so much for all the attention given our students during our recent field trip (5/30/96) to the KW area. While our previous trips have been beneficial, you made this trip the best ever with your detailed knowledge of the geology, biology, and history of the area. The trip to the Dry Sand Prairie was a wonderful addition since our goal is to expose our students to as many different habitats as possible. This was also a first for me, and I've lived in Michigan my whole life!

Thanks again for all your help - we'll ask for you specifically for our next trip.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Pace
Ernest Szuch

Jack and Jean McLeod
6727 Eakin Drive
Sooke, BC CANADA
V0S 1N0

August 21, 1996

Mr. Doug Munson
US Forest Service
401 Court Street
Mio MI 48647
USA

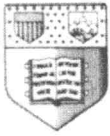
Dear Doug,

We took the Kirtland's warbler tour with you on June 21/64 (the Bay City News reporter was there too, wrote an article, and kindly sent us a copy). We just wanted to thank you for all your know-how on the avifauna and the jack pine ecosystem, and your great stories. Also thanks to your group for the detailed maps in your office locating current rare and interesting birds. The maps helped us to see for the first time the golden-winged warbler at the "flowing well". It's always been my favourite warbler and one I've wanted badly to see since starting out as a teenager. We spent a great weekend at the Mack Lake Forest Service Campground - LOTS of birds there, and the host kept the ATV'ers nice and quiet! Finally hats off to all the FS people and others who help to keep the Kirtland's on the map. Great to see and hear it!

Best regards,



Jack and Jean McLeod



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Copy to Phil Hake

Harold F. Mayfield
1614 Gronlund Circle
Toledo, Ohio 43614

Dear Harold,

Thanks for your interesting letter. Needless to say, I'm intrigued by the observation of equal magnetic declination of breeding and wintering grounds. Since we really have no idea how the warblers find their way, it's hard to say what this might mean. There was a theory that migratory birds followed lines of equal dip angle, but declination generally provides E-W information. Your guess is as good (or better) than mine!

As to the long flights, that has been known for many species. Tim and Janet Williams have shown that there is a substantial population of birds that leave New England headed South East. They pass Bermuda still on that bearing then hit the doldrums and pick up an onshore wind to Central/South America. The advantage is that they have a strong tail wind the whole route. The problem is that if they hit unfavorable conditions, like a coastal hurricane, they can't stop. My guess is that many birds make quite long hops but that others do it by gradual stages, stopping to feed on route. I think Bill Evan's fascinating work recording the sounds of night migrants will allow him to determine which species are passing over at night. With this kind of data we may really be able to get a handle on what's going on.

Again, thanks for your letter. John Fitzpatrick really seems to be forging ahead at the Lab! I'm enjoying the peaceful groves of academe, no budgets to speak of!

Best regards,

Charles Walcott

HAROLD F. MAYFIELD
1614 GRONLUND CIRCLE
TOLEDO, OHIO 43614

Copy to Phil Huber

April 15, 1997

Mr. Bill Evans
P.O. Box 46
Mecklenburg, NY 14863

Dear Bill,

Several months ago my friend Phil Huber of the U.S. Forest Service in Mio, Michigan, went to the Bahama Islands to see the habitat of the Kirtland's Warbler in winter. In adjusting his compass he was astonished to find the magnetic declination to be precisely what it was on the warbler breeding ground. Since hearing from him, I have examined an isogonic map of the United States, and I was amazed to see that the line of five degrees west marks the direct route between the summer and winter grounds of the warbler as accurately as we might draw it.

I wrote Charles Waitott, the best authority I know on bird navigation and asked if this could be coincidence. He admitted that he did not have an inkling on how warblers navigate, but that others have mentioned the possibility that birds might use the magnetic inclination (not declination) to hold their headings. Charles mentioned that your research might ultimately throw some light on this mystery. Actually, I had you in mind already.

In other connections, I have pointed out that study of a rare species can often focus attention problems that are difficult to understand with abundant species. For example, many warbler species flood south in fall migration, making it difficult to know where segments of the population went. But with the Kirtland's Warbler, they all go like an arrow (presumably) from one small spot on the map to another.

There is also another impediment to our understanding of migration routes. What we see on the ground may show us only the birds whose navigation has failed them. I have previously published a suggestion that our knowledge of migration of the Kirtland's Warbler is based on records of the dropouts and not on the truly successful migrants who have passed over unseen. (My reprint enclosed.) This is where you come in.

In any case, this may encourage your work.

Best regards,

Sincerely,

H. F. M.

P. S. to Phil Huber,

This man is pioneering a study of night migrants by identifying and recording the chips and chirps we hear on the ground. Fascinating!