



The Warbler Report

A special publication of the 2010 Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival
Hosted by Kirtland Community College, Roscommon, Michigan
warbler.kirtland.edu



Special concert!
Switchback at the KCPA
See page 6 for details

Annual 'celebration of nature' set for May 15

ROSCOMMON – A good thing keeps on getting better. That's the feeling shared by the committee members and volunteers as they gear up for the upcoming 17th annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF) on Saturday, May 15.

Annually on the third Saturday in May, Kirtland Community College hosts the KWWF with its theme of "A Celebration of Nature" at college's main campus near Roscommon, located in the heart of the Kirtland's warbler's breeding habitat in northern Michigan.

About 2,000 birding and nature enthusiasts annually flock to the festival, looking to see with their own eyes the beautiful and rare Kirtland's warbler. Highly trained wildlife biologists help make the festival's three-hour tours an exciting and educational experience.

But there's more to the KWWF than birding tours. Festival-goers are treated to a variety of presentations and exhibits, as well as chances to meet with representatives of the agencies that have helped rescue the

Kirtland's. There's also a juried art show and silent auction, as well as displays by a featured wildlife photographer and artist.

And, the festival is a family event, with such activities as the kid's fishing pond, live animals and petting zoo, face-painting and more. Not to mention there's plenty of food and live music.

"We believe the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival is a celebration – a celebration of nature, the Kirtland's
See **FESTIVAL**, page 6



Photo by Ron Austing

Center of attention

The rare Kirtland's warbler will again be the center of attention during the upcoming Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival on Saturday, May 15, on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon. About 2,000 birding and nature enthusiasts annually flock to the festival, looking to see with their own eyes the beautiful and rare song bird. But festival organizers proudly brag there's much more to the annual event than the Kirtland's warbler, which makes its summertime home in the jack pine forests of northern Michigan, parts of the Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada.

New tours expand festival offerings

By Hillary Salvus

ROSCOMMON – The Kirtland's warbler is not alone! That may come as a surprise to nature lovers and bird-watchers who have not already attended the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF), thinking the only bird to see during the annual event is the rare song bird that calls northern Michigan its summertime home.

Those who've attended previous festivals can attest the Kirtland's warbler has many other species of birds for neigh-

bors, not to mention the abundance of non-winged wildlife.

While the Kirtland's warbler is North America's rarest warbler, the 17th annual KWWF, set for Saturday, May 15, on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon, features two new tours designed to expand a festival-goers' knowledge of many other birds, including other endangered winged-friends, such as the whooping crane and piping plover.

Best of all, the new tours

See **TOURS**, page 2

Workshop helps birders take it 'to the next level'

ROSCOMMON – Do you want to take your birding skills to the next level? Ever wonder just how the experts do it?

The Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF) is ready to help birding enthusiasts upgrade their skills during a special Friday workshop on May 14, a day prior to the 17th annual festival on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon on Saturday, May 15.

That's when noted birder Caleb Putnam will present, "Taking It To The Next Level – Birding with Caleb Putnam," a half day of outdoor skill building and indoor presentations, as well as a discussion session at the Kirtland House conference center, located on the college's main campus. The workshop will start at 7 a.m. and last about five hours.

During the Friday workshop,

See **WORKSHOP**, page 2

Global ReLeaf marks 20th anniversary at KWWF

John Hancock donates 35,000 jack pine to help reach milestone

ROSCOMMON – The Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF) has drawn thousands of birding and nature enthusiasts to its annual "celebration

of nature" held on the third Saturday in May at Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon. This year, the festival will also help celebrate a very important anniversary, as well as a gracious donation that will benefit the area's wildlife for years to come.

Global ReLeaf, American Forests' education and action program respon-

sible for the planting of more than 30 million trees in over 600 projects across the U.S. and internationally, is celebrating its 20th anniversary in Michigan, home to the group's very first project in the AuSable State Forest, located in Roscommon County. Through the Global ReLeaf initiative, American Forests seeks to plant 100 million trees worldwide by 2020.

As part of the activities at the 17th annual KWWF on Saturday, May 15, John Hancock Financial, one of American Forests' major sponsors, will show its continued support of the organization's planting efforts by announcing the donation of 35,000 jack pine saplings. It's a gift the Kirtland's warbler will appreciate, as the rare song

See **ANNIVERSARY**, page 2

For more information on the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu.



"Taking It To The Next Level – Birding with Caleb Putnam," a five-hour workshop Friday, May 14, will help kick off the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival, slated for Saturday, May 15. Leading the workshop is Caleb Putnam, a skilled ornithologist and lifelong birder. Putnam is also the Michigan Important Bird Areas (IBA) coordinator and chairman of the Michigan Bird Records Committee.

Workshop

Continued from page 1

Putnam will unveil his tried and tested tips for becoming a better birder. Participants will learn how to use voice, shape, plumage and context – habitat, time of year and location – to better identify all birds. He will also touch on optics, digital photography and the use of technology for today's birders.

Putnam is the Michigan Important Bird Areas Program coordinator for the Michigan Audubon Society, chairman of the Michigan Bird Records Committee, a native Michigander and lifelong birder. His more recent work involves research on shorebird molt and a brief stint in Arkansas searching for ivory-billed woodpeckers for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

He is currently working for Michigan Audubon Society on a variety of projects.

But his birding expertise goes back even further. Putnam earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Alma College and a master's degree in environmental studies from the University of Montana. He's worked on many avian projects, including field studies in Montana, Missouri, Virginia, and most recently, Arkansas.

In 2004-05, Putnam led Kirtland's warbler and other tours for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Michigan Audubon Society. He is the co-author of the newly published *Montana Birds* (Lone Pine Publishing).

Cost of the May 14 workshop is \$35 per person, lunch included. The five-hour workshop is limited to 40 participants.

To reserve a seat, individuals should call 989-275-5000, extension 418, or e-mail Jackie Liddle at liddlej@kirtland.edu.

Tours

Continued from page 1

give festival-goers an opportunity to see these rare and beautiful creatures in their natural habitat. In fact, the checklist used for the new bird tours include 227 species of our feathered friends for enthusiasts to search out and check off.

Discussion to add the new tours came after a very successful demonstration, "Birding by Ear" by Nature Discoverer's Jim McGrath, at a previous KWWF. The presentation went over well because many were shocked with how many different birds they saw and heard.

By expanding the festival to include the multiple-species tours, festival organizers hope to bring back repeat birding enthusiasts and previous visitors, allowing them a new and different chance to reconnect with nature during a fun, family-oriented weekend that KWWF officials hope will become a yearly tradition.

"We believe the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival is a celebration – a celebration of nature, the Kirtland's warbler and of the jack pine ecosystem that dominates our region, helping to educate festival-goers through the tours and presentations," said Jim Enger, the festival's committee chairman.

One of the tours isn't really new, but definitely has a new twist – and time. The "Wakeley Lake Wildlife Walk" was previously held on the Friday evening prior to the festival. However, the timing didn't take advantage of the fact many species are more active in the morning.

So, the wildlife walk was moved to Friday morning and is now slated for Friday, May 14,

beginning at 7 a.m. The tour is about two to three hours in length. Not only will participants start off the day with fresh air, they'll also have the chance to spot loons, eagles and a variety of other wildlife.

Like all festival tours, the Wakeley Lake Wildlife Walk is guided by wildlife professionals and naturalists, ensuring that participants will get the most out of this unique experience.

A truly new addition to the festival slate is the "Roscommon Area Birding Tour," which is scheduled for Saturday, May 15, at 7 a.m. and lasts roughly three hours. The tour begins with a bus ride and takes participants to places where they may see dozens of different birds, including diverse types of warblers, sparrows and vireos. Some of the sites are known to harbor the bald eagle, yellow-bellied sapsucker, upland sandpiper and pileated woodpecker, among many others.

"Now, more than ever, The Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival offers a chance to expand your birding knowledge and take some great photographs – cameras, binoculars, and spotting scopes are all welcome," Enger said. "The best thing about these new tours is it's so inexpensive to attend. A \$5 festival button gets you into the festival – that's it – and includes admittance to all the tours and presentations."

A complete festival schedule may be viewed online at warbler.kirtland.edu, or is printed on the back of this publication.

– *Hillary Salvas is a student writer for the Kirtland Current, the student publication serving Kirtland Community College.*

Anniversary

Continued from page 1

bird prefers nesting under younger jack pines that stand between 5 to 20 feet tall in northern Michigan, as well as parts of the Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada.

"It is fitting that we celebrate our anniversary near where Global ReLeaf began its important work," said Dan Smith, vice president of communications at American Forests, the nation's oldest non-profit conservation group. "I am pleased to announce that, when our most recently donated trees have been planted, we will have planted 1 million jack pines for Kirtland's warbler habitat and 1.6 million total trees in Michigan."

The conservation and educational efforts by American Forests and the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival were among the reasons officials at John Hancock Financial joined in by donating thousands of saplings, helping the Global ReLeaf effort reach the 1-million milestone of jack pines planted in Michigan.

"We are proud to be part of Global ReLeaf's effort and to support the state of Michigan," said James Gallagher, executive vice president of John Hancock Financial. "John Hancock and its parent company, Manulife Financial, have a long history of supporting environmental causes, as well as a longstanding relationship with Michigan."

"In fact, Manulife Financial established its U.S. operations in Michigan in 1903, so we are especially pleased to be able to give back to the state that has become so important to our company," Gallagher added.

Because of the conservation work to restore the Kirtland's habitat, the population of the still rare songbird is at its highest level in decades, according to annual census data. The warbler population has been on an upward climb since a reported low of 167 males in 1987, with the total population of the species now nearing 4,000 birds.

"The Kirtland's could not

have survived without the high level of commitment of so many who help ensure this species has the proper environment in which to breed and thrive here in northern Michigan, as well as the benefits to the other wildlife that call the jack pine ecosystem home," said Jim Enger, chairman of the KWWF committee.

To mark the 20th anniversary of American Forests' replanting efforts in northern Michigan, as well as the donation of the thousands of jack pine saplings by John Hancock Financial, the KWWF will host a special ceremony at 12:15 p.m. during the day-long festival May 15 near the festival headquarters' tent.

"We would like to take time to recognize the many individuals and organizations who have stepped forward with generous donations," Smith said. "If not for their commitment to helping the environment, and saving endangered species such as the Kirtland's warbler, we would never have been as successful as we are today."

The event will also include the planting of a jack pine sapling.

"We believe the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival is a celebration – a celebration of nature, the Kirtland's warbler and of the jack pine ecosystem that dominates our region, helping to educate festival-goers through the tours and presentations," Enger said. "So, we're proud to host these two great organizations – American Forests and John Hancock Financial – and help bring about an added awareness to their accomplishments to help protect and grow our natural resources here in northern Michigan."

For details on the 17th annual KWWF and a complete schedule of events, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 266 or 242.

Additional information on American Forests and John Hancock Financial may be found at www.american-forests.org and www.johnhancock.com, respectively.

Editor's Note

The Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival Committee would like to express its thanks and appreciation to the contributions of The Bay City Times, The Houghton Lake Resorter, the Kirtland Current and EDCO Publishing to this year's edition of The Warblers Report.

The management of The Bay City Times and Resorter were gracious enough to allow the KWWF to reprint articles that had run previously in the respective newspapers, while EDCO kindly donated the use of some of its wonderful games and puzzles.

The festival committee would also like to thank the student staff writers of the Kirtland Current, the student newspaper for Kirtland Community College, who contributed by volunteering to write several stories about the festival to the 2010 edition of the festival newspaper.

Tours offer festival-goers birds-eye view of area wildlife

ROSCOMMON - While some festival-goers do come to the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival for fun, food and live music, many flock to Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon and other nearby locales each spring in hopes of seeing, or at least hearing, the rare Kirtland's warbler.

For 2008, the festival committee expanded its tour offering from two to three hours, giving birders and natural lovers more time to see and explore the area's jackpine ecosystem, the summer home of the Kirtland's.

During the festival, buses will be leaving the KCC campus from the festival headquarter's tent outside the Student Center at 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. sharp.

So maximize your chances of seeing the elusive Kirtland's warbler. Ride a bus to nearby warbler habitat with naturalist guides on board to answer questions and enhance the experience.

At the field stops within the young jack pine habitat, you also will see and/or hear many of the dozens of other native birds that share this special habitat with our endangered

Kirtland's warbler, including the upland sandpiper, the Brewer's blackbird, Lincoln's sparrow and clay-colored sparrow. More common species like the hermit thrush, rose-breasted grosbeak, song sparrow and the Nashville warbler should be sighted or at least heard.

Please note that the Kirtland's warbler field trips leave from the Kirtland Community College campus grounds.

These tours leave from campus and visit a MDNRE Kirtland's warbler management unit nearby. They offer an excellent opportunity to see and hear one of the rarest songsters in North America – our endangered Kirtland's warbler.

Guides: Wildlife biologists from U.S. Forest Service, Michigan DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Meet near the Festival Information Tent. School buses will be provided. Viewing will be from dry, sandy trail roads.

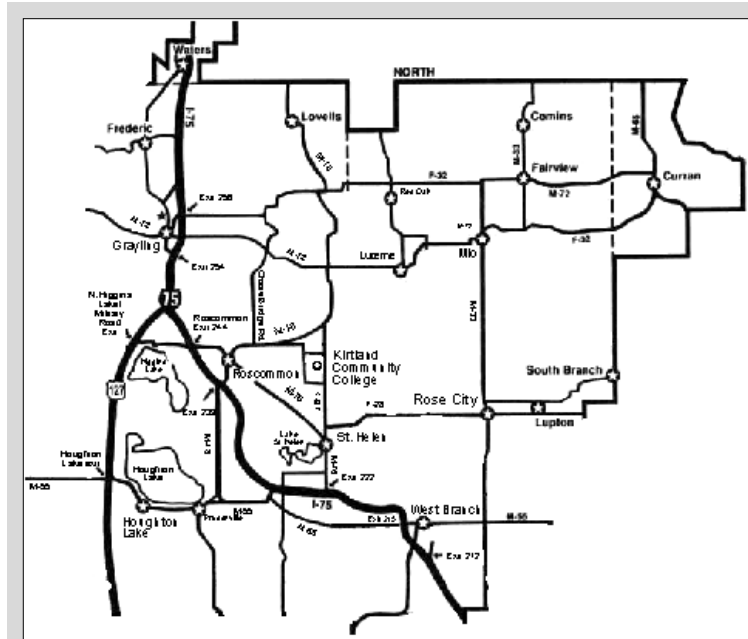
OFF-CAMPUS NATURE & BIRDING FIELD TRIPS

Birding and Nature Watch Tours: Want to do something wild?

The Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival is offering an expanded selection of birding trips and nature watch tours in 2008. These guided tours will get you "out there" in wild habitats to great wildlife viewing areas.

We've recruited some knowledgeable guides to help you. Guides are naturalists with many years of experience either as natural resource biologists, or as science educators and birders.

These nature tours are offered as off-campus trips on Friday,



Below are driving directions to the off-campus nature tours during the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival. For additional assistance, stop by the festival headquarters tent outside the Student Center.

Wakeley Lake - Grayling

Meet at Wakeley Lake Forest Service parking lot on M-72 about 8 miles east of Grayling; or 5 to 6 miles west of M-72 and M-18 intersection. (Look for signs along M-72.)

Houghton Lake Marsh - Houghton Lake

From the Houghton Lake exit on US-127, take M-55 east approximately 3/4 mile to Old 27. Turn north for about 1.5 to 2 miles. See the gazebo and parking lot on the left (west) side of road.

Lois and Jeremy Jones Farm - Roscommon

From downtown Roscommon take M-18 north about 3 miles. Turn left on Chase Bridge Road, go about 3 miles and look for Nature Photography Gallery sign on right side of road.

Gahagan Nature Preserve - Roscommon

From downtown Roscommon, take M-18 south to the Industrial Park (Ford dealer on this corner). Turn right on Southline Road and go about a quarter mile west to Preserve parking lot.

Saturday and Sunday, May 15, 16 and 17, and as on-campus tours during the Festival, midday on Saturday, May 16.

Although not critical, since others will have equipment, it's best to bring your own binoculars or a spotting scope. Weather can get nippy this time of year, so layering of clothing is recommended. Wet, dew-laden vegetation is common on early morning trips so another good idea is to wear or bring water-resistant footwear.

Here's our selection of tour options (meet at site):

Friday, May 14

7 a.m. - Wakeley Lake Foot Travel Area, Crawford County.

Includes a diversity of woodland habitats, plus shrub wetland habitats around Wakeley Lake, a Huron-Manistee National Forest special walk-in area. Good chance to see nesting loons and eagles, and ducks, geese and other wetland birds, plus many woodpeckers, warblers (including pine warblers) and many other woodland species. Beavers

and otters have been seen on these tours in other years. An "owl prow!" will wrap up the tour, using taped owl calls to attract resident owls at dusk.

Guide: Kim Piccolo, U.S. Forest Service, Mio Ranger District Office.

Location: Meet at parking lot on M-72, about 10 miles east of Grayling, or 5 miles west of the intersection of M-18 and M-72. Area is well marked by directional signs along M-72. Hiking will be mostly on dry, sandy foot trails.

Friday, May 14

5 p.m. - Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve.

Habitats include old-growth pine, lowland hardwood swamp, cedar swamp, streamside/riparian, upland oak and pine. Forest birds will be the main feature here with many warblers, thrushes, sparrows and raptors found in these habitats.

Guide: Tom Dale, education director for this 60-acre wooded preserve. Dale is a retired biology professor from Kirtland

Community College.

Location: The Gahagan Preserve is located on the south edge of the village of Roscommon. Meet at the Preserve parking lot which is located on Southline Road, 1/4 mile west of M-18, south side of Roscommon. Southline Road is located just south of the Ford dealership on M-18. Hiking on handicapped-accessible trail and boardwalk.

Saturday, May 15

7 and 8 a.m. - Kirtland's Warbler & Jack Pine Ecosystem - during the Festival.

These tours leave from campus and visit a MDNRE Kirtland's warbler management unit nearby. They offer an excellent opportunity to see and hear one of the rarest songsters in North America - our endangered Kirtland's warbler.

Other likely and unusual birds include the upland sandpiper, the Brewer's blackbird, Lincoln's sparrow and clay-colored sparrow. More common species like the hermit thrush,

rose-breasted grosbeak, song sparrow, and the Nashville warbler should be sighted or at least heard.

Guides: Wildlife biologists from US Forest Service, Michigan DNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Location: Meet near the Festival Information Tent. School buses will be provided. Viewing will be from dry, sandy trail roads.

Saturday, May 15

6 p.m. - Houghton Lake Marsh Wetland Bird Tour

This MDNR waterfowl management area is open marsh and wooded/shrub wetland.

Nesting ospreys, black terns and a great blue heron rookery are special attractions. Waterfowl species and many wetland songbirds and wading birds are also common. Tour will end at the nearby Michelson's Landing on the Muskegon River Deadstream Flooding. An active eagle nest will be the attraction of this final stop.

Guide: Mike Petruca, wildlife specialist, MDNR Wildlife Division, Houghton Lake Field Office.

Location: Meet on the marsh at the wildlife observation platform and parking lot on west side of Old-27, 1 1/2 miles north of the M-55 and Old-27 intersection on the southwest side of Houghton Lake.

Sunday, May 16

8 a.m. - Jeremy and Lois Jones' Wildlife Preserve, near Roscommon, Crawford County.

"Fractured habitats - a little bit of everything," according to owner and wildlife photographer Jeremy Jones. This diverse habitat makes for a diverse nature watching experience.

Constructed wetlands, old field/grasslands, shrub/forest habitat, and two beaver colonies, have created an unusual and rich mixture of habitats and bird life. Coyotes, bobcats, bear, deer, beaver and otter add to the intrigue. Jeremy has a photography studio that displays his many award-winning wildlife and nature photographs - and many are for sale.

Guide: Bob Hess, Michigan DNR district wildlife biologist (retired) and Tom Dale, naturalist and retired biology professor from Kirtland will lead this nature tour.

Location: Meet at the farmhouse at 3121 East Seven Mile Road. Follow Chase Bridge Road north three miles from the M-18 intersection, or Chase Bridge Road south about six miles from the M-72 intersection, to Seven Mile Road. There is a large sign for Jeremy's studio at the intersection of Chase Bridge and Seven Mile roads.

Grass will likely be damp, so best to wear water-resistant shoes or boots. Hiking will be on impoundment dikes and trail roads.

Creative recycling

KCC faculty member set to be featured artist at 2010 festival

ROSCOMMON – Festival organizers are excited to announce that Justin La Doux, a part-time faculty member for Kirtland Community College's Art Department, will be the featured artist for the 17th annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWFF) on Saturday, May 15.

La Doux is familiar with the Kirtland's warbler, but admits he hasn't had the opportunity to view one up close. Nonetheless, his metal wildlife sculptures are a good fit for the festival. Besides helping to save the environment by rescuing "dumped" items and reusing them as art, La Doux said the shapes of the recycled metal objects he uses work well for animal sculptures.

"My sculptures are made with various scrap metal, found objects and recycled materials. All the materials are welded together," La Doux said. "I feel that my sculptures are a puzzle and I have to find the best way to fit the pieces together."

La Doux, a big fan of recycling, said he learned how to weld about two years ago. The resulting combination of interests and creative skill is something festival-goers will get to see first hand at the annual festival, when his work is displayed in the Student Center on the college's main campus near Roscommon.

"I feel that my sculptures are good examples of how people can think in a more positive way about what we waste," La Doux said. "We can make a difference in the way we use stuff."

The 27-year-old La Doux currently resides in Alma, which has curbside recycling. To La Doux, such recycling programs help reduce the number of trash bags going to landfills. But another benefit, at least for this artist, is a wealth of materials he's then able to find for his artistic endeavors.

"The biggest benefit for me with using recycled items in my art is that most of the stuff is cheap, free and, most important, will not end up in a landfill," he said.

These pieces of scrap, at least to most of us, have been used by La Doux to create impressive works of art, including a lion, angler fish and now a giant squid. That's just to name a few.

La Doux added his art is not just one defined method, style or medium. Rather, his work is mixture of ideas, opinions and beliefs.

"I feel that I need to try a variety of methods, styles and different mediums to grow as an artist," he said. "This is the same way I teach letting my students explore the many ways to create art."

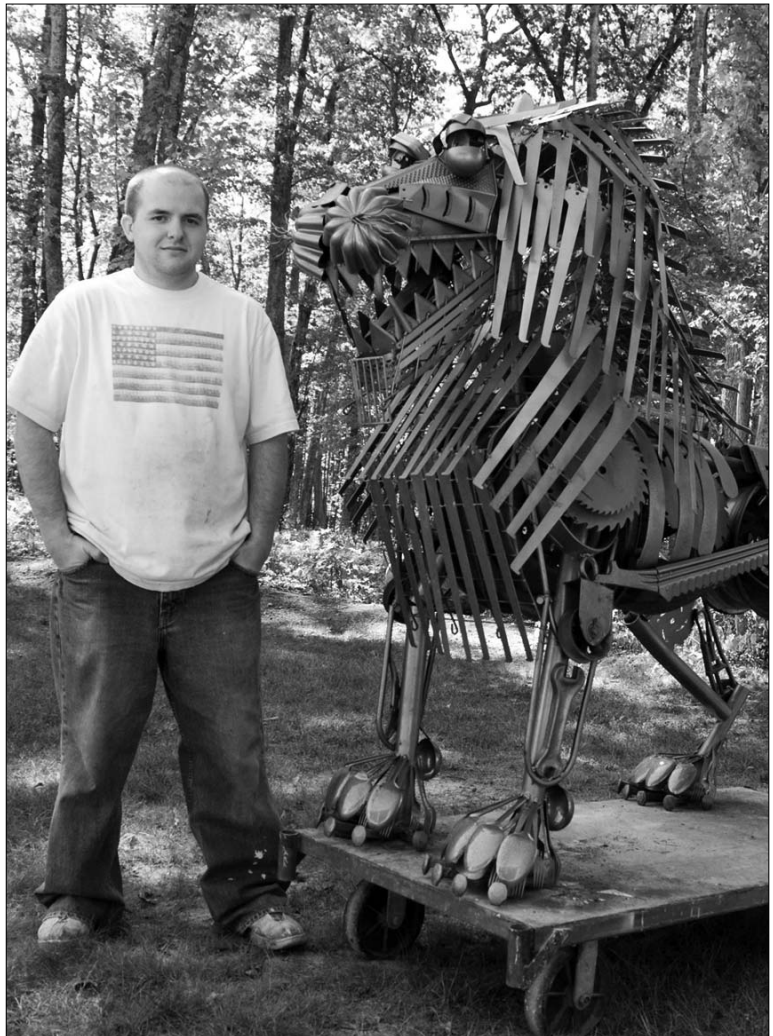
Festival committee members are excited to have La Doux display his work at this year's event.

"People may not always combine recycling and art," said Jim Enger, festival chairman. "But Justin's efforts to create impressive artistic works, many of which are of wildlife, by using recycled materials is one reason we thought he'd be a great choice to be our featured artist. Once festival-goers see his work, we think they'll agree."

La Doux already has plenty of fans, both for his art and his teaching. Students give La Doux accolades for the guidance he provides in the classroom.

"He helps you get your projects going and is ready to lend a hand if you get stuck," said metal sculpture student Devin Yedinak, 19, of West Branch, while also describing La Doux as a good teacher. "He also stands back and lets you do your own thing."

La Doux has been teaching eighth-grade photography for five years at Kirtland. He has also worked as a paraprofes-



Justin La Doux, a 27-year-old part-time instructor at Kirtland Community College, will be the featured artist at this year's Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival on Saturday, May 15, on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon. Above, La Doux stands next to his LION, which he entered in the first-ever ArtPrize International competition in Grand Rapids last year. The LION was made using of various pieces of scrap metal and assembled with a mig and arch welder. It stands six-feet high, about three-feet wide and eight-feet long.

sional for three years and is teaching his first semester of welded sculpture at Kirtland.

Annually, about 3,200 students attend a variety of certificate and two-year degree programs at Kirtland's three locations – the main campus near Roscommon, and the Michigan

Technical Education Center (M-TEC) in Gaylord and in West Branch – with the college's service area including all or parts of Crawford, Oscoda, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Otsego, Kalkaska, Missaukee, Gladwin and Alcona counties, and the surrounding areas.

For more information on Kirtland, visit online at www.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 284.

– Erika Nichols, a student writer for the Kirtland Current, the student publication serving Kirtland Community College, contributed to this story.

Local shutterbug lends talents to annual art show

By Erika Nichols

ROSCOMMON – Local photographer and naturalist Jeremy Jones of Roscommon, a long-time supporter and participant in the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWFF), increased his personal stakes in this year's event by serving as co-curator of the 2010 AuSable Valley Fine Art Exhibition.

For years, Jones and his wife, Lois, have offered their Roscommon County farm for nature tours during the festival.

Artists in their own right, the couple owns "Nature Photography Gallery," and have practiced the art of wildlife photography all over the nation. Jones has won "Best of Show" at the

Roscommon Arts Festival and was the 1993 "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" at the First America Wildlife Festival in Clare.

The juried art show, held at the Kirtland House conference center on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon, serves as a kick off to the annual festival Saturday, May 15, and runs from May 15-28.

The AuSable Valley Fine Art Exhibition begins with a public Artists Reception at noon May 15, complete with hors d'oeuvres. The reception is open to the artists, families and friends, as well as the general public.

An awards ceremony follows the reception at 1 p.m.. The first-place artist

takes home \$500, second place is \$250 and third place wins \$100.

Juror for this year's art show is Laurie Wade. Wade is the head of Alpena Community College's art department, teaching classes in design, sculpture and ceramics.

Wade has participated in art shows and had her work on display in galleries throughout Michigan including a one-person show at the Jesse Besser Museum in Alpena. She studied ceramics, printmaking, papermaking and sculpture at Michigan State University before receiving her master's degree in ceramics in 1986.

Serving with Jones as co-curator of this year's AuSable Valley Fine Art

Exhibition is Kirtland art instructor Joe Donna, who teaches sculpture, digital imaging and photography.

Donna, who received his master's degree in ceramics from MSU, encourages Kirtland students and faculty to give back to their community through art events such as last fall's Empty Bowls Project. That art auction was held as a benefit to River House, a local domestic abuse and homeless shelter in Grayling.

Donna also has organized and participated in many other art shows at Kirtland.

– Erika Nichols is a staff writer for the Kirtland Current, the student newspaper serving Kirtland Community College.

For more information on the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu.



Robert Scholl of Saline will soon be bringing his photographic talents and efforts to the 2010 Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival on Saturday, May 15, at Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon.

Scholl to be festival's featured photographer

ROSCOMMON – Robert Scholl of Saline might not have started out to be an accomplished nature and wildlife photographer, but he is now. And, Scholl will soon be bringing his photographic talents and efforts to the 2010 Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF) on Saturday, May 15, at Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon.

Scholl graduated with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Michigan Technical University in the state's Upper Peninsula and then moved on to a 20-plus year career in the automobile industry. But it was also during this time in the U.P. in which Scholl developed his love of photography.

"I grew up in Ann Arbor and developed an early love

of the outdoors from family camping trips, Boy Scout activities and many hours spent in the fields and woods near home," he said. "After high school, I attended Michigan Tech ... where I developed an interest in photography while exploring the Keweenaw Peninsula and the surrounding areas.

"During this time, photography remained a hobby," he added. "In the past few years, I have traveled to many places, including Alaska, South Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado and many trips within Michigan exploring and searching for great photos."

Scholl's other interests include fishing, kayaking, restoring cars, classic jukeboxes, and home-brewing award winning beers and ciders.

"I can sit for hours watch-

ing wildlife and get great enjoyment with the wildlife going about their normal routines," he said. "This carries over to my photography, where I take great care to avoid disturbing my subjects.

"I am particularly proud of my Common Loon pictures," he added. "Most of these pictures are the same Loon pair I have been photographing for five years now. Their acceptance of me watching and photographing them has been incredible."

In an effort to share his work with others, Scholl started a website, <http://SchollPhoto.com>, in January 2004. Products sold online include prints, note cards, computer screensavers, and dye sublimation coffee mugs and mouse pads. And current clients using his images include the University of Wisconsin Sea

Grant, National Forest Service, Yankee Air Museum, McKee Botanical Gardens and Somerset Entertainment.

"We're very excited to welcome Robert Scholl to the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival as this year's featured photographer," said Jim Enger, chairman of the festival committee. "People will surely enjoy the opportunity to meet Robert and talk about his outdoor adventures, as well as to discuss how he approaches wildlife photography."

"And, we're absolutely sure festival-goers will love to see his work and probably want to buy a piece or two to take home," he added.

For more information on the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 266 or 242.

Kirtland Ms. Club takes charge of silent auction

By Cari Talarico

ROSCOMMON – The annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF) is not only fun and educational, it's also a chance for one Kirtland Community College service club to help raise money for a very worthy cause – Kirtland students.

The Kirtland Ms. Club will be hosting a silent auction during the festival Saturday, May 15, on Kirtland's main campus near Roscommon for the first time in the KWWF's 17-year history. Previously, festival committee members Sandy Hull and Jackie Liddle, both employees at the two-year college, helped organize the silent auction.

However, Hull retired in February and Liddle was not available to continue helping coordinate what had become an annual fund-raiser for the festival.

That's when the festival committee reached out to the college's Ms. Club, an organization that helps current students by providing short-term loans for items such as gas or books.

"We really thought this was a win-win," said Dennis Mansfield, festival committee member and director of public relations for KCC. "The Ms. Club will keep 100 percent of the proceeds from the silent auction, giving them another fund-raiser to use in supporting students in need."

"And, the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival benefits by having this great organization working in cooperation with the festival, making it an even better event," he added.

Ms. Club members are currently in the process of collecting items for the upcoming action.

"Please buy or bring nice items, not 'white elephants,'" said Kirtland Ms. Club secretary Carol Silverman, when discussing the event with other club members. "You can bring something from home if it is in good shape or buy something nice."

Kirtland Ms. Club members were encouraged to ask local businesses for donations for the auction. In exchange, those making a donation will get free publicity, as well as two \$5 buttons to the KWWF.

"It costs \$5 for a button to get into the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival," Silverman said. "This way they can get two free buttons."

Currently, Ms. Club members to be working the silent auction include club vice president Jo Ann Gave, president Carol Chilton and Silverman. The time of the auction will be decided at the Kirtland Ms. Club meeting Thursday, April 8.

For more information on the silent auction or to make a donation, persons may contact Gave via e-mail at gavej@kirtland.edu or by calling 989-275-5000, extension 289.

– Cari Talarico is a student writer for the Kirtland Current, the student publication serving Kirtland Community College.

U.S.P.S. offers limited KWWF stamp cancellation

MIO – Stamp collectors will again want to prepare to make their way to the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival (KWWF) on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon on Saturday, May 15.

Annie Miteen, the postmaster for the U.S. Post Office Oscoda County Station in Mio, said representatives of the local post office will again be on hand to provide a special stamp cancellation, specifically commemorating the day of the 17th annual festival.

"These special stamp cancellations are created for specific events," Miteen said. "It's only available at the event or for 30 days after the event at the Mio post office, if people ask for it."

Miteen said that, after 30 days, the stamp cancellation is destroyed. For collectors, that makes the annual stamp a very



OSCODA COUNTY STATION
MAY 15, 2010
MIO MI 48647

limited item.

"There are people who collect different post marks from events all over the place," she said. "It's very limited, where that post mark is used."

But that's not all postal officials will be offering at the festival. Miteen said they'll also

have the recently issued Mackinaw Bridge stamp, as well as pre-marked postal cards with the KWWF stamp cancellation for just 31 cents.

"It's a very economical souvenir of the festival," she added.

For more information on the special KWWF stamp, contact Miteen at the Mio post office by calling 989-826-5531. Or, for additional details on the festival, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 242 or 266.



In cooperation with the Kirtland Center for the Performing Arts, festival-goers will be able to attend a musical event featuring the Celtic folk music group Switchback at 4 p.m. Saturday, May 15.

KCPA host Switchback for special festival show

ROSCOMMON – For a third consecutive year, the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival will be offering festival-goers a special concert at a great price.

In cooperation with the Kirtland Center for the Performing Arts, also located on Kirtland Community College's main campus near Roscommon, festival-goers will be able to attend a musical event featuring the Celtic folk music group Switchback at 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 15.

Tickets for the concert are \$22 and \$20 per person, with \$5 off for those already having purchased a festival button.

For over two decades, the musical partnership of Brian FitzGerald and Martin McCormack, known as Switchback, has been entertaining audiences around the world with their unique American Roots music blended with Celtic soul. In 1986, FitzGerald was a mandolin student of Jethro Burns and had already been touring with Clifton Chenier when he met McCormack, an award-winning voice student of Whelma Oshiem at the American Conservatory of Chicago and a member of the Star Search selected band Beyond Blue.

They were both chosen by legendary County Kerry composer and concertina master Terrence 'Cuz' Teahan to join his traditional Irish group.

Festival

Continued from page 1

warbler and of the jack pine ecosystem that dominates our region, helping to education festival-goers through the tours and presentations," said Jim Enger, the festival's committee chairman.

Enger added festival-goers soon realize the annual event is about much more than just the Kirtland's warbler. In 2009, "wildlife" was added to the festival's name to reflect the broad nature of the event.

New for 2010 is the introduction of a multi-species tour, the "Roscommon Area Birding Tour, at 7 a.m. on May 15. The roughly three-hour tour takes festival-goers out into area forests to view many of the species that call northern Michigan home, including common sites for the bald eagle, yellow-bellied sapsucker, upland sandpiper, and pileated woodpecker, among many others.

To attend, festival-goers need to purchase a \$5 festival button at the entrance to the college. Children 14 and under are admitted free of charge. No reservations are required for any of the tours or presentations.

While the price for festival buttons is the same

Teahan taught FitzGerald and McCormack the old country techniques of Irish musical entertainment, making them one of the last generations to be directly influenced by a master of this musical genre.

By 1988, shortly before Teahan's death, the duo continued his musical legacy with the Wailin' Banshees, joining forces with banjo great Bert McMahon of Woodford, County Galway and Chicago fiddle legend Mary McDonagh. The Banshees flourished, but it was the power of seeing such Texan greats as Stevie Ray Vaughan, Joe Ely and Rodney Crowell that fueled FitzGerald and McCormack's songwriting and ultimately led to the formation of Switchback in 1993.

Playing over 200 engagements a year, Switchback can be heard at festivals ranging from the Stan Rogers Folk Festival in Nova Scotia to the Summer Celebration in Michigan where they performed for an audience of 15,000.

Switchback also conducts educational programs and songwriting workshops for school and community organizations.

For more information on the special May 15 performance, contact the KCPA ticket office by calling 989-275-6777 or visit online at kirtland-center.com.

as last year, the button has even greater value for festival-goers in 2010. The Kirtland Center for the Performing Arts, also located on the Roscommon campus, will be hosting a special performance by the folk group Switchback at 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 15.

Tickets for the concert are \$22 and \$20 per person, with \$5 off for those already having purchased a festival button.

"Festival costs in almost every area have gone up," said Enger. "But we want to keep this an event that everyone is able to attend, because it's an educational event, community festival and a celebration of nature all rolled into one.

"And, for just \$5, it's still a terrific bargain considering all the activities available throughout the day," he added.

There is also a special Friday workshop, "Taking it to the next level – Birding with Caleb Putnam," on May 14. Cost is \$35 and includes lunch. This event does require pre-registration by calling 989-275-5000, extension 418.

For a complete festival schedule and other details, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 266 or 242.

Rice gives festival an artistic touch

ROSCOMMON – Each year, one of the projects facing the members of Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival Committee is the design for the annual festival button. With the talented faculty of Kirtland Community College's Art Department, they don't have to look far.

Simply, the committee knows they can't do better than the artistic efforts of Scott Rice, a full-time art instructor at KCC's main campus near Roscommon.

Tom Dale, a KWWF Committee member and retired faculty member, said Rice has been a wonderful asset to the festival.

Each year, Dale, who visits more than 5,000 area students at area elementary schools as part of the Visiting Naturalist Program, turns to Rice for the button's artwork, which is based on that year's wildlife program.

"I just take an idea to him, tell him what I'm looking for and he does the rest," Dale said. "He's just been great. And the artwork always looks fantastic."

This year, Dale's program was on "Cat Tales." With that in mind, Rice created artwork that features "big cats" native to Michigan, as well as the Kirtland's warbler.

"People love our festival buttons and even collect them to year," said Dennis Mansfield, KWWF Committee member. "So, in a way, they have their own collection of Scott's artwork. We're just happy to have him as part of the group of people who make this such a special event."

Rice has a long list of accomplishments and awards to his credit. Since receiving his diploma from the Kendall College of Art and Design, the 1992 graduate has contributed his time and expertise to various area K-12 school programs; has been a dedicated participant and juror for many art competitions; is a member of several state and national art groups; has donated his artwork and creativity to a number of auctions and fundraisers, designed the sign work for the Kirtland Nature Trail and Marguerite Gahagen Nature Preserve, and is the editorial advisor for the "On Drawing" text book.

In March 2007, in front of family and friends, as well as several current and past Kirtland art students, Rice was honored with the Kendall's "Alumni Community Service Award" during an awards ceremony in Grand Rapids. The awards are presented annually to those alumni who have contributed significantly to their field and/or the community.

"It was a very humbling experience," said Rice, who lives in St. Helen with his wife, Ann, and their two sons. "Even the

more well-known, bigger award winner told me he was envious of me, because of the impact I had on my students.

"I never really knew how much of an impact I had on someone's life as a mentor and a friend," he added. "It was touching."

Since 2002, Rice has not only been instrumental in building the KCC art department from about 200 students per year to more than 500, he also contributed to the creation of the associate's degree in graphic design and helped more than 30 students from KCC transfer to Kendall, the Chicago Art Institute, Northwestern Michigan College and the College of Creative Studies, and win more than \$400,000 in scholarships.

Not a small feat for the "stereotypical jock looking" art guy who didn't originally intend on being a teacher.

"In the sixth grade, I knew I was going to be an artist," Rice said. "By the eighth grade, I knew Kendall College was the college I wanted to attend.

"But teaching? No, I wanted to be a comic book illustrator," he added.

His first taste of teaching arose when, after watching his instructor demonstrate a drawing for figurative study, he raised his hand and mentioned a process he was taught at Kendall.

"After class, the instructor asked me to see him in his office," Rice said. "He said he was amazed with my ability to draw, as well as teach, and offered me the role to supervise the life drawing class, the models and a degree transfer."

After much deliberation and reflection on his family connection to teaching – his mother, both his in-laws and an aunt were all teachers – he knew he'd found his calling.

"Seeing how much joy (my family) had on teaching students and the positive aspect they have on someone's life, I decided to do it," he said.

In 1996, after graduating with his master's degree in drawing and painting from CMU, he began doing just that. He was offered an adjunct faculty position at Kirtland, teaching the advanced eighth-grade drawing, then college drawing classes and was hired full-time six short years later.

"As an instructor, I want to see my students succeed in their art, whether by gaining expertise in the visual communication field or fulfilling their goal to receive their (bachelor's in fine arts)," Rice added.

For more information on Kirtland's art programs, contact Rice by calling 989-275-5000, extension 300, or via e-mail at ricet@kirtland.edu.

Cutting through the myths

Clearcutting forests helps keep lands vital for all

By Irene Borak

ROSCOMMON – Let's face it – a lot of people really don't care for the sight of a good clearcut. Myself, I've always seen them as scenes of great potential. They're great places to scout for birds of prey, as well as insects, snakes and other less-handsome creatures.

But I realize I'm in the minority when I say with all honesty that I've never seen a clearcut in this beautiful state of Michigan that I did not like. In fact, nine out of 10 people I talk to about the subject will liberally use the words "rape," "devastation" and "nuclear holocaust" when describing said scenes.

From my point of view, however, they can't see the forest without the trees.

I think my father, a retired forester, said it best. "It's all in how you look at it," he said. "In reality, we've simply changed the age of the forest."

Regardless of whether you think of it as the work of the devil, or the portent of better things to come, the clearcut is an option that should not be taken away from those who manage our forests. Just like you wouldn't take a hammer away from a carpenter and expect him to be able to build you a house, you can no more take away one of the most important tools that foresters use in this region of Northern Michigan.

Without the option to clearcut, management of certain tree species, especially the jack pine with which we are so amply blessed, becomes difficult at best. When it comes to jack pine at least, here's why:

SMOKEY'S FRIENDS don't play with fire. Smokey Bear was not from Michigan. So it's not likely that he'd ever seen a jack pine, much less heard the term "bird of fire" when he started his fire-prevention campaign back in the 1950s. But that didn't stop him from having a profound impact on what used to be a fire-dependent ecosystem – the jack pine forests of Northern Michigan.

Lest we made the big guy cry, youngsters for years have heeded Smokey's message and no longer play with matches and we, rightly so, cheer our firefighters as heroes and saviors. Since the advent of the Smokey Bear ad campaign, decades of Americans have viewed the forest fire as nothing other than something to be squelched.

This was bad news, however, for jack pine forests and the creatures that call them home, most notably the Kirtland's

JACK PINE ECOSYSTEM

We often think of forests as stable, mature communities of very large, old trees, rich with life. We may think of other natural communities which lack the towering trees and thick green mantle of the mature forest as less rich or less productive. But this is not the case.

In both the northern Lower and Upper Peninsulas of Michigan, you can find a forest ecosystem which has always contained few large trees and little or no old growth. A forest where soils are dry and the vegetation sparse, it is called a *barrens*. A forest periodically swept by raging fires, only to spring back, fresh and revitalized.

A forest which is amazingly productive and biologically diverse, providing homes for numerous plants and animals, many of them nowhere else on Earth. That is the **jack pine** ecosystem.

Today, more than ever, we are part of the jack pine ecosystem, seeking to extract its resources, enjoy its beauty, explore its secrets, and preserve its life. The jack pine forests can exist, only if we care.

Natural History: As plants and animals followed the northward retreat of the glaciers 12,000 to 16,000 years ago, they formed a variety of natural communities. The warm climate and moist, rich soils of the southern half of the Lower Peninsula eventually fostered the growth of deciduous forests.

Farther north, as the Wisconsin ice sheet melted, it deposited a glacial till and left a sandy outwash plain which was dry and nutri-

ent poor. The plants and animals which came to dominate this large area formed the coniferous forests. One of the most fascinating of these northern forests is the jack pine ecosystem.

The jack pine ecosystem is characterized by dense stands of relatively young trees interspersed with small grass and sedge openings and is often called the jack pine "plains" or "barrens." Except for lowland areas of aspen, birch, maple, or cedar and spruce, its vegetation is dry and sparse. This ecosystem experiences extreme temperature and dryness and is prone to fire. The jack pine ecosystem is extremely well adapted to fire, so well adapted that it is dependent upon fire for its very existence.

Succession is the process by which early, pioneering plant communities are replaced, or succeeded, by later communities. While we often think of forests as progressing toward "climax" communities of very large, old trees, the jack pine forest contains few old trees. On these sandy plains, the jack pine represents both the early and late successional stages.

All of the native wildlife species are adapted to a dynamic, ever-changing landscape perpetuated by the recurrence of fire. Early successional plant communities, such as jack pine forest, actually have greater productivity than mature systems, because they capture the sun's energy more efficiently and produce plant and animal material (biomass) at a faster rate than mature forests.

– *Story courtesy of the MDNR.*

warbler. Without periodic wild-fire, jack pine forests do not regenerate well.

Northern Michigan comprises the very southern tip of the natural range for jack pine and they tend to inhabit the very sandy, dry soils types here that other species do not do well in. In fact, jack pine in Michigan doesn't grow nearly as well as it does in Southern Canada, but it can survive the unusually dry conditions and harsh frosts that plague this region.

However, they don't survive well for long. For most of their lives, local jack pine stands are under stress from either the lack, or overabundance, of one or more natural commodities, be it sunlight, rain or nutrients. Because of this, when they are allowed to mature, jack pine forests will eventually succumb to insect and disease infestation. This creates lots of dead, dry tinder that makes for great wildfire and, historically, this pattern served to regenerate the species very well.

But with Smokey around, old jack pine forests just got older.

Jack pine is known as a "fire species" because, when the inevitable forest fire does sweep through a dry jack pine

forest, it kills those trees that are not already dead, thus preparing the site for regeneration, but also opening the tough jack pine cones to release the seeds necessary for this process.

Jack pine produce what are known as serotinous cones – they are sealed with a tough resin that prevents the cones, and thus the seeds within, from drying out in the harsh conditions in which the tree grows. This resin melts however, in high temperatures such as those produced by wildfire. The seeds are released onto the bare, open conditions they do well in.

This tendency to regenerate by wildfire is why most jack pine stands you'll ever walk through are, for the most part, even aged – all the trees got their start at the same time.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS need young jack pine, and so do we. For reasons known only to themselves, the Kirtland's warbler as a species adapted itself to this fire-dependent ecosystem. They nest exclusively in large areas of young jack pine.

You should really read Bob

Hess's article on page 2 to find out the specifics, but what it boils down to is that the push toward fire prevention all but eliminated periodic wildfire from the region. And by the 1970s, without Mother Nature to regenerate large tracts of jack pine forests in northern Michigan, the Kirtland's warbler started going downhill fast.

Which isn't to say that the drastic drop in population of this little songbird was all Smokey's fault. The brown-headed cowbird shoulders a lot of the blame as well. The cowbird is labelled a "brood parasite" because it lays its eggs in other birds' nest and, as it pushed its range eastward from the plains, it encountered plenty of species of which it could take advantage.

The combined effect of a severe decline in young jack pine stands and a rise in the population of brown-headed cowbirds led to a Kirtland's warbler population low in 1974 of around 330 individuals.

It was then that the concept of the "controlled burn" gained popularity in jack pine management circles.

Alas, it was again our intolerance for fire that got in the way

of a good idea. And then, of course, there was the Mack Lake fire of 1980 – a controlled burn that got away – consuming one life, 44 homes and buildings and 20,000 acres of forestland in the process.

And you thought clearcuts were bad! Anyone who was around for the Mack Lake fire can tell you what impact an out-of-control controlled burn can have on the psyche of a northern Michigan homeowner.

So what is a forest manager to do?

If she lets a jack pine forest live too long, it succumbs to age and natural predators, is no longer usable in the forest products industry and becomes a fire hazard. If a controlled burn of said forest gets out of hand, it leads to the potential loss of property and life, as well as really bad PR. (Despite this risk, forest managers retain this valuable tool and use it with caution.)

So often it comes down to just one management option – the clearcut.

By harvesting and replanting jack pine on a fairly rigorous 50-year cycle, everybody wins. The trees at 50 years are large enough to have some commercial value, yet usually have not yet succumbed to too much insect and/or disease damage. The Kirtland's warbler and its pals that inhabit the young stands that are planted in the wake of the harvest have a steady supply of suitably aged habitat in which to nest every year when they return from the Bahamas. And in addition, the risk of catastrophic wildfire is greatly diminished.

Whether you like the look of them or not, jack pine clearcuts in this region of Northern Michigan were planned with all these factors in mind, by foresters and land managers who love the land as much as you do. They've even left snags – dead standing trees – for the bird species that love them and they've replanted jack pine at a density and pattern that benefits many species of wildlife in addition to the Kirtland's warbler.

So the next time you drive by or through one of these high-profile scenes of good forest management, try to see the forest without all those trees in the way.

Think of the forest to come and all the creatures that are happy to take advantage of this reborn ecosystem.

– *Irene Borak is the former director of public relations at Kirtland Community College and is currently the volunteer coordinator for the Kirtland's Warbler Festival.*

Birders and others can help with wildlife studies

By Thomas Reznich

Houghton Lake Resorter

Birders and other outdoor enthusiasts can help efforts by state and federal agencies to learn about and keep track of three native species of bird this spring by reporting sightings of trumpeter swans, ospreys and bald eagles to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Roscommon Operations Service Center. Wildlife biologist Mark Boersen said the DNR is also interested in sightings of the mute swan, an introduced species.

The trumpeter swan, the world's largest waterfowl, is a formerly abundant species native to Michigan which was not seen in the wilds of the state for almost 100 years after habitat depletion and market hunting wiped out the population in the 1880s. Efforts to reestablish the bird in Michigan in the 1980s and 90s proved successful, and a 2000 count exceeded 400 individual birds.

In 1975, there weren't many bald eagles in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. That is when DNRE wildlife biologist Jerry Weinrich, now retired, started making survey flights covering the area to count how many there were.

He counted 30 pairs.

Two years ago, after beginning his 33rd set of spring survey flights in mid-March last spring, Weinrich reported almost 400 pairs of bald eagles, including 13 new pairs. He said he expects more new birds and nests will be found in upcoming years, and that an average of 20 new pairs have been found each spring over the last six years.

The surveys are part of a



Department of Natural Resources and Environment lead pilot Bill Green (left) and retired wildlife biologist Jerry Weinrich have logged many hours in the air during eagle survey flights which annually begin in mid-March. Weinrich's participation in the yearly aerial survey, which searches for eagles and eagle nests, began in 1975.

Photo by Thomas Reznich

continuing contaminant monitoring study that was begun in the 1970s by Clemson University professor Bill Bowerman to see what effects pesticides and other chemicals have on eagle reproduction. Along with the aerial survey, there is also a banding program during which blood samples are taken from eagle chicks to see what contaminants are present.

Weinrich said the major factor behind the upsurge in Michigan's eagle population was the banning of the insecticide DDT in the 1970s.

He said he and the DNRE's pilot and aircraft work under a contract with Clemson and also conduct a count of ospreys later in the season. He said he will put in 140 hours in the air before the survey ends in July,

and that data is shared by Clemson, the DNRE and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Another valuable tool for getting a thorough count of nests are reports from individuals who spot them from the ground. Since the nest sites are marked using GPS, Weinrich said he can tell immediately if a reported nest has been found before.

Anyone sighting adult eagles or a new eagle nest can report it by calling the DNR at 989-275-5151.

- This article originally appeared in the Houghton Lake Resorter's Spring Seasons magazine in March 2009 and is reprinted with permission by the Houghton Lake Resorter (www.houghtonlakeresorter.com).

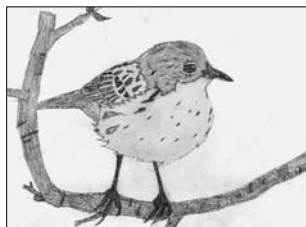
Bahamian student featured on '09-10 calendar cover

ROSCOMMON — A drawing by a Bahamian sixth-grader was selected as the overall winner in the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival's Young Artists Calendar contest and was featured on the front cover of the 2009-10 edition of the calendar.

The overall winner, Mario Strachan, a sixth-grader at St. Anne's Catholic School on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas, submitted a drawing of a Kirtland's warbler perched on a tree branch. The winning entry was one of more than 1,000 submitted prior to last year's April 20 deadline, according to Dennis Mansfield, contest coordinator and director of public relations for Kirtland Community College.

The calendar contest was created by the Kirtland's Warbler Festival Committee, which helps organize the annual festival hosted by KCC on its main campus near Roscommon on the third Saturday of May, as a way to engage and educate young students about the Kirtland's warbler and Michigan's jackpine ecosystem.

"Again, we had hundreds for entries from across northern Michigan and the Bahamas," Mansfield said. "That includ-



The overall winning entry for '09-10, was by Mario Strachan, a sixth-grader at St. Anne's Catholic School on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas.

ed entries from more than 20 different schools, from students ranging from pre-kindergarten to the eighth grade. We're just thrilled to see so many students again take part in the contest."

The calendar entries were judged by members of the KWWF Committee and special guests. Selection criteria included artistic effort and attention to the biology of the Kirtland's warbler, its habitat and the region's jackpine ecosystem.

Haily Davis, a first-grader at Surline Elementary School in West Branch,

earned first runner-up honors for her colorful drawing of a Kirtland's warbler sitting on a jack pine branch. Davis' entry will be used on the back cover of the calendar. And another Bahamian student, sixth-grader Virginia Jean of the Tarpum Bay Primary School on Eleuthera, won second runner-up recognition, with her drawing of warbler eating berries set to be on the inside cover.

"It's amazing to see the artistic talent of these very creative young people," Mansfield said. "And the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival committee is proud to be able to help display their work, as well as to help educate more people about the Kirtland's warbler."

The KWWF committee has expanded the calendar in recent years, increasing the number of winning entries displayed with the individual months from 18 to 20 and increased the number of honorable mention selections from 30 to 60. And that number might grow to nearly 80 in the upcoming 2010-11 edition, depending on design changes.

The calendar also includes an informational page about the Kirtland's warbler.

"We're hoping to improve the calendar even more with this year's edition,

adding to its educational value," Mansfield added. "But it's the students and their artwork that make the Young Artists Calendar a very unique project."

Kirtland officials are planning to have the new 2010-11 calendar printed prior to the start of the upcoming school year. Students with winning or honorable mention entries, and the participating schools, will receive a number of calendars courtesy of the KWWF committee. Persons wishing to purchase additional calendars may do so at the KCC Bookstore or by using the ordering form included with each calendar.

The artwork for the 2010-11 calendar contest will also be on display at the Kirtland's Warbler Festival on Saturday, May 15, at the Kirtland House conference center. Purchase of a \$5 festival button — good for all festival events — is required for those 15 and older. Winning and honorable mention drawings will be posted on the festival's website, as well.

For more details on the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival or the Young Artist Calendar contest, visit online at <http://warbler.kirtland.edu/>, e-mail mansfield.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 242.

Habitat management helps more than just Kirtland's

Kirtland's warblers are really picky about where they call home. They nest almost exclusively in Michigan, and only in thick young jack pine forests that grow on a special sandy soil.

And coincidentally, about three-fourths of the world's population of this bubbly little songster nests in the four-county area of Crawford, Ogemaw, Oscoda and Roscommon counties — precisely the area served by Kirtland Community College, the host and sponsor of the annual festival that celebrates the remarkable comeback of the bird from which the college took its name.

The Kirtland's warbler was once much more abundant because there was once much more of their preferred young jack pine forestland in Michigan.

Modern forest fire prevention has been very successful. It has controlled the wild forest fires which used to create vast areas of ideal habitat for this now endangered warbler. Successful forest fire control has allowed jack pine forests to age and mature, preventing the natural perpetuation of the young jack pine habitat needed by the Kirtland's warbler.

As most everybody knows, the loss of nesting and brood-rearing habitat is what brought about the serious decline of our "jack pine warbler". The other major cause has been nest parasitism by the brown-headed cowbird, a non-native prairie species that lays its eggs in Kirtland's warbler nests killing many of their young.

In 1973, Congress passed the federal Endangered Species Act.

The Kirtland's warbler was

"Dozens, if not hundreds, of other species benefit from the significant habitat changes that occur during the 50-year cutting and regeneration cycle that is used."

- Robert Hess

the first bird designated as endangered under the Act. Since then, the Michigan DNRE, and the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been working closely together to bring back the warbler and its habitat. They jointly have set aside about 150,000 acres of their publicly-owned forest land in the Lower Peninsula to focus their efforts on the recovery of the Kirtland's warbler and other species that depend on the jack pine ecosystem.

In recent years, Kirtland's warblers have begun nesting in the Upper Peninsula, so the agencies are expanding their Kirtland's warbler management in newly established nesting areas up there also.

These habitat improvement efforts have focused on clearcutting mature jack pine stands followed up by planting young jack pine seedlings. This replaces the natural regeneration of the jack pine forests previously maintained by the vast areas burned by wildfires prior to European settlement.

Now 150,000 acres — plus the new acreage in the U.P.— might seem like an awful lot of land to set aside for one little bird, for one species of wildlife.

But the jack pine warbler is hardly the only species that benefits.

And it is not the only species that the natural resource agencies target when managing the jack pine on the 50-year rotation they use to assure the survival of the Kirtland's warbler. Dozens, if not hundreds, of other species benefit from the significant habitat changes that occur during the 50 year cutting and regeneration cycle that is used.

Early in the cycle, following the clearcutting and re-planting, the new habitat is very open. It looks and functions much like a prairie. Grassland birds including the upland sandpiper, Lincoln's sparrow, clay-colored sparrow, Brewer's blackbird, even the grasshopper sparrow, can be found nesting in the newly opened forest land.

To help other species, the agencies require that commercial cutters leave standing snags and dead and downed trees during their timber operations. This helps cavity-nesting birds like bluebirds, chickadees, kestrels and woodpeckers.

The downed logs and woody debris provides ideal habitat for meadow voles, deer mice, salamanders and snakes. This increased prey base attracts northern harriers, red-tailed hawks during the summer, and rough-legged hawks and even bald eagles in the winter. Badgers and coyotes are more common in these early stages of forest regeneration.

As the planted jack pine grows up and as the oaks, cherries and other deciduous trees that were also clearcut sprout back up, woody habitat returns creating a thicker, brush-like stage. More food and cover is available for deer and their numbers increase. Bears feel more secure with the added cover and are also attracted by blueberries and ant colonies that are more abundant in this stage.

Brush-land birds such as brown thrashers, chipping sparrows, ovenbirds, house wrens, and eastern kingbirds move in. Ruffed grouse, turkeys, and the rare spruce grouse benefit from this brushy, dense young jack pine-cherry-oak regenerating habitat.

It is during this stage when the Kirtland's warbler begins using these treated areas, usually when the planted jack pines reach five to eight years of age or four to five feet in height.

The Kirtland's warblers nest on the ground usually under the thick, live pine boughs. They will use this thick jack pine habitat for only another eight to 10 years until the lower jack pine branches begin dying back due to shading.

As the trees become taller and their canopies fill out, the habitat becomes more forest-like. Grasses and sedges that were more dominant in the ear-

lier, more-open grassland stage begin receding, also due to increased shading. Blueberries and juneberries become more dominant.

These habitat changes in turn attract birds like Nashville warblers, hermit thrushes, rose-breasted grosbeaks, robins, and white-throated sparrows — the forest land species. Some trees die from the deeper shade, creating more dead snags and homes for woodpeckers, squirrels, and bats and other small mammals.

And so it goes, forest succession progresses, the structure of the forest changes helping some species and reducing habitats

for others — all bringing about a rich and diverse succession of plant and animal species and most notably, bird species that are best adapted to these ever-changing habitat conditions.

So while it appears that all this land has been set aside for the endangered Kirtland's warbler, its special management also benefits — and is intended to benefit — much much more.

— *Bob Hess is a retired wildlife biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment and Program Committee chairman for the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival.*

HELP US BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR OUR STUDENTS AT KIRTLAND

Dear Friends of Kirtland Community College,

Each year, the Kirtland Community College Foundation works closely with the college faculty and staff to enrich the lives of our students, as well as their ability to learn.

This is all made possible thanks to the generous support we receive from our local communities.

We are hoping that we can count on your contributions as we work on future fund-raising efforts. Your generous gifts are essential to helping continue the Foundation's efforts, which include: providing financial assistance to students of all ages and circumstances; supporting professional and personal growth activ-

ities of faculty and staff; encouraging innovative programs which benefit the college and community; and engaging in other activities appropriate to the mission of KCC and the Foundation.

Thanks to you and your financial pledges, despite many challenges, the Foundation continues to fulfill its mission and face the future with hope and confidence for generations to come.

Thank you once again for your support.

Sincerely,

A. Pepper Kuntzsch
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Photo courtesy of Ron Austing

The Kirtland's warbler was once much more abundant because there was once much more of their preferred young jack pine forestland in Michigan. Modern forest fire prevention has been very successful. It has controlled the wild forest fires which used to create vast areas of ideal habitat for this now endangered warbler.

Numbers continue to rise for the rarest of warblers

The Kirtland's warbler census is held June 6-15 each year and is a count of singing males, as the females do not sing. Censuses start about sunrise and end by 11 a.m., when singing frequency begins to lessen.

Photo courtesy U.S. Forest Service



Kirtland's thrive in northern Michigan

By Michael Petrucha

It wasn't really all that long ago when Harold Mayfield organized the first Kirtland's warbler census in 1951.

The second census took place in 1961 and the third in 1971. After the census totals dropped 60 percent from 502 in 1961 to 201 in 1971, the ad hoc Kirtland's Warbler Advisory Committee recommended holding the census annually starting in 1972 to closely monitor the population. The results are also

used as an aid for evaluating management and forestry practices.

The Kirtland's warbler census is held June 6-15 each year and is a count of singing males, as the females do not sing.

It is generally assumed that there is one female for each male. Although this is not always true, one can double the singing male count to get an approximation of the number of adults. The male is a loud and persistent singer, and in good listening conditions, can be heard a quarter of a mile away.

Censuses start about sunrise and end by 11 a.m., when singing frequency begins to lessen and hearing conditions degrade. The census is done with as little disturbance to the birds as possible.

Kirtland's only have to be heard, not seen, to be counted. In large areas, census personnel simultaneously walk parallel transects about 0.2 miles apart, keeping track of the distance walked by counting their paces. Roads, trails and habitat edges are used whenever possible to lessen disturbance of the warblers.

State or federal permits are required to enter all Kirtland's warbler breeding areas. When a male is heard, its location is marked on a sketch map. Afterward, the maps are compared with those of the adjacent transect to avoid over counting. Smaller areas are checked from the edges of the habitat.

The census is a cooperative effort of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Environment, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Military Affairs, Michigan Audubon Society, and many volunteers.

In 2009, there were 1,813 singing males counted in Michigan, of which 1,780 were located in the Lower Peninsula and 33 in the Upper Peninsula. Kirtland's warblers were found in 11 LP and five UP counties.

Wisconsin reported 11 males, and Ontario reported two males, for a North American total of 1,826. This represents 1.2 percent increase from the 1,803 males reported in 2008, and is the highest total ever recorded. Wisconsin reported 11 female Kirtland's Warblers and multiple nests. Ontario reported nesting for a third consecutive year, with a two pair and two nests.

The warbler population has been on an upward climb since a low of 167 males in 1987. The 1813 Michigan males counted this year are almost 11 times more than the 1987 count.

— Michael Petrucha is a wildlife assistant for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and a member of the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival Committee.



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10775 N St Helen Road
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Mikenauk Rock & Gem Society set to return to festival

Hobbyist group again to host youth rock hunts at 11 a.m.

ROSCOMMON – For years, the Mikenauk Rock and Gem Society has been part of the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival.

But rarely has the group's display been as popular as the last couple of years, when it was moved to a prominent location in the Game Room of the Student Center at Kirtland Community College.

The hobbyist organization once again will display a sawdust pit in which kids (of all ages) are encouraged to sift through and find various fossils and mineral treasures – all free of charge.

"Kid's love it," said Mikenauk's secretary, Gwen Anderson, adding the group hopes to expose visitors to the hobby of rock collecting by showing that there's more to it than just picking up and looking at rocks.

The group's extensive and fascinating displays promote the geological sciences and stimulate interest by including different types of crafts one can do with rocks and minerals, many of which can be found right here in Michigan.

The society sells beginning collections for the starting hobbyist. For just a dollar or two, people can pick out stones and place them in egg cartons to start their own collections.

Displays progressively advance to the more exotic arrangements, involving unique and extremely fragile fossils dating back thousands of years, and rocks from around the world.

Their beauty is accented in the club's jewelry demonstrations, an interesting aspect Anderson shares with many rock and gem enthusiasts. Rocks are tumbled to bring out their luster by putting the stones in a container and shaking them together for polishing. The rocks and fossils can be wrapped with wire and beaded to create pendants, necklaces and rings.

Anderson's collection includes a shark tooth pendant that she says is a couple of million years old.

Past highlights to Mikenauk's natural wonders have included such rarities as a mammoth tusk exhibit and a dinosaur egg unearthed from China.

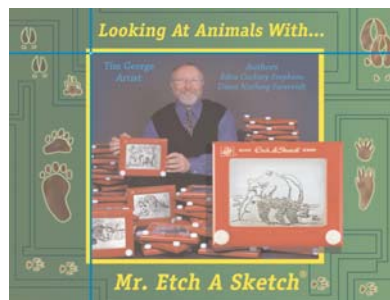
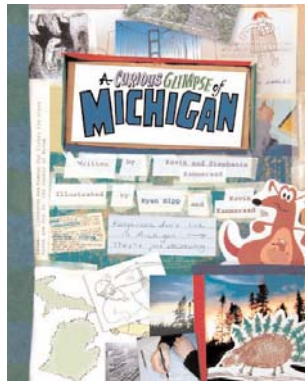
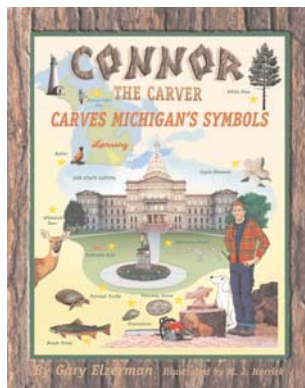
To learn more about the Mikenauk Rock and Gem Society, visit its Web site at: <http://www.geocities.com/mikenauk/>.

- Story by former KCC journalism student Sarah Colclasure.

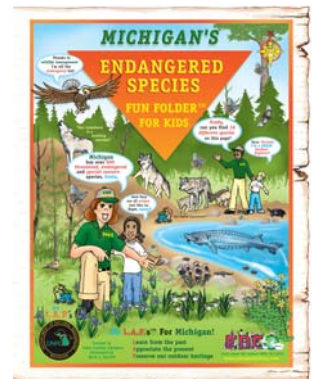


The annual rock hunts (right) have always been a favorite of younger festival-goers. This year, the hunt is slated for 11 a.m. Don't miss out!

KIDS' BOOKS AND OTHER RESOURCES ABOUT MICHIGAN



The activities for kids in this publication is courtesy of EDCO Publishing, Auburn Hills, MI. EDCO creates and publishes books and other Michigan materials for kids and teachers.



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For more information on the annual Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival, visit online at warbler.kirtland.edu.

Hartwick Pines State Park: A one-stop birding destination

By Craig Kasmer

Park Interpreter,
Hartwick Pines State Park

GRAYLING - As birders, we all know that birds can be particular about their habitat.

Therefore, to see specific species, we have to travel far

and wide to catch a glimpse of that elusive feathered friend. For us hard core birders, an eventful day of birding can be exhausting not to mention expensive.

A typical day in the life of a northern Michigan birder could go like this: one might drive to a

lake or river to see a variety of waterfowl or water-loving passerines; then travelling inland and to higher elevations to see (and hear) numerous species of warblers and woodpeckers; finally on to an area of open grassland where a bevy of sparrows and

birds of prey can be observed.

Back at the hotel, a review of the journal entries and field guides closes out the day. Tomorrow, you will do it all over again...Being a devoted birder, this is entertainment and what's more, accepted behavior

every spring and fall (or anytime of the year).

But there is an easier way to see dozens of bird species without putting hundreds of miles on your car: spend the day at Hartwick Pines State Park.

Every one who has traveled north (or south) along I-75 has passed by Exit 259. Some have stopped and others vow to do so when they have more time. Trust me when I say that Hartwick Pines is close to your one-stop-birding opportunity.

One of the greatest reasons to spend the day birding at Hartwick Pines is because of the wide variety of land-types and forest types found within the 9,000-plus acre park. Listed below are some of these areas with the types of birds commonly observed:

Old Growth Conifer Forest - warblers, grosbeaks, thrushes, woodpeckers, raptors, owls, crossbills

Red Pine Plantations - nuthatches, chickadees, brown creepers, winter wrens, owls, raptors, thrushes

Northern Hardwood Forest - warblers, tanagers, sparrows, thrushes, wrens, woodpeckers, raptors, owls, vireos

Lowland Conifers - warblers, owls, sparrows, game birds (grouse and woodcock)

Oak-Pine Forest - chickadees, nuthatches, jays, ravens, warblers

Mature Jack Pine Forest - warblers, sparrows, woodpeckers, thrushes

Open Fields - sparrows, raptors

Bright and Glory Lakes - ducks, wading birds, kingfishers, mergansers, loons, geese, swallows

AuSable River - warblers, sparrows, wading birds

Bog - wrens, warblers, thrushes, sparrows, game birds (grouse and woodcock).

Additionally, there is a bird feeding area where visitors can watch the seed eating birds hover around the window feeders and the tanagers, grosbeaks and warblers take baths in the water garden (a.k.a. bird pond).

A bird list in the visitor center is constantly updated so folks can see what species are currently in the area and where they are being seen. As one can see, there are many birding sites in which to choose. Bring your field guides, checklist and binoculars (and bug spray!). You will not be disappointed.

So come and spend the day among the towering pines while a black-throated green "zee zee zee zoo zees" in the background and the barred owl ask "who cooks for you?"

For more information call the Michigan Forest Visitor Center at Hartwick Pines at 989-348-2537. Or e-mail Kasmer, park interpreter at HPSP, at kasmerc@michigan.gov for an update of what is currently being seen.

The community college is education's best kept secret.



Check out **KIRTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE** when planning your future!



For more information on KCC athletic programs or to complete a recruiting form to possibly play sports at Kirtland, visit online at firebirds.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, ext. 385.



Kirtland Community College offers a wide variety of programs, including many online courses, at some of the most affordable prices in higher education.

Just compare the difference to the price tag of many larger colleges or universities. Your first two years at KCC will be as good or better than many four-year institutions - and at about a third the cost!

Plus, high school students can get a jump on college through our **DUAL ENROLLMENT** and **ARTICULATION** programs.

So when planning your future, see how Kirtland can help you take that next step to a brighter future.



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For a course or career, visit us online at www.kirtland.edu!

Helping the Kirtland's is the responsible thing to do

By Tom Dale
KWWF Committee member

I was a high school science teacher in Ithaca, just 150 miles down the road just over three years prior to coming to Kirtland Community College.

Ecology was becoming a big deal then and it was with much excitement that our science department launched its first ecology course. It was the high status course at the time, so the highest ranking member of the department got to teach it.

And after just one year, he was done with it and the priority went to No. 2. He, too, abandoned it and so skipping No. 3 (he declined even to try) it came to me. I bombed, as well.

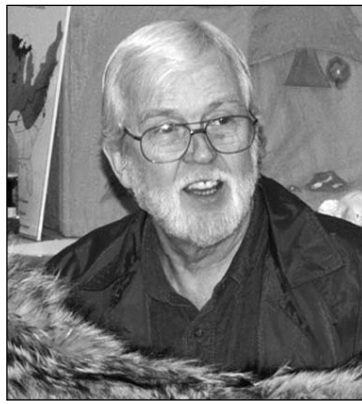
That was about a three-year run and

was met with utter failure. We just couldn't get a grasp on the subject.

There wasn't much available at the time to help us design a high school ecology course. Ecology its self was a fairly new subject.

All my training was in biochemistry and genetics. John was primarily trained in chemistry. Byron was a geologist. None of us was an ecologist.

That was about the time the job at Kirtland opened up and right in the middle of the whole ecology thing, January



Tom Dale

1973, I came to the college's main campus near Roscommon. That was also the year the Endangered Species Act became the law of the land.

The first species to have a recovery plan in place and thus to come under the protection of the act was none other than our own Kirtland's warbler. By the way, it is Kirtland's warbler.

The warbler is named after Dr. Jarred Kirtland. It's his warbler. But that's another story.

America was into ecology, as well.

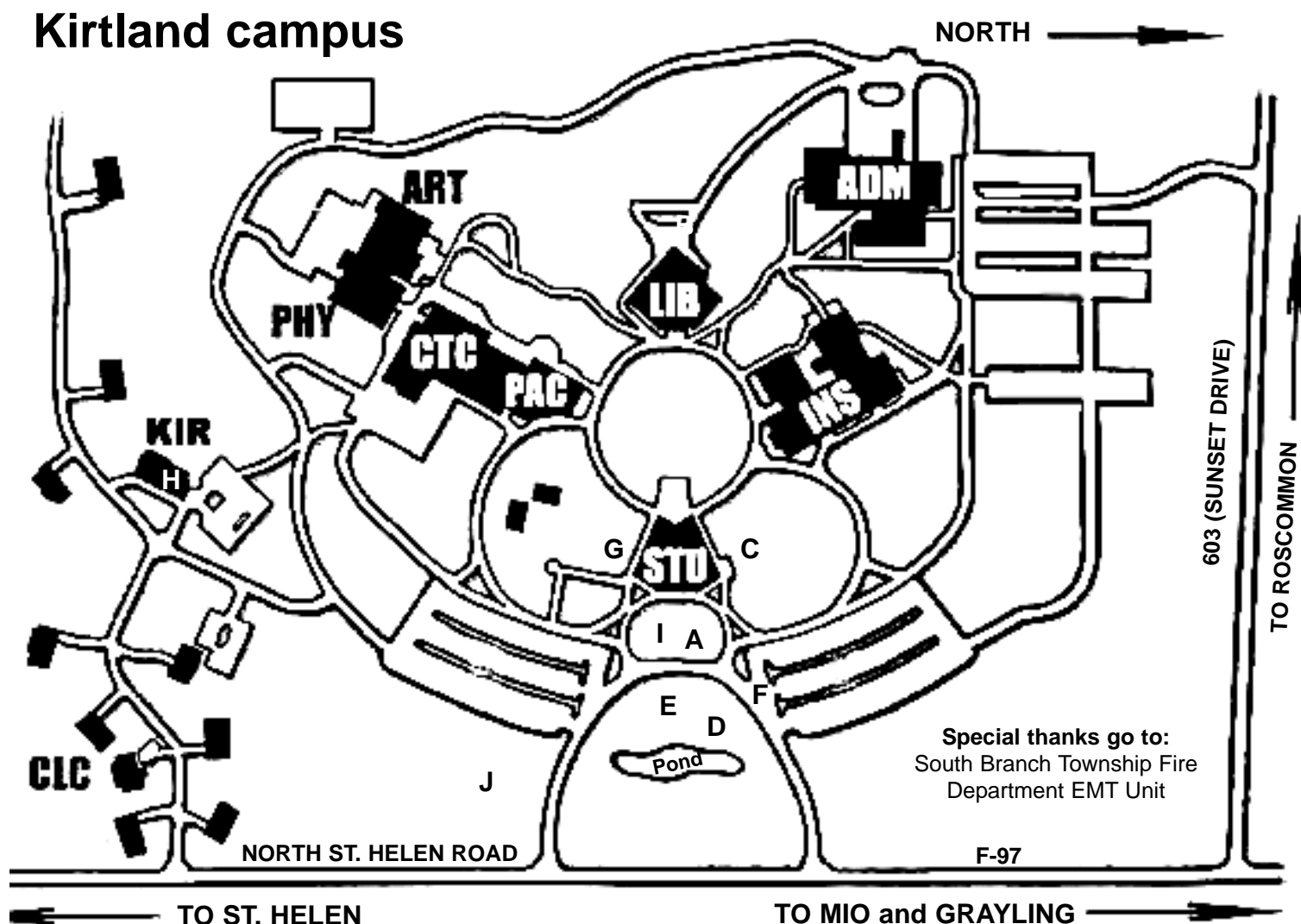
Ecology was in the vanguard of thought all over the country and at Kirtland, my good and dearly departed friend Don Fenton, was all over the subject.

Kirtland's natural resource program which had already been running for several years when I got here included: wildlife biology, forestry, fish management, forest fire control, parks and recreations, conservation law and more. Kirtland and Don Fenton knew how to teach ecology and had been doing it for years.

And there was a lot of interest in the program, as well. Natural Resources Technology was the biggest program on this campus for years. Well, for 10 years anyway.

See *ECOLOGY*, page 14

It's educational and entertaining Join the celebration at the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival!



- A – Warbler Festival Headquarters Tent
- B – Pancake Breakfast (Student Center cafe)
- C – Barbecued-Chicken Lunch
- D – Nature Arts & Crafts Show
- E – Kids' Activity Tents
- F – Horse-drawn Wagon Rides
- G – Kids' Rock Hunt
- H – Juried Art Show & Young Artists' Calendar Contest entries
- I – Nature Walk
- J – Warbler Wobble Tent

Don't miss these great off-campus nature and birding field trips:

Wakeley Lake Wildlife Walk – Friday, May 14, 7 a.m.

Houghton Lake Flats Marsh Bird Tour – Saturday, May 15, 6 p.m.

Jones' Farm Tour; Grassland and Wetland Bird Walk – Sunday, May 16, 8 a.m.

For more detailed information about these field trips, go to the Warbler Festival headquarters tent.

Ecology

Continued from page 13

Despite public concerns and interest and even congressional action, it became more and more difficult to find jobs in the field. From 1970-80, our graduates were finding interesting jobs all over, but the great recession of 1980-82 really took their toll. And Kirtland's Natural Resources Program was one of the casualties.

Environmental health issues slid to a distant back burner as the big run up to today's medical health obsession began. The Natural Resources program was scrapped as Kirtland's current highly successful associate's degree RN program began.

During a few years prior to 1966, when the formation of our college was being actively debated, the foundation for our connection to ecology was forged. A name for the college finally emerged from a host of suggestions – AuSable Valley Community College was one very hot prospect.

The AuSable River is a very famous trout stream and would have been a proud name to Wear.

Ogemaw County, however, is almost completely outside of the AuSable River drainage basin. It was the suggestion of Dr. Bontrager of Mio, a charter member of our board of trustees, that the Kirtland's warbler, unique in all the world to just our college district could provide a name that would earn us worldwide recognition.

And that it has. The college has certainly benefited from its association with the Kirtland's warbler.

It's been debated whether Kirtland's warbler should replace the robin as our official state bird (I would personally prefer the chickadee). But just as the "bird of fire" has become our mascot and name sake, so we must return the favor and become the Kirtland's warbler's advocate and protector.

I used to worry that it might

become the Kirtland's warbler's bad luck to have our college take its name. What if by our growing presence we were to cause harm to this tiny endangered species. Wouldn't it be ironic if that little bird were to become extinct because of us!

Well, by some good fortune and a lot of hard work by a crew of very serious scientists and technicians, that has not happened. The population is on the rise and seems to be in relatively good shape.

The habitat where the warbler breeds and rears its young is maintained on a 50-year rotation. On fiftieth of the reserved 150,000 acres of state and federal land, 3000 acres, is harvested and replanted each year and again 50 years hence.

The habitat becomes suitable in about 8 years and remains suitable for 10 more years. There should always be adequate habitat available in our college district to house our famous bird, provided of course that the effort is sustained.

Another management objective has been to control the non-native parasitic cow bird in the nesting habitat. Cow birds parasitize nests by laying their eggs there – a clever trick for a cow bird, but a disaster for a Kirtland's warbler.

The cow bird's eggs hatch a day or so sooner and the baby cow bird is slightly larger. The warbler parents feed the baby cow bird and eventually any baby warblers that hatch die from lack of care.

A final management objective has been to safeguard their winter range. That just happens to be the islands, big and small, of the Bahamian archipelago.

When the population of warblers was tiny, sightings of it in the Bahamas were rare. Now that the population is recovering, sightings occur much more often and a study of the warblers in their winter range has become possible and is going on right now.

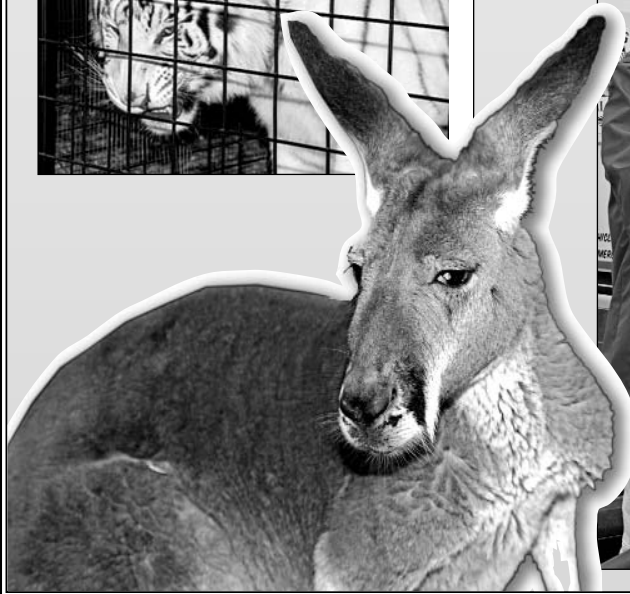
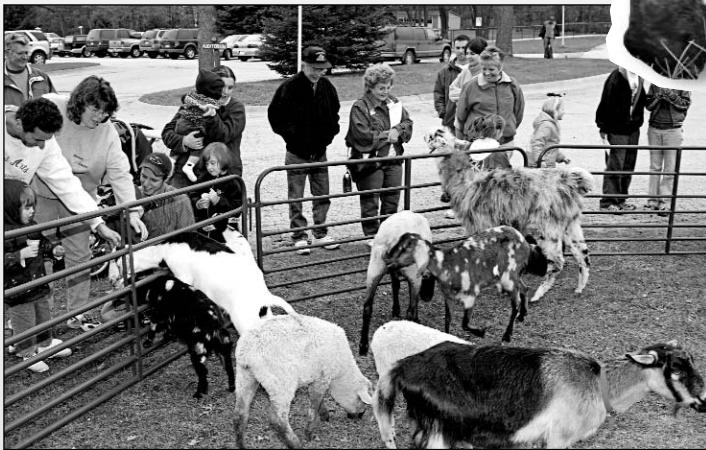
See DALE, page 15



Courtesy photos

Though they aren't likely to be seen in the jack pine forests of northern Michigan, the kangaroo, zebra, lions and tigers that will visit Kirtland's campus for yet another year are among the KWWF's most-popular attractions. Other exotic animals from the Whispering Pines Animal Kingdom include monkeys, a wallaby, a llama and several goats in a petting zoo.

Zoo-tastic



Kirtland continues to grow, serve northern Michigan

ROSCOMMON – Surrounded by the breathtaking beauty offered by Michigan's four seasons and offering splendid solitude that lends itself well to the joys and challenges of higher education, Kirtland Community College is a fully accredited two-year institution that has served the state's largest community college district for more than 40 years.

Carved out of northern Michigan's great forests, Kirtland is committed to providing quality education in a peaceful, intimate setting with one of the most productive student-to-teacher ratios (about 18-to-1) in the state.

The college's main campus –

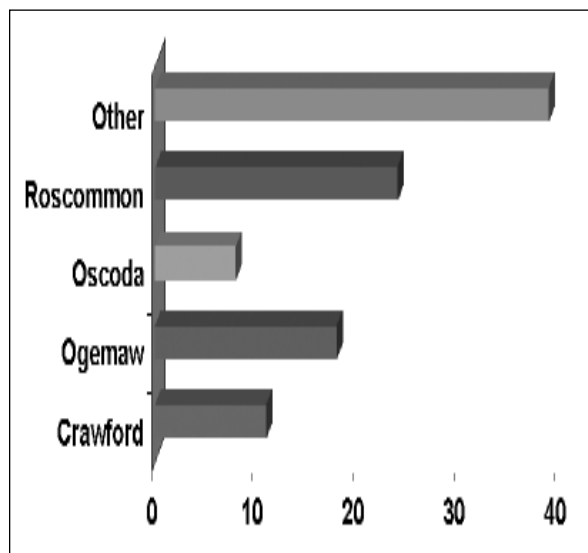
and its birth place – is located at 10775 North St. Helen Road, about 10 miles outside the Village of Roscommon and near the center of its core four-county district on a scenic spot that faculty, staff and students share with deer, squirrels, raccoons, wild turkey and even the occasional bear.

But the college takes its name from a little bird, the Kirtland's warbler, which has valiantly fought its way back from near extinction thanks to the work and cooperation of several state and federal wildlife agencies.

Each year on the third Saturday in May, the college helps host the Kirtland's

Warbler Festival, drawing birders and naturalists from all over the nation who travel to northern Michigan to the only place in the world they can be almost assured of seeing this rare song bird.

Currently, about 3,200 students attend a variety of certificate and two-year degree programs at Kirtland's two campuses - near Roscommon, and the Michigan Technical Education Center in Gaylord - with the college's service area including all or parts of Crawford, Oscoda, Ogemaw, Roscommon, Otsego, Kalkaska, Missaukee, Gladwin and Alcona counties, and surrounding areas.



Most students attending Kirtland are from the four primary counties that make up the college's tax district – Crawford, Oscoda, Ogemaw and Roscommon.

For more information about Kirtland, visit online at

www.kirtland.edu or call 989-275-5000, extension 284.

Dale

Continued from page 14

But now for the shocker! Most Bahamians don't know about them. Very few islanders are even aware that an endangered species of warbler is visiting their islands, let alone that it lives there for three fourths of the year. It is entirely likely that actions taken in the Bahamas may be frustrating our efforts locally to protect this bird.

Perhaps development is on the verge of taking a potentially harmful step. Perhaps children are unknowingly harming the birds or their winter habitat. We just don't know and it is important for us to find out.

It is entirely appropriate that this college that owes its very name to that tiny bird do what ever it can to help safe guard it now and into the future.

Scientific, ecological, educational, cultural and humanitarian involvement by this college with the islands of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas is appropriate and consistent with our own best interests.

Our backyard is just off the Florida coast and we need to be taking care of business. It is the responsible thing to do.

But, and this is the big but, that is not the only reason, nor is it even the biggest reason for us to be worrying about how the Kirtland's warbler is doing down there in the Bahamas. We are all faced with a rather classic example of the old Canary in the Coal Mine dilemma.

You know the story. The men working deep down in the mine worry constantly about the

build up of poisonous and explosive gases. By keeping a weaker scrap of life down there, the miners are forewarned of the accumulation of dangerous levels of gases when the canary drops over dead.

Creatures like the Kirtland's warbler are for us today, living up here on the surface, like that canary trapped in a cage down there in the coal mines of days gone bye. And now, here is the ecology lesson.

We now understand that the ecosystem within which we all live is healthiest and most stable when it is very complex. Many species of plants and animals and bacteria and fungi are all interconnected and interdependent.

Take one away and the whole thing suffers a little. Take many away and the whole thing, our ecosystem, suffers a lot.

The thing is, do you want to suffer a little or do you want to suffer a lot. The endangered species of the world are our warning signs. By protecting them and their homes, we are protecting ourselves, our families, our college, our ecosystem and our homes.

The Kirtland's warblers don't know this, but we do and it is up to us to protect them. It is the responsible thing to do.

- Tom Dale is a retired instructor from Kirtland Community College and now the educational director of the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve in Roscommon and a member of the KWWF Committee.

WILDLIFE SHADOW SHOW

Without a shadow of a doubt, the future of endangered species is in our hands. Create an endangered animal shadow show. See how many endangered animals you can make by using your hands. You will need an unshaded lamp or a flashlight and a blank wall. First, direct the light onto the wall. Then, make the room dark and place your hand shape in the beam of light. Practice the hand positions below. Once you have practiced, try making wings flap, mouths talk and legs walk. Use your imagination to make other shadows of endangered species.



TURTLE



EAGLE



WOLF



L.A.P.'s™ ANT

ANIMAL BABIES

- ___ 1. wolf
- ___ 2. fish
- ___ 3. eagle
- ___ 4. deer
- ___ 5. frog
- ___ 6. ant
- ___ 7. fox
- ___ 8. swan
- ___ 9. owl
- ___ 10. bear

A baby cat is a kitten, but what is a baby fish called? Match the name of the animal on the left with its baby's name.

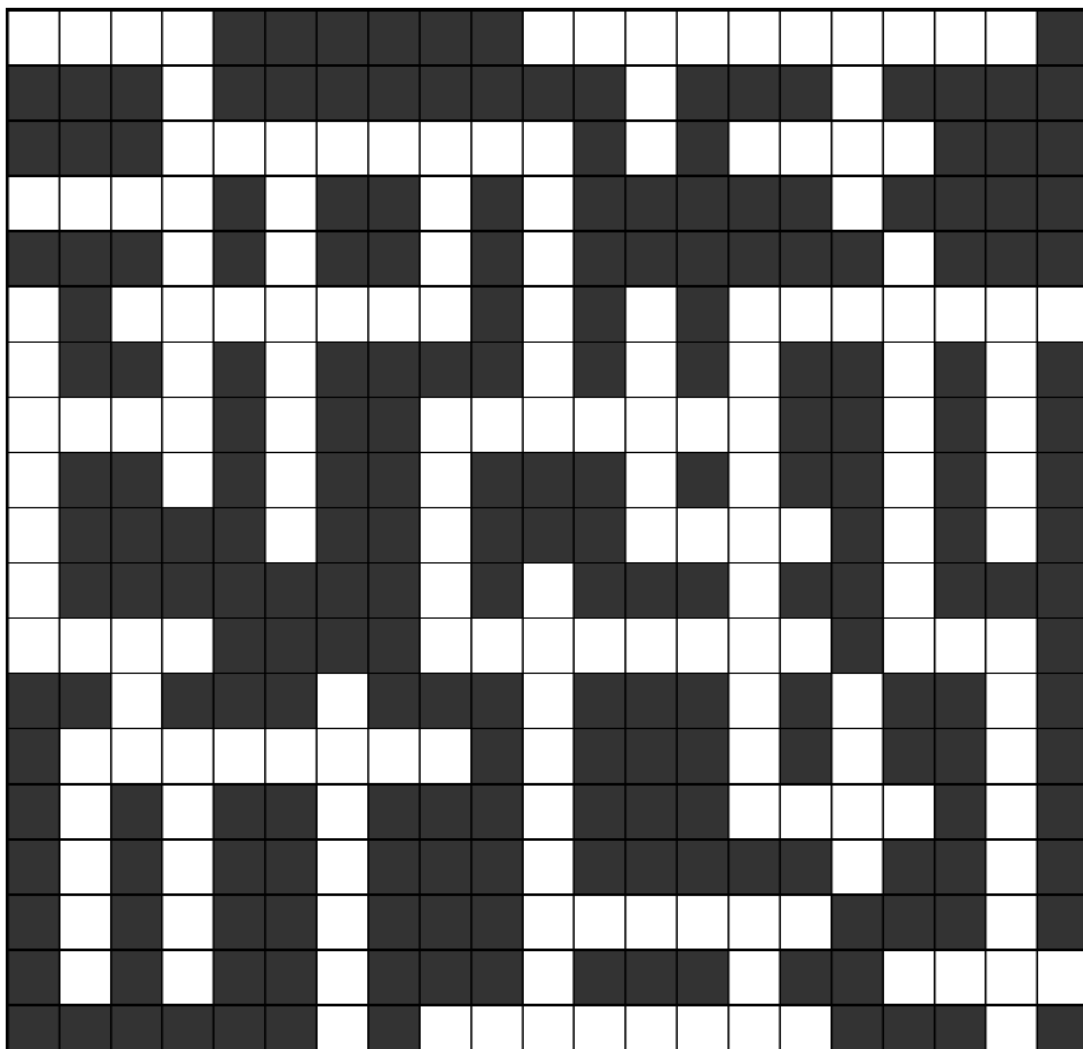
- A. fawn
- B. tadpole
- C. kit
- D. eaglet
- E. fingerling
- F. pup
- G. cub
- H. cygnet
- I. antling
- J. fledgling



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Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival Crossword Puzzle

See answers on the right bottom corner of this page.



**FIT INTO PUZZLE.
GOOD LUCK!**

3-LETTER WORDS

NOW
AXE
DRY
NET

4-LETTER WORDS

JACK
SNAG
NEST
BAND
PINE
TRAP
DEER
BIRD
EGGS
TEAM
TREE

5-LETTER WORDS

NORTH
SOUTH
COUNT
CHIRP
CHICK

6-LETTER WORDS

PLAINS
YELLOW

7-LETTER WORDS

BAHAMAS
EXTINCT

COWBIRD
HABITAT
MIGRATE

8-LETTER WORDS

RECOVERY
TRAVELER
NESTLING
PARASITE
CLEARCUT
MICHIGAN
WILDFIRE

9-LETTER WORDS

KIRTLANDS
SANDPIPER

10-LETTER WORDS

UNDERSTORY
ENDANGERED



KWWF Kids' art



This was a project, among many, to help elementary and middle school pupils throughout our region and in the Bahamas better understand one of the world's rarest warblers and the unique jack pine ecosystem in which this



The 2007 cover winner by Daniel Schorn

endangered bird spends its spring and summer. More than 1,100 children from grades K-8 submitted entries through their schools after learning about the animals and birds that benefit from the management of the Kirtland's warbler habitat, most of it in the four-county (C.O.O.R.) district served by Kirtland Community College.

Tom Dale, a retired Kirtland science instructor, visits dozens of schools, speaking to thousands of youngsters every spring about the Kirtland's warbler and other birds and animals of the jack pine ecosystem, inspiring many to submit the artwork you'll see in the Kirtland House at this year's festival.

The KWWF Committee congratulates the young artists whose wonderful work is featured here, as well as all the children who submitted entries, and their teachers.

Face-painting fun!

Courtesy photos

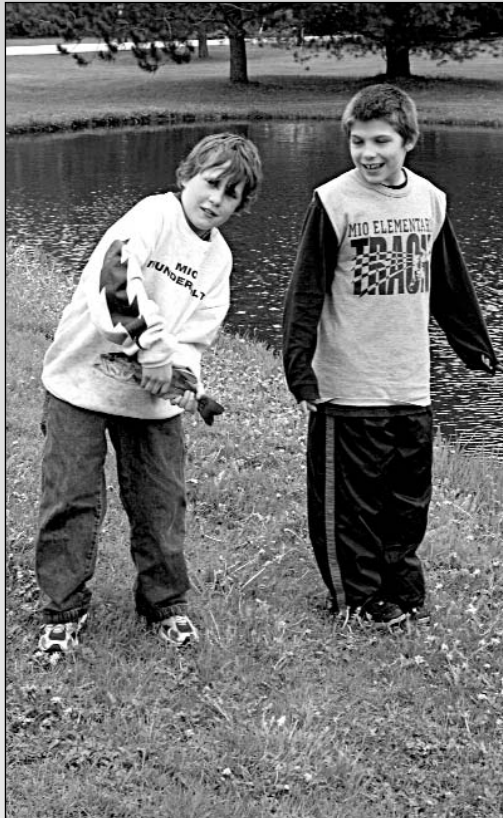
Kids of all ages, including Dr. Charles Rorie, Kirtland's former president (pictured in the photo immediately below), line up to have their faces painted by several volunteers – among them students from the college's renowned Cosmetology Department. Face-painting is located in the Kids' Activity Tent next to the birdhouse builders.



GOIN' FISHIN'

Courtesy photos

Hundreds of youngsters have been known to catch their first-ever fish in the well-stocked pond on the front lawn of Kirtland Community College during the KWWF. Volunteers like Deb and Melvin Near make sure the hooks stay baited for as long as the worms from Walt Crawlers hold out. This year, those catching trout in the pond will be able to take them home. But catch a bluegill, and it goes back.



For the birds



Courtesy photos

Tap, tap tap

All day long – or at least until the building materials run out – young carpenters at the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival are busy assembling birdhouses to take home and hang in their yards for feathered visitors. It's one of the primary enterprises in the Kid's Activity Tent. Volunteer Tom Hamilton acquires and assembles the lumber into kits, and delivers them to the festival. Many more volunteers work with the youngsters to make sure they hit more nails than little fingers.



SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE KWWF SUPPORTERS:

Walt Crawlers of Vanderbilt, for the fishing worms;

Tom Hamilton of West Branch, for the birdhouse kits;

Karefree Ranch of Fairview, for the horse-drawn wagons;

Avita Artesian Water of Roscommon, for watering our volunteers;

Roscommon County Road Commission, for being there; and

All the great volunteers who make this festival a success!

HELP THE WILDLIFE GAME!

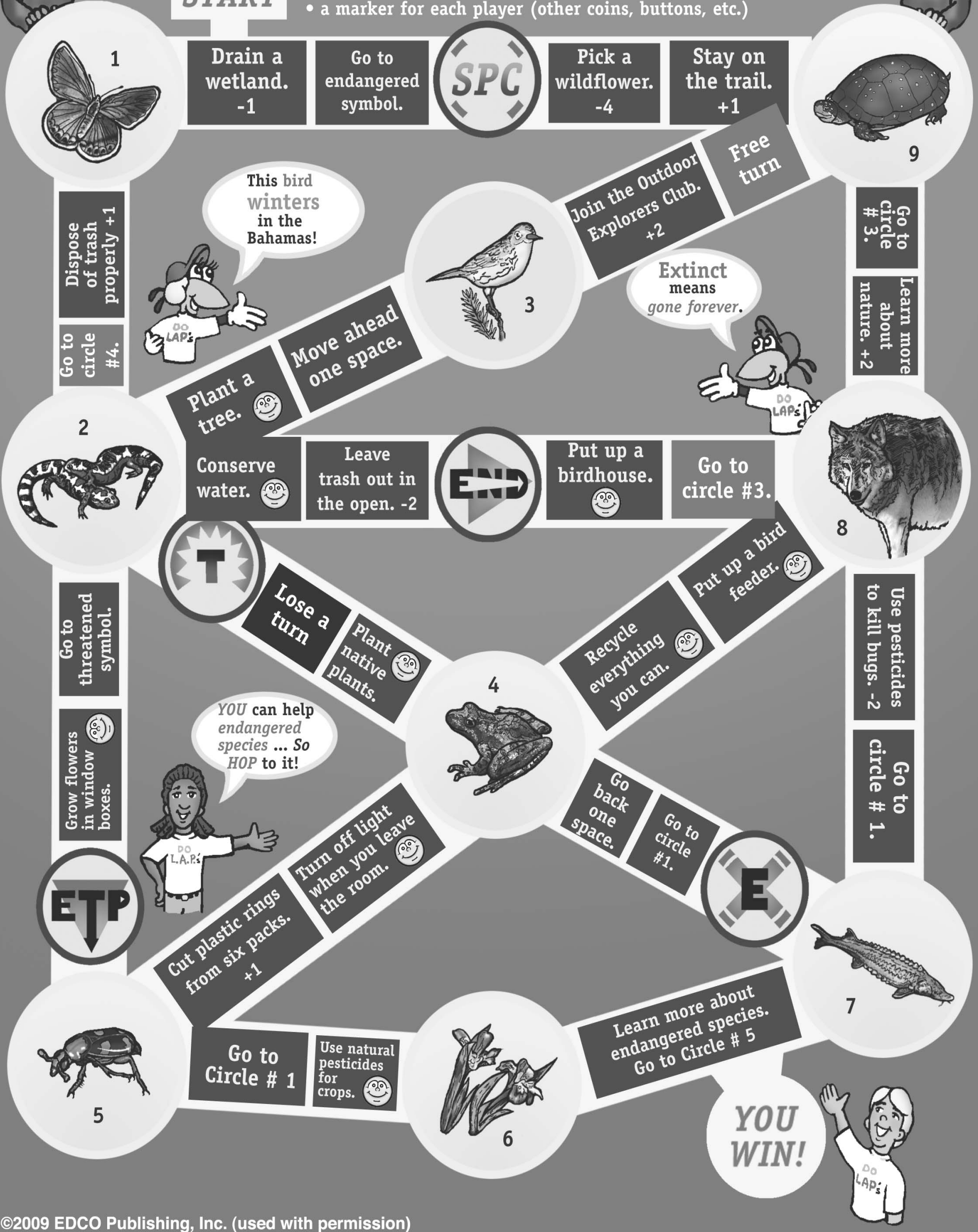
D

- The first player to reach the win circle is the winner.
- If you land on a space with a threatened or endangered species, say its name. If you can't, move back one space. (Hint: Look it up in this Fun Folder™ before your next turn.)
- If you land on a space with a classification symbol, tell what it means and get a free turn. If you can't, look it up in this FunFolder™, tell what it means and stay there till your next turn.



START

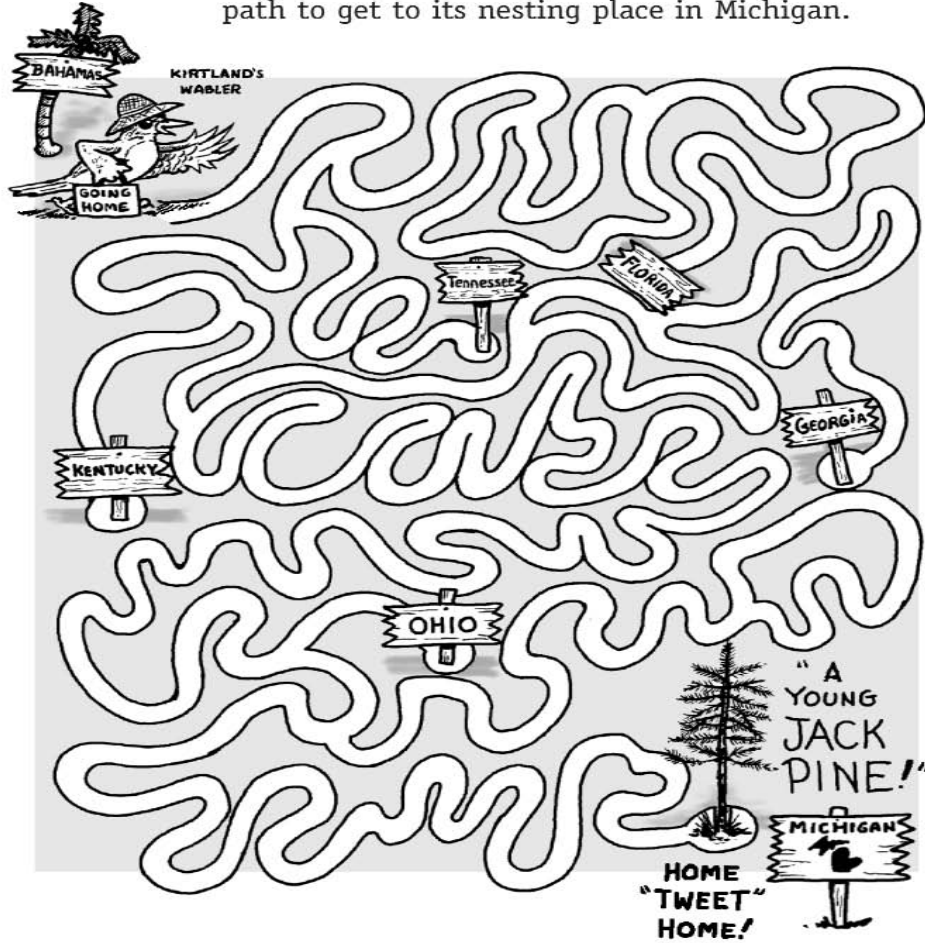
- Things you will need:
- a quarter to flip - Heads = move one space Tails = move two spaces
 - a marker for each player (other coins, buttons, etc.)



FLY AWAY HOME!

The Kirtland's Warbler is an endangered species. It only nests in a few counties in Michigan's northern Lower and Upper Peninsulas. This bird spends the winter in the Bahamas.

Help this Kirtland's Warbler follow the right path to get to its nesting place in Michigan.



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KIRTLAND'S WARBLER WORD SEARCH

K	I	R	T	L	A	N	D	S	X	N	Y	D	P	W
U	P	X	Y	T	C	L	V	K	G	M	R	O	L	V
P	A	R	T	M	B	J	O	N	L	J	O	H	M	I
B	T	O	S	C	L	E	A	R	C	U	T	R	B	Z
P	D	F	I	U	M	G	N	I	L	T	S	E	N	L
E	X	E	V	O	I	T	B	U	A	J	R	C	W	D
N	L	R	I	H	C	W	K	T	I	K	E	O	X	R
D	M	Z	C	A	E	Y	I	C	P	L	D	V	B	I
A	S	I	A	N	X	B	S	A	B	S	N	E	L	B
N	M	I	G	R	A	T	I	O	N	A	U	R	C	W
G	K	A	C	H	E	P	S	B	Z	M	M	Y	E	O
E	I	T	B	E	W	I	R	T	I	A	P	O	G	C
R	R	O	R	L	T	W	P	K	E	H	O	E	G	B
E	X	T	I	N	C	T	W	T	M	A	E	J	S	T
D	E	N	I	P	M	L	W	A	R	B	L	E	R	G

KIRTLANDS
COWBIRD
HABITAT
NESTLING
RECOVERY
BAHAMAS

UNDERSTORY
TEAM
ENDANGERED
WARBLER
TRAP
MICHIGAN

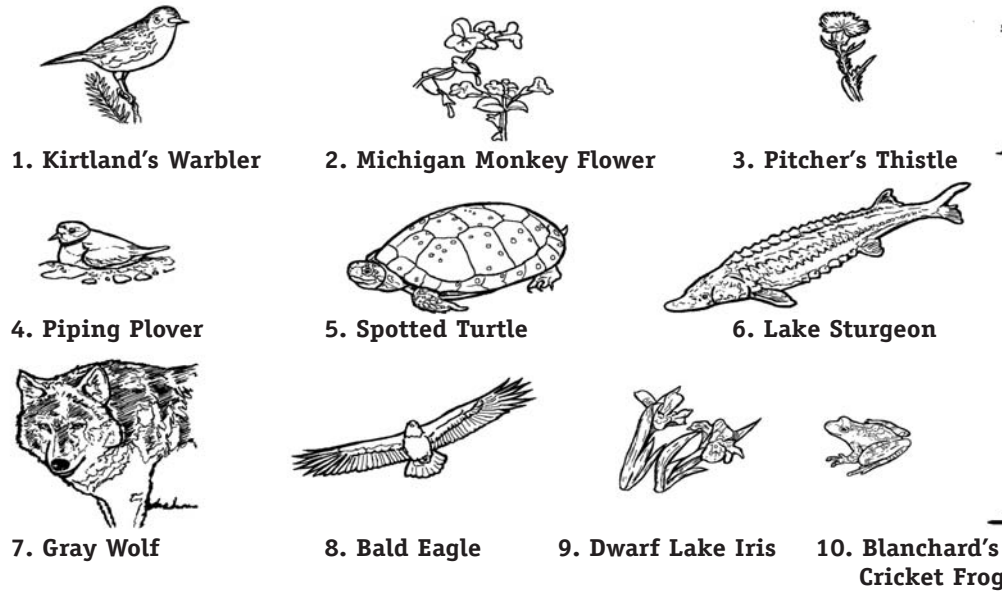
EGGS
EXTINCT
MIGRATION
CLEARCUT
PINE
TREE

CAN YOU PASS THE TEST?

1. True or False - The Kirtland's warblers are an endangered species?
2. True or False - The Kirtland's warblers are warm-blooded animals?
3. True or False - The Kirtland's warblers are not songbirds?
4. True or False - The Kirtland's warblers breed nowhere else in the world but Northern Michigan?
5. True or False - The Kirtland's warblers nest only in white pines?

HABITAT MATCH

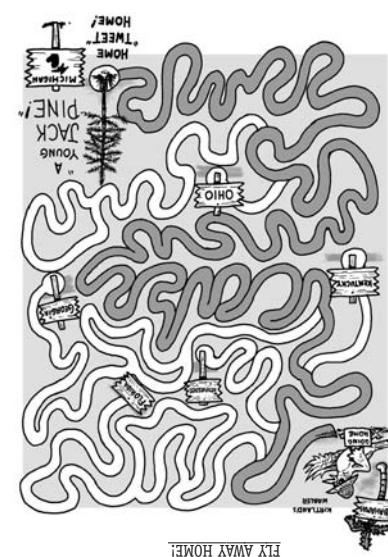
Match the number of the threatened or endangered species to its habitat below.



- A. This large bird lives in tall trees near shorelines of lakes, large rivers and other bodies of water where it can catch fish for food.
- B. This shore bird can be found in northern Michigan on the beaches of Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. In the winter it lives along beaches and mudflats from Florida to northern Mexico.
- C. This "bird of fire" breeds in Jack pine forests in few counties in Michigan's northern Lower and Upper Peninsulas. It spends the winter in the Bahamas.
- D. This plant is **endemic** to Michigan and grows only in the Grand Traverse and Straits of Mackinac regions.
- E. This reptile likes boggy ponds and grassy marshes. Once found primarily in the southern or western portions of the Lower Peninsula, today it is rare to find this reptile in Michigan.
- F. This threatened fish is found in the Great Lakes and also lives at the bottom of several inland lakes and rivers in Michigan.
- G. This plant is only found growing in sand dunes along the shoreline of Lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior.
- H. This amphibian lives along the edges of ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. It is found in the southern half of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.
- I. Thanks to wildlife management, this mammal is now threatened instead of endangered. It lives in large forested areas in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and on Isle Royale.
- J. Michigan's state wildflower grows only on the northern shores of Lakes Michigan and Huron. It grows **NOWHERE** else in the world.

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ANSWER KEY:



F 6
G 3
H 10
I 7
J 9

Habitat Match
page 14:

A 8
B 4
C 1
D 2
E 5

True & False
page 14:

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. F

Animal Babies
page 13:

1. F
2. E
3. D
4. A
5. B
6. I
7. C
8. H
9. J
10. G

"A Celebration of Nature"

Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival 2010 Schedule of Events

Saturday, May 15, 2010

There is **NO** pre-registration required to attend the Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival. If you wish to attend, just come to Kirtland Community College's main campus on F-97 near Roscommon the day of the festival. A fee of \$5 for the purchase of a KWWF button is required for entry to presentations and for the guided bus tours on Saturday.

GUIDED BUS TRIPS

Saturday
7 a.m.

NEW! Roscommon Area Birding Tour

Hey, there are a lot more birds than the Kirtland's warbler here! You'll stop at a variety of habitats to check off as many bird species as possible that are found in the Roscommon area. You'll visit sites that are known to harbor Common Loon, Bald Eagle, Upland Sandpiper, Clay-colored sparrow, Brewer's Blackbird, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker and a slew of other warblers, vireos, thrushes, sparrows, swallows and more. Each participant will receive a Michigan Birds checklist to tally the day's finds. Allow 3 to 3-1/2 hours. Bus leaves from in front of festival headquarters tent on campus. A \$5 button is required and can be purchased as you enter the campus.

Saturday
7 & 8 a.m.

Field Trips to See Kirtland's Warblers

Bus leave promptly as scheduled. There is **NO** pre-registration for the field trips. A \$5 festival button is required and can be purchased as you enter the campus.

FESTIVAL PRESENTATIONS

Chart indicates beginning times. Presentations run from 45 minutes to 1 hour.

10 a.m.

Saving Our Sturgeon Discover what is being done and how you can help

A fascinating look at this ancient fish and how its population is being protected and restored in the Great Lakes. Presented by Brenda Archambo, Sturgeon For Tomorrow. *Instructional Center Room 11.*

Restoring the Trumpeter Swan to the Midwest

Learn how the trumpeter swan was restored in the Midwest. Includes video of Alaska egg collecting trip. Presented by Joe Johnson, wildlife biologist emeritus, Michigan State University. *Instructional Center Room 123*

11 a.m.

Bird of Two Countries - The Kirtland's Warbler

Learn about the comeback from near extinction of what is still our country's rarest warbler. Presented by Elaine Carlson, DNRE; Chris Mensing, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Phil Huber, U.S. Forest Service; and Scott Johnson, Bahamas. *Kirtland Center for the Performing Arts auditorium.*

Saving Our Sturgeon Discover what is being done and how you can help

A fascinating look at this ancient fish and how its population is being protected and restored in the Great Lakes. Presented by Brenda Archambo, Sturgeon For Tomorrow. *Instructional Center Room 11*

Insects

Presented by John Strazanac, Entomologist, West Virginia University. *Instructional Center Room 108*

Restoring the Trumpeter Swan to the Midwest

Learn how the trumpeter swan was restored in the Midwest. Includes video of Alaska egg collecting trip. Presented by Joe Johnson, wildlife biologist emeritus, Michigan State University. *Instructional Center Room 123.*

FEATURED PRESENTATION

1 p.m.

The Rapture of Raptors

Features live birds of prey including a golden eagle by a noted environmental education organization. Presented by S.E.E. North. *Kirtland Center for the Performing Arts auditorium.*

FESTIVAL PRESENTATIONS

Presentation schedule continued ...

2:30 p.m.

Michigan's Giant Silk Moths

Some of our continent's largest and most impressive Lepidoptera are not butterflies, but members of the Giant Silk

Moth family. Become familiar with the life cycles and habits of Cecropia, Polyphemus, Luna and Promethea moths. Learn to how to find them in all their metamorphic stages, what food plants their larvae prefer and the reasons for the decline of these magnificent moths. You'll also learn how to raise them in captivity and how to have fertile eggs mailed to you so you can raise your own! Presented by Jim McGrath, Nature Discovery. *Instructional Center Room 11.*

Cat Tales: The Story of America's Wild Cats

Learn about America's great cats, from cougars to bobcats. Handle the pelts of these awesome creatures. Presented by Tom Dale, education director of the Gahagan Wildlife Preserve and KWWF Committee member. *Instructional Center Room 108.*

Bats of the World

Back by popular demand! Presented by the Organization for Bat Conservation. *Instructional Center Room 123.*

4 p.m.

Live Music Concert with Switchback - American Folk Music. *Kirtland Center for the Performing Arts auditorium.*

Michigan Eagle Update

Learn the status of Michigan's bald eagles from wildlife biologist and eagle expert Jerry Weinrich. *Instructional Center Room 11.*

Bat House Basics

Learn how to build bat houses and where to put them. Presented by the Organization for Bat Conservation. *Instructional Center Room 123.*

OTHER EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

CAMPUS GROUNDS

On Campus Grounds

9 a.m.-4 p.m. . . . Kids' Activity Tent
 9 a.m. 'til . . . Kids' Fishing Pond
mid-afternoon
 9 a.m.-1 p.m. . . . Silent Auction
 11 a.m. . . . Kids' Rock Hunt
 11 a.m.-3 p.m. . . . Horse-drawn Nature Tours with Karefree Ranch Riding Stable
 12:30-1:15 p.m. . . . Campus Nature and Bird Walk
Other events: . . . **FEATURED ARTIST** - Justin La Doux
& activities: . . . **FEATURED PHOTOGRAPHER** - Robert Scholl
 Whispering Pines
 Nature Arts & Crafts
 Music by the Blue Water Ramblers

Kirtland House

All day Juried Nature Fine Arts Show
Noon Meet-the-Artists Reception
1 p.m. Awards presented
All day View the Young Artists Calendar Contest entries

Student Center

6-11 a.m. Early Bird Breakfast in the Kirtland Grill
 6 a.m.- 4 p.m. . . . Grill will be open
 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. . . . Bookstore will be open
Other events Mikenauk Rock and Gem Society
& activities: Mio Post Office - Get your mail stamped with special festival cancellation
 Displays by: DNRE, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Huron Pines RC&D
 Other displays by a Biodiversity of Conservation Organizations

Off-Campus Nature & Birding Field Trips

(Meet at site)

Fri., 7 a.m. **NEW!** Wakeley Lake Wildlife Walk
 Fri., 5 p.m. Gahagan Nature Preserve
Sat., 6 p.m. Houghton Lake Flats Field Trip
Sun., 8 a.m. Jones Farm Tour: Grassland and Wetland Bird Walk