

Wisconsin Kirtland's Warbler Update

June 3, 2013

Kirtland's Return to Adams County!

Kirtland's warblers are back in Adams County and the nesting season is just getting started! We had a busy month of May at the Kirtland's site. Joel Trick (retired Fish and Wildlife Service biologist) confirmed four banded males during a site visit on May 11. We do not know when the Kirtland's first arrived in Wisconsin and it is possible that the males arrived earlier than May 11. The following week, staff from the Fish and Wildlife Service (Sarah Warner), Department of Natural Resources (Davin Lopez, Richard and Amy Steffen), and two volunteers (Daryl Christenson and Brian Collins) confirmed two more banded males and reconfirmed the four previously located by Joel.

This year, we hired two nest monitors. Ashley Hannah, a recent graduate of UW-Madison, started on May 19 and hit the ground running. As of May 30, Ashley has determined territories for eight banded males, seven of which have females confirmed. She also reported two unbanded males at the site. Our second nest monitor, Jon Stein, started on June 2. Jon previously worked for the Wisconsin Bird and Bat Observatory conducting bird counts. Together, Ashley and Jon make an incredible field crew and as we head into June they will focus on nest searching and monitoring.



Ron Refsnider, Sarah Warner, and Ashley Hannah banding a Kirtland's warbler and discussing aging techniques.

Photo courtesy of Joel Trick



Male Kirtland's warbler banded in 2012, Adams County, Wisconsin.

Photo Courtesy of Joel Trick

Daryl Christensen (nest monitor from 2013) provided our first Kirtland's monitoring training session on May 19 and a second training on June 2. This year, we have new staff to help with the field season and we greatly appreciate Daryl's training sessions!

Statewide Surveys

Volunteers started searching for Kirtland's warblers in the jack pine habitats of northern Wisconsin during our seventh annual Kirtland's warbler survey. Jack Swelstad (volunteer) found a banded male in Marinette County, the same bird that has occupied territory there for the past three years. No other Kirtland's have been reported from the surveyors.

Banding Efforts

Joel Trick, Ron Refsnider (retired Service biologist), Ashley Hannah and Sarah Warner spent a successful morning catching and banding Kirtland's at the Adams county site on May 30. We banded two males and two females and are hopeful that more unbanded Kirtland's will be located. In total, we have nine banded males and three banded females at the Adams County site.

Summary of Kirtland's Warblers in Adams County, Wisconsin

To date, we have confirmed nine different male and seven female Kirtland's warblers in Adams County, and one male in Marinette County. Ashley reports that the male in Marinette visited the Adams County site on May 21 before continuing his journey north.



Ashley Hannah releasing a newly color-banded male Kirtland's warbler.

Photo courtesy of Joel Trick

Cowbird Trapping

Cowbird traps have been operating at the Adams County site since May 1. As of May 31, USDA Wildlife Specialist, Barry Benson, reports that a total of 100 cowbirds have been captured, consisting of 91 males and 9 females. This compares to 168 captured after the fifth week in 2012 and 155 captured after the fifth week in 2013. This year, we have deployed four traps, and plan to operate them through late June, similar to last year.

2014 New Initiatives

Two new Kirtland's projects are being initiated this year! First, DNR employee Nick Anich deployed audio playbacks that broadcast the Kirtland's song in an attempt to attract new arrivals to suitable jack pine stands across northern Wisconsin. Research on other passerine species suggests that this method can draw birds to nest in suitable habitats. Nick deployed 12 playbacks (3 per site area) in 4 different jack pine sites across three northern counties (Bayfield, Vilas, and Marinette). To date, no birds have been recorded at the study sites.

Second, we plan to band nestlings, but whether we do will depend on the number of nests and other factors. We are approaching this banding cautiously with the safety of the birds foremost. We will select a minimum number of nests to band, depending on how many are found. Banding nestlings will ensure that we color-band females and males in a much more efficient manner than traditional mist-netting affords. The banding crew is very experienced with nestling banding and will follow established protocols.

Sarah Warner U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 505 Science Dr. Madison, WI 53717 608-238-9333 ext. 130 Sarah_Warner@fws.gov	Kim Grveles Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources 101 S. Webster Street - ER/6 Madison, WI 53703 608-266-0822 kim.grveles@wisconsin.gov
---	--