



Wisconsin Kirtland's Warbler Update May 20, 2011



Kirtland's have arrived!

Kirtland's warblers were first detected at the Adams County nesting site during a brief site visit on May 13. Our main Kirtland's warbler monitor Sam Jonas began work on Monday May 16, and on his first day of work he was able to document at least 6 birds already present at the site. By the end of the week Sam had determined that a minimum of 12 males were present, of which 11 are banded.

The first female was observed on May 17, and there are now at least four known to be present, with the first nest building observed on Thursday the 19th. As was the case last year, we again have a banded male that has only three of the expected four bands. We believe we know the identity of this bird through the process of elimination, but are eager to capture and confirm his identity.

Field Trips

This morning we held the first of two 2011 Kirtland's warbler field trips hosted by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, and it was a great success. Approximately 30 attendees were greeted by ideal weather conditions and a cooperative male Kirtland's warbler that sang frequently, allowing it to be viewed by all participants. A second field trip is planned for tomorrow morning.



NRF Field Trip attendees view a Kirtland's warbler while monitor Sam Jonas (right) looks on. Adams County, Wisconsin. 20 May 2011. Photo by Joel Trick



NRF Field Trip Leaders pose near a sign marking a Kirtland's warbler habitat project being developed in conjunction with Plum Creek Timber Company. Adams County, Wisconsin. 20 May 2011. Shown left to right are Kim Grveles, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Joel Trick, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bill O'Brion, Plum Creek Timber Company; Barry Benson, USDA-Wildlife Services; Sam Jonas, Kirtland's warbler monitor; Todd Watson, Plum Creek Timber Company, Jon Robaidek, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Statewide Surveys

Twenty volunteers and 6 staff have begun field surveys for Kirtland's warblers at sites in 8 counties. Just today we received word of a single male Kirtland's warbler at the same Bayfield County site where several birds were observed in 2010. We plan to follow up on this observation to determine if more birds may be present.

Cowbird trapping

Brown-headed cowbird traps have been in operation at the Adams County site since April 18. As of May 20, USDA Wildlife Specialist Barry Benson reports a total of 127 cowbirds have been captured, consisting of 79 males and 48 females. This number is significantly lower than totals for the same period last year, and reports from the Michigan cowbird trapping program indicate a similar pattern. We suspect this may be due to our prolonged, cool spring, with cowbirds remaining flocked in areas where food is available. This appears to also be reflected in the high number of incidental captures of blue jays and rose-breasted grosbeaks observed this year. One of the more interesting captures was a single female evening grosbeak found in a trap last Monday the 16th. This year, we have again deployed three traps, and plan to operate them through mid-June, similar to last year.

Color Banding

We plan to begin color banding beginning next week. Ron Refsnider, our volunteer bander, will again lead our banding efforts.

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