



Wisconsin Kirtland's Warbler Update May 28, 2011

Adams County Activity

As of Friday, our monitor Sam reports at least 14 males and eight female Kirtland's warblers present at our main Adams county breeding site. A number of the females have been observed carrying nesting material.

Of the 17 banded males present at the site in 2010, at least 11 are now known to be present, with a twelfth banded bird whose identity is not yet confirmed, and two unbanded birds. One of the banded birds present has only three bands instead of the expected four, although the three bands he carries match up with the color combination of a bird we banded in 2008. We plan to capture him to confirm his identity when we conduct our banding operations next week. We had planned to conduct our banding this week, but the cool and windy weather has forced us to delay until next week.



This male Kirtland's warbler, first banded in 2009, has returned to the Adams County nesting site for the third year in a row. Photo by Bill Volkert. Adams County, Wisconsin. July 2010.

Cowbird Trapping

USDA-Wildlife Services has had three cowbird traps in operation at the Adams county site since April 18. Wildlife Specialist Barry Benson reports that through May 27, a total of 136 cowbirds have been trapped so far this year. Again, this total remains behind our totals in past years, and we can only speculate on why this may be.

Statewide Surveys

Volunteers continue to survey for Kirtland's warblers at sites we have identified in 8 counties. Within the past few days, we received word of two separate male Kirtland's warblers in Marinette County, at the same sites where birds have been observed over the past few years. We have also had a report of a single bird responding to a taped recording in Vilas County. Including the bird reported in Bayfield County last week, so far this year there have been four Kirtland's warblers reported outside of Adams County. We will be following up on these observations in the next week, and attempt to band these birds if they are still present.

Field Trips

Subsequent to our update last Friday, we had the second of our Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (NRF) field trips on Saturday morning. NRF (<http://wisconservation.org>) has provided the bulk of funding for our work since the beginning of the project, and we enjoy providing an opportunity for NRF members to see Kirtland's warblers.

Over the course of two mornings, 64 people attended the field trips. The tour on Friday, May 20 was comprised of 27 NRF members and guests, whereas Saturday's tour had 37 people who learned about the field trip from an article that appeared in the April issue of the DNR's Natural Resources Magazine.

Response from the article was terrific in that it brought 15 visitors from 9 states other than Wisconsin: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Massachusetts, Texas, and California. Of these 15 people, 10 came on Saturday and 5 on Friday with Illinois and Iowa the only states represented on both days. People from Wisconsin totaled 22 on Friday and 27 on Saturday and hailed from as close as Friendship and from as far away as Ephraim in Door County.

Participants visited three field stations at the Adams County breeding site. They learned about cowbird trapping from Barry Benson of U.S.D.A. APHIS – Wildlife Services who demonstrated the trap and discussed the importance of trapping for Kirtland's warbler nesting success. Bill O'Brion and Todd Watson of Plum Creek Timber Company and Kim Grveles of the DNR were on hand at the second station to discuss habitat management and ecology of the Kirtland's warbler in Wisconsin. Friday's group was treated to a special talk by volunteer, Jack Swelstad, who shared stories of his work on the project in Marinette County.

At the third station, Joel Trick of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), who was assisted by Kirtland's warbler monitor Sam Jonas, DNR wildlife biologist Jon Robaidek, and FWS biologist Sarah Warner, located a singing male Kirtland's warbler for folks to see. Every participant on both days got a good view of the bird (despite the inclement weather on Saturday) and a few had the good fortune to snap some photographs as proof of their success!

Many thanks to NRF hosts Mark Schleicher (Friday) and Barb Barzen (Saturday) for making the trips run smoothly and on-time.

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