



News Release Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

NR-08-17

For Immediate Release

Contact: Scott Posner, 715-373-2667, ext. 240, or Dan Eklund, 715-762-5194

Federally Endangered Kirtland's Warbler observed on the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF

On July 2, 2008, the US Fish and Wildlife Service confirmed an observation of the Kirtland's Warbler on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF) in Bayfield County, WI. "The presence of the Kirtland's Warbler is rewarding news for us. We have been planning for and working towards this outcome through our habitat management efforts. The goals in our Land and Resource Management Plan and the needs of the Kirtland's Warbler fit well together." said Jeanne Higgins, Forest Supervisor.

The Kirtland's Warbler, a Federally Endangered Species since 1967, was observed by a bird surveyor working under contract for the Forest. "The sighting of this bird and responses from a second bird are suggestive of breeding activity," said Linda Parker, CNNF Ecologist, who oversees the neotropical migrant bird program. In Wisconsin, there is only one other location known to have nesting Kirtland's Warblers. Dan Eklund, CNNF Wildlife Biologist, added, "This is a location where we will be sure to concentrate survey efforts next year."

Cooperative management efforts have restored the Kirtland's Warbler throughout much of its historic nesting range in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The presence of a healthy and expanding core population in this area has resulted in the dispersal and



(Photo courtesy US Forest Service partner Ron Austing)

appearance of the birds in the Upper Peninsula, Canada and Wisconsin. On the CNNF, large blocks of jack pine (the Warbler's preferred habitat) began dying in the late 1980s and early 1990s due to insects and storm damage. During this period, these blocks were harvested and naturally regenerated. Today, the CNNF has many acres of young jack pine, less than 20 year old, which offer high quality habitat for the Warbler.

“The observation of the Kirtland’s Warbler on the Forest is significant in that it is considered one of the rarest North American birds. We look forward to working cooperatively with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and other partners in recovery efforts that will continue to bring this bird back to Wisconsin,” said Higgins.

In order to protect the species from disturbance, the US Forest Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are not disclosing the Kirtland’s precise location. Attempting to find, approach or photograph the nest will disturb the Warbler. Anyone who disturbs protected birds, their eggs or active nests is violating the Endangered Species Act.

About the Kirtland’s Warbler

- The Kirtland’s Warbler was first described in Ohio in 1851
- It is commonly referred to as the jack pine warbler
- This songbird is one of 56 species of wood warblers found in North America
- Adult Kirtland’s Warblers are lightweight birds, weighing ½ ounce, and are less than 6 inches long
- Breeding males have plumage of blue gray with black streaks
- Average life expectancy is two years
- Kirtland’s Warblers build nests on the ground under living jack pine branches
- The birds migrate to the Bahamas where they stay for the fall and winter seasons