



THE K.W. CUE

Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team Newsletter

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2021 KW Census

- The 2021 Census will take place on **June 6-27, 2021**.
- Post Delisting Monitoring Plan calls for a full census in 2021, 2025, and 2029 and survey (sampling) in 2023, 2027, and 2031.
- The Kirtland's Warbler Alliance has successfully recruited about 35 volunteers to assist the Michigan DNR with their portion of the census (along with a few to help in the Upper Peninsula), where the effort is being led by the Forest Service.
- A new training website has been completed by Bill Rapai of the KW Alliance, along with the assistance of a developer. The website will go "live" shortly for the volunteers, and it can currently be previewed at KWcensus.org. It has KW songs along with listening instructions, jack pine ID, triangulation instructions, and even job hazards. The website should be able to be saved and used for the next census.
- The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center will update the census protocol in 2022, after comparing methodologies used during the 2021 census. The goal is to reduce cost, while providing reliable population estimates.

2021 KW Festival:

The Virtual Kirtland's Warbler Festival will be held June 5th, 2021, starting at 9:00 AM via Zoom. We will lead off with a pre-recorded virtual KW tour where an overview of KW life history will be given while viewing and hearing Kirtland's. Warblers. Then there will be a series of 10-15 minute pre-recorded presentations from the various agencies and organizations involved with KWs talking about what they are doing currently and will be doing in the future for KWs now that KWs are delisted. The agencies/organizations that are participating are: ABC, MDNR, WDNR, KW Alliance, USFWS, USFS, and BNT.

Updates can be found on the KW Festival Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/kirtlandwarblerfestival>

While the festival is virtual this year, we hope to have a physical festival next year and we are always looking for more involvement in the festival planning committee. We would really like more involvement from the KWCT and subcommittees. If anyone is interested in joining the festival planning committee, they can contact me via email (mepetrucha@hotmail.com) or phone: 989-619-3393.

Submitted by: Mike Petrucha, Chair, KW Festival



SAVE THE DATE!

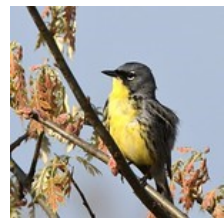
KWCT Fall Meeting: September 14-15, 2021

Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center
104 Conservation Drive, Roscommon, MI 48653



The Kirtland's Warblers have arrived!

Chris Mensing of the USFWS reported a Kirtland's Warbler sighting near Grayling, MI on May 3rd, 2021.



Stock photo, USFWS Midwest Region

Get to Know a KW Conservation Team Member:



Ken Tuininga is a Senior Species at Risk Biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service in Toronto, where he focuses on the recovery of song-birds, invertebrates and multiple grassland taxa including plants, snakes, birds and insects. He led the drafting of both the Recovery Strategy and Action Plan for the Kirtland's Warbler in Canada. (More information can be found at: [Kirtland's Warbler \(Setophaga kirtlandii\) - Species search - Species at risk registry \(canada.ca\)](http://Kirtland's Warbler (Setophaga kirtlandii) - Species search - Species at risk registry (canada.ca))) Ken has led Kirtland's Warbler recovery in Canada for 16 years, and worked closely with long-time Kirtland's Warbler enthusiast, Paul Aird (U of Toronto) and Daryl Coulson (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry) on the Canadian Recovery Team. He has represented Canada as a member of the US- Bahamas-Canada Kirtland's Warbler Recovery

Team/Conservation Team for over a decade. Ken has worked closely with US members of the Team since he started working on the Kirtland's Warbler. He coordinated the first banding of a Kirtland's Warbler singing male in Canada in 30 years, in 2007, with the collaboration of Carol Bocetti. Some of the first field surveys he conducted in northern Ontario were completed with the assistance of Phil Huber and Steve Sjogren. In 2016, Ken refocused Canadian recovery and restorations efforts to central Ontario. Working primarily with consultant Peter Burke and the County of Simcoe, he collaborated on the first Kirtland's Warbler habitat restoration project in Canada. He continues to work on several Kirtland's Warbler restoration projects with these and many other partners. Ken is also leading the recovery planning and recovery action implementation of the Monarch butterfly for Canada, and is currently coordinating the development of Canada's Monarch Recovery Strategy.



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KW Alliance Hosts 2021 Jack Pine Planting Day

The May 1, 2021 Jack Pine Planting Day was an unqualified success. We planted about 1,000 jack pine trees on one acre in Crawford County, MI. The site was located on Stephan Bridge Road about three-tenths of a mile south of Four Mile Road. It was a chilly and overcast morning (even a few sleet pellets fell from the sky), but the tough group of volunteers shrugged it off to get the job done!



Thank you again to the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation for their generous support for this event. Thank you also to our partners at Huron Pines and the Michigan DNR (particularly Tim Greco of MDNR) for their help with this event.

We hope you will join us on May 7, 2022, for our next Jack Pine Planting Day. With Covid - hopefully - behind us, we'll plan to plant about 2,400 trees on two acres.

Submitted by Bill Rapai, KW Alliance

Progress Highlights

- Joe Wunderle and Dave Ewert were recently named the 2020 "Conservation Champions" by the Bahamas National Trust.
- The 2021 KW Calendar Contest hosted by the USFS was a success, despite pandemic restrictions for school presentations. Fourteen schools from Michigan participated, along with several from the Bahamas. Over 350 entries were received!



- The KW Alliance gave a virtual presentation to Washtenaw Audubon in late April that drew nearly 100 people. The presentation was part of the Alliance's effort to continue to reach birders, conservationists and the general public to inform them of the importance of Kirtland's Warbler conservation and the continuing challenges going forward.

- Round 2 (2021-2025) of USDA NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Funding has begun:
 - 6,670 additional acres of Early Successional Habitat (ESH) using GWWA + KW Best Management Practices
 - RCPP investments of \$5 million matched by \$7.6 million in partner contributions over 5 years

KW Subcommittee Progress Reports

HUMAN DIMENSIONS

- Abby Ertel (Huron Pines) has stepped down as Chair of the HD Subcommittee and is transitioning off of the KWCT in an effort to focus on other commitments to Huron Pines. A huge thank you to Abby for her years of phenomenal efforts to move the mission of the KW Conservation Team forward! We are grateful to Emily Pomeranz (HD Researcher, MIDNR), who as agreed to temporarily serve as HD Chair until the roll is filled.
- The HD Subcommittee is currently a small group and would eagerly accept new members who have an interest in outreach and education!

NON-BREEDING RANGE

- Bradley Watson and Scott Johnson of Bahamas National Trust found Kirtland's Warblers in new and old pastures, and reference sites during their April sampling period in Eleuthera.
- While on Eleuthera, Bradley Watson gave visitors from the U.S. a tour of the Kirtland's Warbler study sites.

BREEDING RANGE

- Coordination for the stocking density project continues. USFS, DNR, and researchers are meeting on a regular basis to discuss logistics.
- As part of an update to MDNR's Regional State Forest Plans, we will be conducting an optimization modeling exercise using forestry software called Remsoft on State Forest Kirtland's warbler essential habitat to help us better understand commercial vs. non-commercial forest treatment and regeneration opportunities over the next several decades.
- MDNR's KW habitat planting efforts were recently completed for 2021. Totals will be reported at the fall meeting.

FINANCE

- The ABC KW long-term fund balance is about \$166,000 and the Natural Resources Foundation of WI, ABC Kirtland's Warbler fund is about \$25,000. Lynne Mecum is a new Development Officer with ABC and will be working with donors to increase the endowment for KW.
- Efforts are underway to secure 2022 funding for the KW Coordinator position.

BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST (BNT) FORMS PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL FARMERS TO ENSURE KW SUCCESS

Preliminary data from our research on the Kirtland's Warbler on livestock farms and areas outside of farms is showing that goat farms continue to be an important habitat for Kirtland's Warblers on Eleuthera, especially during the dry season (December-April). The next phase of our project includes reaching out to farmers

and other community members to show them the value of Kirtland's Warblers for Eco-tourism and further encourage them to protect KW habitat on private lands.



Submitted by: Scott Johnson, Science Officer, Bahamas National Trust

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April 6, 2021 Virtual Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team Meeting a Success

- The spring biannual meeting of the KW Conservation was a success, with approximately 70 attendees pre-registering for the meeting. About 50 attendees participated in the live meeting via Zoom, and a recording was created and emailed out to those that could not attend live. Meeting minutes were also emailed out to the conservation team listserv. The recording and minutes can be obtained by emailing the KWCT Coordinator at kheidenreich@abcbirds.org.

A FEW MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

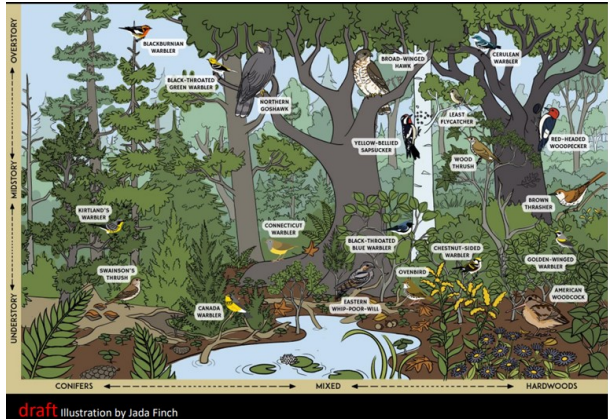
- Chris Mensing, USFWS, discussed potential habitat shortfalls and a potential future slight population decline due to decreased plantings and wildfire occurrences.



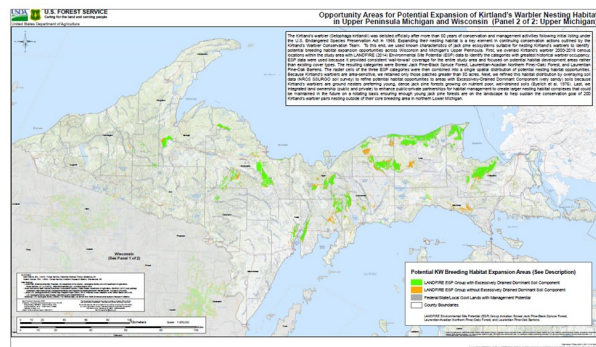
- Chris asked attendees discussion questions, such as "Are we prepared to immediately address the expected significant habitat shortfalls over the next 10-15 years?" and "What actions are necessary now that we are approaching the 1,300 pair trigger established in the Conservation Plan?"

- Kayla Knoll, formerly with ABC, described the Forestry for MI Birds program (formed in 2018), which is op-

erating under a three-year grant from the USFS. They are developing two different books (one for landowners; one for land managers) in an effort to stop the decline of birds in need, and the estimated publication date is January 2022. They gave a sneak peek of their "Where in the Woods" diagram, which identifies their 20 priority species.



- Davin Lopez, WI DNR, gave a presentation on "Mapping Beyond the Core Breeding Area in Michigan." The goal is the project is to map areas in the Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin, Ontario, and Minnesota that has current or future potential as KIWA breeding habitat. The working group decided that they want at least 200 pairs outside of Michigan's Lower Peninsula (up from previous goal of 100). USFS (Sam Adams and Deahn Donner Wright) took the lead in developing a mapping tool. They put together 50-acre minimum contiguous areas, focusing on soil types and not current land cover.



- Bradley Watson and Scott Johnson of Bahamas National Trust gave a presentation on KW Monitoring on Eleuthera Goat Pastures:

- Goats are KW habitat creators (a mix of native and imported goat stocks). They are grazed rotationally on farms and Scott and Bradley desire to work with farmers to create more KW habitat. Study sites: goat farms and surrounding points. They did point counts and vegetation sampling to assess KW use of goat farms.

- Part of the work they were doing in Eleuthera was collecting fruits so that they could start nurseries. Goal is to determine how they can propagate fruit plants both in the field and in nurseries. Their focus is on white sage, as they have had more luck germinating white sage than other fruit species used by KW.

KW Monitoring on Eleuthera Goat Pastures

Scott Johnson, Bradley Watson, and Dave Ewert
Bahamas National Trust
American Bird Conservancy

