



The Newsletter of the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team

Fall 2023 Issue

This issue: KWCT Summer Meeting Recap; Kirtland's Warbler Tours; KWCT Members Honored; Meet Jason Hartman, State Silviculturist

New Faces at KWCT Summer Meeting

The KWCT convened its Summer meeting in Sault Ste. Marie July 18–20. This year's theme, "Locking Through", referred to the Soo Locks, which serve as a critical connection in the Great Lakes region just like the KWCT connects conservationists across the range of Kirtland's Warbler.

Carol Bocetti, KWCT Chair, kicked off the meeting remarking, "It's amazing to see this many new faces. That's exciting!" Sixty-seven people representing twenty-one organizations attended the meeting.

Eric Clark, Wildlife Biologist with Sault Tribe, gave a keynote address highlighting the Tribe's agreement with the US Forest Service to co-manage fire-dependent ecosystems on the Hiawatha National Forest using both traditional ecological knowledge and Western science.



Photo by Nathan Cooper

2023 Kirtland's Warbler Tours by the Numbers

Tours: 46	Attendees: 708
Successful tours: 44	Attendees with sightings: 684
Total KIWA sightings: 179	Countries represented: 4
Other bird species: 49	States+D.C. represented: 30

"I had the pleasure of meeting a diverse array of individuals, each with their own captivating stories from around the globe. Amidst the waiting for the elusive gray and yellow warbler to emerge from the jack pines, a strong sense of camaraderie united us. The shared thrill of its sighting fostered a unique connection, highlighting our collective passion for nature."

- Brant Georgia, 2023 Tour Guide



The Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team tours Tribal co-management sites on the Hiawatha National Forest.

Photo courtesy of Falon Cartwright

Visit us online! [KWconservation.org](https://www.kwconservation.org)

Join our mailing list by emailing KWconservation@gmail.com

Save the Date: Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team Winter Meeting

February 13, contact KWconservation@gmail.com for more information



Photo by Steve Roels

Species Profile: Lowbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)

Lowbush Blueberry is a significant component of the ground flora in Kirtland's Warbler breeding habitat. Female warblers preferentially build nests near dense blueberry cover and blueberries are a significant component of the warbler's late summer diet. Fire stimulates blueberry growth, benefitting warblers and dozens of other species that feed on blueberries, including snacky *Homo sapiens*.

KWCT Recognizes the Dedication of Two Outstanding Members

Mike Petrucha and Bill Rapai were honored by the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team during the Summer meeting in Sault Ste. Marie. Both are long-time Team members who not only wear multiple hats for the KWCT but also play unique leadership roles in the ongoing success of the collaboration. They are two of the best ambassadors the Kirtland's Warbler could have. Congratulations to both!



Mike Petrucha and Carol Bocetti.



Bill Rapai and Carol Bocetti.

Mike leads efforts to build an archive of Kirtland's Warbler conservation history, manages a database of migration records, and chairs the annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival.

Bill recently stepped down as Executive Director of the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance and chairs the Human Dimensions subcommittee of the KWCT.

Get to Know a KWCT Member: Jason Hartman, State Silviculturist

Jason Hartman's first Kirtland's Warbler sighting was in high school, birding with relatives near his family's hunting camp. He admits it didn't make a big impression at the time, but maybe that's just because teenagers don't always recognize glimpses of their future. "I've developed a passion for the species through the conservation work I do," Jason told the *Observer*.

As State Silviculturist for the Michigan DNR, Jason provides guidance to DNR foresters, coordinates reforestation projects, and tackles what he calls "silvicultural conundrums." One of those conundrums is how to improve jack pine management for the benefit of Kirtland's Warbler and the rest of the ecosystem. To that end, Jason co-leads the Jack Pine Research Working Group with Dr. David Rothstein of Michigan State University. "We need collaboration to make research function and a platform where agencies can share ideas. What we did over the last fifty years worked extremely well [for Kirtland's Warbler], but we don't know what else works well," Jason explained. Asked about the challenges of forestry research, where results may take a generation, Jason said, "All forestry is doing something for someone else. But you see the results of Kirtland's work pretty quickly, actually!"

Jason lived in Roscommon for two decades before a recent move to Grayling. "As a member of the community, I want to help the community find value in Kirtland's Warbler management. I would love to see more of that."



Photo by Jason Hartman

IN THE NEWS:

Zoos celebrate 50-year anniversary of ESA

"SAFE" program directs resources to Kirtland's Warbler protection

<https://bit.ly/44AnAaS>

Budworm boom in the Jack Pine

Can caterpillar-feeding warblers take advantage of needle-feeding caterpillars?

<https://bit.ly/3rhYMXB>

Muddled migrant moves to Maine

Wayward Kirtland's Warbler stuns seabird surveyors on remote island

<https://bit.ly/3ECzXsi>

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