

# First Annual Census of the Endangered Kirtland's Warbler in Wisconsin

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## ABSTRACT

Recent dispersal of Kirtland's Warblers (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) from Michigan into Wisconsin is considered a direct result of conservation and management enacted by the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team in Michigan. Range expansion is critical for the long-term survival of this federally endangered bird. In

order to ensure that breeding in Wisconsin continues over the long term, nests must be closely monitored and controlled for parasites (cowbirds). Therefore, discovery of Kirtland's Warbler breeding sites through an annual survey is imperative for appropriate management to be implemented. This project has established an annual Kirtland's Warbler volunteer census in Wisconsin which is an extension of the existing census in Michigan and Canada. Potential breeding sites were documented and a state population estimate was reported to the Recovery Team.

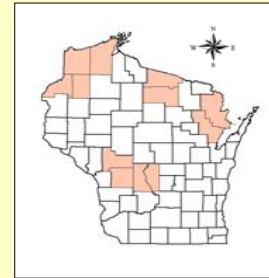
## METHODS

Sites were determined using remote sensing and the WDNR WHISFIRS database. Volunteers were recruited from bird clubs and through newsletter articles during 2007 and early 2008. Survey orientations were held regionally in April and May 2008. Survey packets were distributed at the orientations and sites were assigned based on volunteers' preferences for location and time commitment. Sites were surveyed June 6-15. Survey was extended to June 21 due to inclement weather. Volunteers walked sites stopping every 250 m to listen for singing males for 1-3 minutes. Use of playback recording following the passive listening period was optional. No. of singing males, males observed not singing, females, and cowbirds were recorded along with associated bird species list. Habitat details were also recorded. Locations with Kirtland's Warblers present were further investigated by agency staff for confirmation of male presence and for nesting evidence. When possible, males were captured and banded.



## Fig. 1. Volunteer Orientations.

Volunteers at the La Crosse Kirtland's Warbler Orientation on May 21 peruse maps and data in order to choose the best sites to survey in June.



## Fig. 2. Map of Survey Areas.

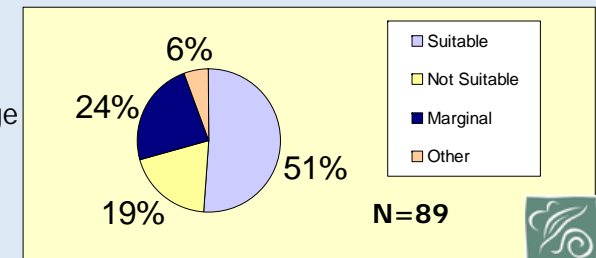
Survey sites were located in Douglas, Bayfield, Burnett, Washburn, Vilas, Oneida, Marinette, Oconto, Jackson, Monroe, Juneau, and Adams Counties based on distribution of jack pine cover type and sandy outwash land type associations.

## RESULTS

**41 Volunteers**      **89 sites surveyed**      **12 Counties**  
**# Sites w/Males:** 2 Marinette 1 Douglas 1 Adams 1 Bayfield\*  
**# Males:** 11      **#Females:** 5 (all at Adams)  
**# Sites w/probable males:** 3 Vilas 3 Jackson 2 Marinette  
**% Sites surveyed w/cowbirds:** 27%

## Fig. 3. Habitat Assessment.

Graph shows percentage of sites that have suitable habitat for survey again next year.



\* Male reported by US Forest Service staff

