



East Lansing, Michigan
January 21, 2004

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE 2004 KIRTLAND'S WARBLER TOURS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service are pleased to announce the dates for the 2004 Kirtland's warbler tours. Bird watchers are urged to take this opportunity to observe the endangered Kirtland's warbler and view nesting areas by participating in guided tours. The guided tours represent the best opportunity to view this endangered songbird, as Kirtland's warbler nesting areas in northern Michigan will be closed and posted against public entry during the 2004 nesting season.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will conduct guided tours from May 15 through July 4, 2004, departing from the Holiday Inn in Grayling, Michigan. The tours are offered daily at 7:00 a.m. and at 11:00 a.m. and are free of charge. For more information, visit <http://midwest.fws.gov/EastLansing/tour.html>.

The U.S. Forest Service will conduct tours from May 15 through July 2, 2004 with tours departing at 7:00 a.m. from the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Office in Mio, Michigan. Tours are conducted daily with the exception of Memorial Day, May 31. The USFS tour charges \$5.00 per person under the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program. More information can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/hmnf/pages/kirtland.htm>.

Actual sighting of the Kirtland's warbler is not guaranteed. The average date when the first Kirtland's warbler arrives at the nesting area is May 12; the latest record of the first arrival is May 20. Thus, the chance of seeing the bird during early guided tours is less than optimum. The best period for seeing the warbler is during late May and the month of June. After July 1, viewing opportunities diminish. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars and spotting scopes.

Small groups are preferable. They create less disturbance and participants are more likely to see the bird. No reservations are necessary for groups four or fewer. Large groups are urged to contact the following offices for reservations so optimum schedules can be established. Playing recorded warbler songs or the use of any other attraction methods will not be allowed. Special efforts will not be made for photographers.

For more information contact:

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East Lansing, MI 48823
Phone: (517) 351-2555
Contact: Chris Mensing (x316)
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401 N. Court Street
Mio, MI 48647
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