

July 24, 1983

Dear Nick,

Here is the xerox of the article about attracting Puffins with decoys. It would surprise me if a warbler would react to an oversize image of its kind, but it is not beyond belief that it might respond to realistic images if these were stuck up conspicuously in a prospective nesting site--let's say a tract that looked good but had no warblers. As a sidelight on this question, it would be interesting for some researcher to see if Kirtlands reacted to life-size replicas on their nesting grounds and near established nests. If they did not, it might be because their recognition is mainly auditory rather than visual. Sometimes it has seemed males ignore other males if they do not announce themselves with song. Now that I am talking about the matter, it seems to me that Van Tyne once put up a stuffed Kirtland's Warbler near a nest, where it was attacked by the resident male. I'll have to dredge through the files to check my memory on that point.

With regard to writing up your notes on Kirtland field work, I had a thought that might be worth your considering. Why not just put your conclusions on paper--1, 2, 3...--without worrying about documenting them completely. Since you are not hungry for publication and recognition, at the very least you could circulate these among a number of friends whom you know to be interested in the birds. It is not beyond possibility that The Jack-Pine Warbler would consider publishing a "note" of this kind. Then others could refer to the findings and credit you properly for them.

It is also possible that the mere elucidation of your summary would lead to a sufficient expansion to justify a "short communication." This would avoid the intimidating prospect of writing a tome.

I recall that my friend Edwin Way Teale, the professional nature writer, said he never sat down to write a book. This seemed impossibly difficult. Instead, he sat down to write a chapter. Thus, he just ~~wrote~~ worked on a little piece at a time. This seemed possible.

I think if you will reflect, you can easily identify several facts about the birds that you proved to your own satisfaction. Put them down in clear, simple terms. Then consider, if you want to, how much elaboration is really necessary. Tackle it as a little job, not as a huge job.

None of this may be new to you, but I express these thoughts hoping they may give you a little different slant on the problem.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely,