livestock parking area.

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gate, and fencing which has expanded the

music, entertammiem, a camival, 1000; and a stock auction at noon Saturday of lambs, steer, hogs and chickens raised by

quite sure who did it.

The voters were from four blocks of Ridge and Arch streets. They had not yet

## Warbler numbers plunge in U.P. See Election Page 12A, col. 1 4-H youth. Bergdahl expects good weather for the

Journal Staff Writer

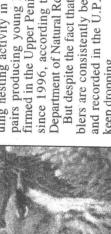
MARQUETTE - While Kirtland's warbler populations statewide are at near record levels, numbers of the endangered songbirds locally are slumping dramati-

number is down drastically from a peak A June 6-18 survey by biologists and volunteers discovered six singing males over four Upper Peninsula counties. That U.P. census of 19 males in 1999.

males," said Steve Sjogren, U.P. Kirt-"For the last two years, we had eight land's warbler census coordinator.

The birds are counted by listening for songs can be heard more than a quarter mile away, and provide an accurate method to census the birds with minimal their songs. Only the male birds sing. The disturbance.

To guess at the total number of birds in-habiting a given area, biologists double In this year's count, females were obthe number of males they've found. This served with the males, indicating contin-To guess at the total number of birds in-



A Kirtland's warbler is shown in a June 2001 Michigan Department of Natural Resources handout photo. (AP photo)

uing nesting activity in the U.P. Mated firmed in the Upper Peninsula each year since 1996, according to the Michigan pairs producing young have been con-Department of Natural Resources.

blers are consistently being heard, seen and recorded in the U.P., their numbers But despite the fact that Kirtland's warkeep dropping.

Service's Hiawatha National Forest in St. gnace, said the reason for the decline is Sjogren, who works for the U.S. Forest a lack of suitable nesting habitat.

Kirtland's warblers nest only under jack old, with branches reaching down to the pine trees that are between 4 and 20 years ground. The number of warblers found in given area is directly influenced by available nesting habitat.

As trees grow older, their suitability as nesting sites fades. As habitat declines in the U.P., so do the Kirtland's populations.

See Warblers Page 12A, col.

## Road agency lobbies for more funds

Journal Staff Writer

MARQUETTE - The Marquette County Road Commission said next year's state transportation budget will deprive them of \$175,000, and it hopes residents will ask their state legislators to vote it down.

House Bill 5651, the 2002-03 state ransportation budget bill, is scheduled for tion Committee Tuesday. The budget includes a gross appropriation of \$3.119 bildiscussion by the state House Transporta-

ity and State to recover administrative ex-

includes grants for not only the Attorney General, Environmental Quality and State But the budget bill under consideration Management and Budget, Treasury, and Civil Service and the Jegislative auditor departments, but those of State Police, general agency.

gan, of which the Marquette County Road The County Road Association of Michi-Commission is a member and to

commission they are expecting a court date in early September.

The commission, faced with a \$500,000 shortfall this year that was covered by fund balance, cut 13 employees from payroll in May through early retiren and layoffs.

The commission began alerting last month that its winter mainter vices will suffer this year due work force.

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## Warblers

Continued from page 1A

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"To sustain them in the U.P., we need to do something about habitat," Sjogren said. "I think if we focused on creating habitat, the numbers would go up.'

In 1992, Sjogren found one singing male in a jack pine stand in Schoolcraft County. This was the first time the species had been documented here, although some birds may have been in the area previously and went undetected

Nesting was later confirmed When Sjogren first found the warblers, they were in jack pine west of M-94 that was about five or six years old. The stand had grown up after forest fires had burned through the area in the late 1980s.

In other parts of the U.P., a mixture of fire and tree planting on public lands produced warbler nesting areas. Many of those places became suitable at about the same time.

"We had a peak of good habitat in the late '90s," Sjogren said.

Historically, young jack pine stands were created by natural wildfires that frequently swept through northern Michigan. Modern fire suppression pro-grams altered this natural process, reducing Kirtland's warbler habitat, the DNR said.

To mimic the effects of wildfire, state and federal wildlife biologists and foresters now conduct a combination of clearcutting, burning, seeding, and re-planting on about 150,000 acres.

But the vast majority of this effort is being undertaken downstate branching out from the core area for Kirtland's warblers near Mio in Oscoda County.

For good warbler nesting sites, jack pine stands should be at least 80 acres, but preferably between 200 and 500 acres. Optimal habitat would have about 1,200 jack pine trees per acre.

Places downstate where pine was planted specifically for warbler habitat held more than 80 percent of the Kirtland's population this year.

Downstate census efforts found 1,044 singing male Kirtland's warblers in June. That figure is only slightly lower than last year's record census which found 1.077

More planting efforts will produce future warbler habitat downstate. However, in the U.P., no clear analysis has been performed to determine the exact

"There is some," Sjogren said. "But the picture is not real clear right now

During the 1999 banner year for the U.P. Kirtland's populations, Schoolcraft County had four singing males. Another three were discovered in Delta County. Marquette County had 12 males situated in a few places including south of Ishpeming and near Little Lake.

Comparatively, this year's census found one male each in Marquette, Schoolcraft and Baraga counties. Three males were found on nesting territories in Delta County.

The number of singing males found in 11 northern Lower Peninsula counties was: Alcona 124, Clare 6, Crawford 236, Iosco 74, Kalkaska 23, Montmorency 6, Ogemaw 380, Oscoda 174, Otsego 17, Roscommon 3, and Grand Traverse 1.

Over the years, biologists have determined that the warblers move between the U.P. and downstate habitat areas, sometimes more than once during a single nesting season. The U.P. population was formed by birds dispersing from the downstate core area.

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The lowest numbers for the statewide survey occurred in 1974 and 1987, when only 167 singing males were found. The census started in 1951 and has been conducted annually since

The 2002 survey was a joint effort of the Michigan DNR, U.S. Forest Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Military Affairs, and citizen volunteers.

Kirtland's warblers eat insects, winter in the tropics and are Michigan's only endemic bird species. They are found nesting nowhere else.

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