

---

January 1984

## Kirtland's Warbler Sighting in Palm Beach County, Florida

Florida Field Naturalist

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn>

---

### Recommended Citation

Florida Field Naturalist (1984) "Kirtland's Warbler Sighting in Palm Beach County, Florida," *Florida Field Naturalist*. Vol. 12 : Iss. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/ffn/vol12/iss1/4>

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Field Naturalist by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usf.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usf.edu).

**Kirtland's Warbler sighting in Palm Beach County, Florida.**—On 29 April 1982 we observed a Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) on Hypoluxo Island, Palm Beach County, Florida. Hypoluxo Island, a residential area with vestiges of tropical hammock, lies one-half kilometer inside the barrier island. This bird was found in the front yard of a private residence. In this grassy yard grew a gumbo limbo (*Bursera simaruba*), two mature pigeon plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*), four cabbage palms (*Sabal palmetto*), and a small mahogany (*Swietenia mahogani*). In the adjacent empty lot to the south mature native trees and shrubs formed dense cover. Using 7 x 35 and 10 x 50 binoculars from a distance of 12 m, we viewed this silent bird in a leafless gumbo limbo continuously from 0745 to 0750. We noted persistent tail wagging and the slow deliberate movements as this large warbler fed among the small branches and tiny flowers in the crown of the 8 m tall tree. No other birds were in the immediate area.

This bird had a warbler bill, blue-gray head, neck and back with black lines down the back. No wing bars were evident on the gray wings. A dark smudge near the eye made the broken white eye-ring distinct. On the ventral side we noticed bright yellow on the throat and breast and soft yellow on the upper abdomen. The lower abdomen and undertail coverts were white. There were two small black flecks near the center of the breast. Short prominent black streaks marked the side of the breast near the shoulder. A narrow strip of white on the sides and flanks below the wings was partially covered by two parallel irregularly formed sooty streaks. Comments on plumages of the Kirtland's Warbler by Van Tyne (1953) indicated to us that the bird was a male in the first year breeding plumage because of its yellow upper abdomen, the two small black flecks near the center of the breast, and facial smudge.

Our sighting is the sixth published spring record for Florida and the southernmost for the United States in that season. The first recorded Kirtland's Warblers in Florida were one seen on 19 April 1897 and another collected on 27 April 1897 by Charles B. Cory (1898) at West Jupiter, Palm Beach County. Sam Grimes collected one in Duval County on 1 May 1932 but discarded it after an aborted attempt to skin it (Mason 1960, in litt. to C. Wesley Biggs). Two inland spring sightings are both from Gainesville, Alachua County, one on 26 April 1934 by R. C. McClanahan (1935) and one on 12 April 1970 by James Horner and Bob Wallace (Wallace 1971).

Several published fall sightings of the Kirtland's Warbler in Florida have been reviewed and rejected by Van Tyne or Clench (Clench 1973), but the following fall sightings have been accepted by them: 9 September 1919, Wakulla County (Griscom and Nichols 1960); 21 September 1958, Dade County (Art Schaffner and Richard Cunningham in Stevenson 1959); and 2, 3 November 1961, Palm Beach County (Veronica Carmen in Stevenson 1962). A 27 October 1978, Martin County (L. Malo in Edscorn 1979) sighting has not been reviewed critically by Clench.

The generally accepted spring migration routes of the Kirtland's Warbler are from the Bahamas to the coasts of Florida, Georgia, South or North Carolina and then northward along the coast before heading across the Appalachians to the breeding grounds (Byelich 1976). Although our suggesting an alternate route with meager data available might seem presumptuous, the two inland sightings at Gainesville suggest that some birds may cross to the east coast of Florida from the Bahamas, a main migration corridor for warblers, and then work northwesterly. These birds may skirt the southern end of the Appalachian

chain on their way to their breeding grounds. This may explain the curious spring record in St. Louis and the strange grouping of several sightings near Chicago, southwest of the known Michigan breeding grounds (Byelich 1976).

C. Wesley Biggs, Mary H. Clench, and Paul W. Sykes, Jr., generously provided background materials, historical records, and thoughtful revisions of the text.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- BYELICH, J. 1976. Kirtland's Warbler recovery plan. Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources.
- CLENCH, M. H. 1973. The fall migration route of Kirtland's Warbler. *Wilson Bull.* 85: 417-428.
- CORY, C. B. 1898. Kirtland's Warbler in Florida. *Auk* 15: 331.
- EDSCORN, J. 1979. Florida region. *Aud. Field Notes* 33: 171.
- GRISCOM, L., AND J. T. NICHOLS. 1960. Fall migration records of the Kirtland Warbler. *Cranbrook Institute of Science Bull.* 40: 39.
- MASON, C. 1960. Heretofore unpublished records of the Kirtland's Warbler. *Fla. Nat.* 33: 226.
- MCCLANAHAN, R. C. 1935. Fifty years after. *Fla. Nat.* 8: 56.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1959. Florida region. *Aud. Field Notes* 13: 24.
- STEVENSON, H. M. 1962. Florida region. *Aud. Field Notes* 16: 24.
- VAN TYNE, J. 1953. Kirtland's Warbler. Pp. 417-428 in *Life histories of North American wood warblers* (A. C. Bent, Ed.). U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull.
- WALLACE, R. 1971. Interesting sightings at St. Marks Wildlife Refuge and elsewhere. *Fla. Nat.* 44: 63.
- H. P. Langridge, 1421 W. Ocean Ave., Lantana, Florida 33462 and Gloria Hunter, 1716 13th Ave. N., Lake Worth, Florida 33460.

Florida Field Naturalist 12: 9-10, 1984.

**A Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Florida.**—On 5 May 1981 at Oasis Ranger Station, Big Cypress National Preserve, Collier County, Florida, I observed a Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*). I first saw the bird at 1600 and watched it for approximately 20 min along the edge of a borrow pond. It was viewed as close as 10 m in good light with 7 x 35 binoculars. When observed, the bird was hawking insects from the bare branches of Brazilian pepper bushes (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) that dot the borrow pond edge. When perched, it sat at approximately a sixty degree angle to the ground, motionless except for moving its head to look about. Frequently it sallied forth after insects.

The bird was slightly larger than nearby Eastern Kingbirds (*Tyrannus tyrannus*). Its most distinctive feature was the length of the tail, which was equal to or slightly greater than the length of the body. The bird was generally dark above and light below. The head and upper nape were black with a thin longitudinal light-colored streak on the crown. The back and lower nape were light bluish-gray. The wings were darker brownish-gray, and the tail was almost black. The chin, throat, breast, belly, and under-tail coverts were white. The bill was stout and black. The eyes were dark, and the feet were relatively small and black.