



Kirtland's Warbler

*Dendroica kirtlandii*

Observer: Jerry McWilliams

Location: southwest end of the channel along the RR tracks on the Erie side of the bay

Date: May 22, 2012

Time: 5:15 PM to 5:30 PM

Weather: mostly clear with NW wind to 15 mph, temp. about 65 F

Viewing distance: as close as 25 feet

Optics: mostly through the camera lens using an F 4 300 mm lens and 1.4 teleconverter, also 10 X 40 Zeiss Binoculars

Details: I received a call from a very excited Mike Weible at about 4:50 PM, who said he had just found a Kirtland's Warbler. He said I need some help relocating the bird, so we can get photographs. I got there as quickly as I could and standing in the road was Mike with bins on the bird. I jumped out of the car with camera in hand and began taking photos. Mike was also clicking away.

After I calmed a bit from taking numerous photos with some satisfying results, I began to study the bird. It struck me as a bit smaller than I remembered when seeing them on the breeding grounds in Michigan. Maybe it seemed small because it was on its' own. However, the plumage and the up and down flicking of the tail was diagnostic. There was no question it was a Kirtland's Warbler. The entire upper side, including the rump, was medium gray with fine black spots on the crown and heavy dark spot rows on the mantle and dark spots on the wing coverts. The face was gray with black in front of the eyes, over the bill and down the side of the throat where it was sharply demarcated from the bright yellow throat. The broken eye ring was very broad and prominent—the eye ring broken in the front and back of the eye. There were two very thin white wing bars. The lower breast and belly was unmarked pale yellow becoming white on the undertail coverts. There were several tiny black spots forming a thin breast band. There were two rows of black spots, though messed a bit, down the flanks with the thickest spots being at the shoulders. I never saw the tail spread, but from below you could see white on the outer portion of the otherwise all dark tail. Several other birders (13+) arrived later and also saw the bird including Dave Wilton, Shannon Thompson, Rob Hodgson and his wife, Mary Birdsong, Mike Plyler, Shawn Collins, Dr. and Mrs. Andersen and their daughter Katie, Michele Franz, and Mark Vass.