First US "Important Bird Area" Named at ABA's Conference

The American Bird Conservancy announced the first "Globally Important Bird Area" in the United States at ABA's Sierra Vista conference. Jeff Price, director of the conservancy's Important Bird Areas Program, announced the selection of the nearby San Pedro Riparian Conservation Area for this significant international recognition. The San Pedro area, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, is considered the largest and best example of riparian woodland remaining in the southwestern US. ABA members have long known of the San Pedro's unique habitat, which harbors Gray Hawks, Green Kingfishers, and a host of other significant and sometimes threatened species. IBA designation will bring worldwide attention to this site and help to focus public and private conservation efforts on behalf of the San Pedro.

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Kirtland's Warbler Trail — A Successful Partnership

The entire world population of Kirtland's Warblers nests in a nine-county area in the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan, which contains the young Jack Pine forests in which the birds nest. The presence of an endangered species in an area of timber production...hmm, sounds familiar, doesn't it?

And it's not usually good news for the bird in question. But, in a refreshing new look at harboring an endangered species in their backyard, the people living and working in Kirtland's Warbler country have created a model for habitat conservation tied to economic development.

The Jack Pine Wildlife Viewing Tour officially opened in June 1994. A partnership of federal and state agencies, local homeowners, conservation groups, and industry representatives joined together to shepherd development of a self-guided auto tour, culminating in a dedication ceremony and debut of the 1st Annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival in 1994. This year saw the second full year of the program, now judged to be an outstanding success in creating an economic asset dependent on the conservation

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ABA's Albuquerque Conference Update

Registration officially opened on September 15 for ABA's upcoming regional conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Focusing on the waterfowl spectacle at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge and including a trip to Water Canyon, the conference will offer exciting winter birding in the Southwest. From the spectacular concentrations of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese (and some Ross's) at Bosque to winter raptors, longspurs, and sparrows in the grasslands to the birds of the Sandia foothills and mountain, there

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San Pedro (continued from p. 1)

The American Bird Conservancy is a partner of BirdLife International, the revitalized and reorganized ICBP (the International Council for Bird Preservation, originally founded in England in 1922). The American Bird Conservancy was formed from the former US and Pan American sections of ICBP, and is dedicated to the preservation of birds and their habitats in the Americas. ABC's Important Bird Areas program is modeled on a similar effort by BirdLife International that named Important Bird Areas in both the Middle East and Europe. The designation of IBAs throughout the world will bring attention to sites important to birds and help to motivate the conservation and management actions needed to keep those habitats viable.

Congratulations to the American Bird Conservancy for this significant first step in their Important Bird Areas program, and to the BLM’s San Pedro staff for helping to conserve the vital San Pedro habitat.

Kirtland’s Warbler

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of Kirtland Warblers. Local communities have welcomed the resulting increase in what was already a well-established “warbler tourism” and have jumped on the bandwagon: “the more we understand this little bird and the economic impact it could have, we decided we’d better celebrate” (from the owner of Mio’s Songbird Motel).

The 48-mile, self-guided tour (which runs south and east of Mio) is noted with attractive roadside signs (decorated with their distinctive Kirtland’s Warbler-Jack Pine logo) and well-crafted interpretive boards at parking areas. Their brochure, complete with map, is full of useful information for both the new and the veteran birder.

Much of the interpretive material is broad in its approach, appealing to a wide range of wildlife viewers. Notable, however, is that one of the formal guidelines for development of the tour is that “the biological needs of the Kirtland’s Warbler...are the basis for tour design and communications.”

Work will continue, as described in an informative booklet, “Jack Pine Wildlife Viewing Tour, An Interpretive Proposal” (March 1995). The booklet—appropriately subtitled “Dedicated to Kirtland’s Warbler Conservation”—and the brochure/map can be obtained from the US Forest Service office in Mio, (517) 826-3252. Look for information next year in Winging It on tours to see Kirtland’s Warblers, conducted by the US Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Albuquerque Conference

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will be something for everyone. Conference speakers will talk about the birds of New Mexico, the evolution of bird color, North American owls and raptors, and more. Join us for great winter southwestern birding!

Registration forms were printed in the August issue of Winging It, and are also available by calling ABA’s conference registrar at (800) 850-2273.

Pre-Conference Tour Added

A second conference tour has been added, since the post-conference tour has already filled. Field Guides, Inc., will offer an identical Arizona Winter tour, to be held prior to the conference. This pre-conference tour will be held January 4-11, 1996. For details, see the post-conference tour announcement in the conference registration forms. It is not necessary to be a conference partici-

pant to attend this tour, and registrations for the tour should be made directly with Field Guides, Inc., PO Box 160723, Austin, TX 78716; (800) 728-4953.

ABA/Lane Birdfinding Guide Changes

In the March issue of Winging It we reminded our members that the ABA/Lane Birdfinding Guides are under constant revision. While we always appreciate corrections to our guides (send to the Colorado Office) reflecting changes of birdlife, habitat, and access, we also know that it is impossible to foresee changes while the book sits on the shelf.

Montezuma Quail in the Davis Mountains—For example, we recently received changes for a Birder’s Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas from John R. Schmidt and Dan and Barbara Williams about birding in Big Bend National Park and the Davis Mountains in Texas. These included details on the often-sought Montezuma Quails of the Davis Mountains.

The bad news is that one good quail site, the Bloy’s Camp Meeting Ground (p. 101), is currently closed to birders. Access is now refused. The good news is that the best place to see the Montezuma Quail is now the campground area at the Davis Mountain State Park (pp. 98-99). The campground host site—the first RV on the right—has a watering and feeding station for the quails. Of course, how long the campground hosts remain the same and if their successors will continue to feed the birds is a question that only illustrates the fragility of some of our birdfinding information. Still, you may want to note these changes in your own copy of A Birder’s Guide to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

—The ABA/Lane Birdfinding Guide Staff