

MAKING WAVES AT DCS



Wylie Students Weigh in On Potential Change of Michigan's State Bird *Should Michigan's state bird remain the American Robin, or switch to the Kirtland's Warbler?*

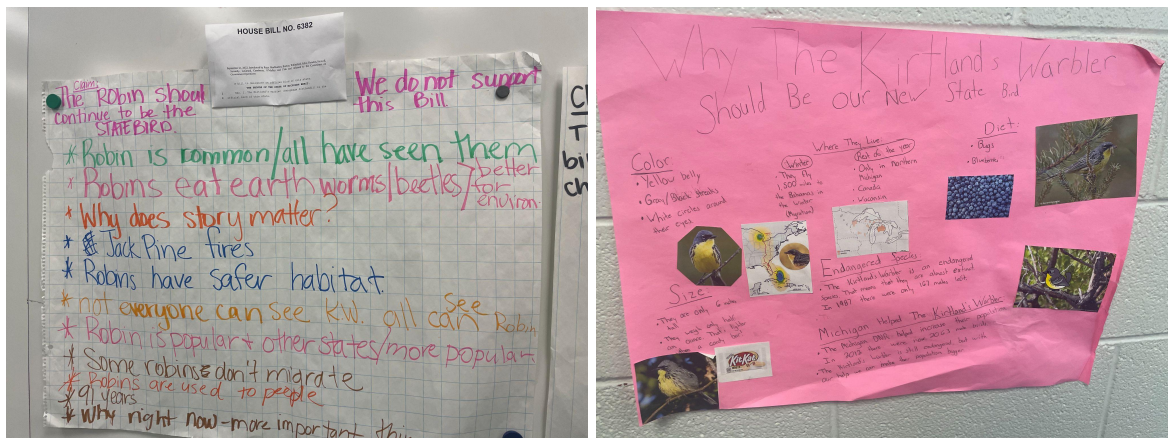


Students at Wylie Elementary School welcomed State Representative Carrie Rheingans into their school this past Monday, January 30th for a very important debate. For the past several months, Dexter 4th graders have been discussing the pros and cons of a bill introduced to the Michigan House of Representatives in September 2022 to change the state bird from the American Robin to the Kirtland's Warbler. This exciting legislative visit serves as a culminating experience for a group of fourth graders' inquiry on what it takes to pass a bill, as well as a launching event into opinion writing for Leah Tatar's third grade class.

Fourth grade teacher Kylie Benson shared the introduction of the bill with her students this past September, asking them their thoughts about this change. Student interest in the topic inspired the class to explore the process of passing a bill at the state level, as well as encouraging students to develop opinions based on research and evidence.

Benson's class partnered with Deb Eber's fourth grade class to research both birds, form a committee to discuss the pros and cons of the suggested change, then share their opinions before taking a vote on whether or not they supported the bill. Students then wrote opinion pieces supporting or opposing the change. This experience inspired Kris Bowman's and Roxanne Kohler's fourth grade classes to join this inquiry.

Based on the students' enormous interest and strong opinions on the subject, teachers invited Rep. Rheingans to visit the school to speak about the process of a bill becoming (or not becoming) a law, as well as hear student ideas supporting and opposing the bill.



Rep. Rheingans, who had served as a State Representative for only thirty days at the time of her visit, listened closely as students shared their differing opinions. Students opposing the bill shared that the state bird should remain the robin because they are so common in Michigan and they have been the state bird for 92 years. Supporting the change were students reasoning that Kirtland Warblers are more unique to Michigan than the robin. Rep. Rheingans and her staff were presented with the students' written opinion pieces for further consideration on the bill.

While the focus of fourth grade students was to learn more about the process of a bill and share their stances on the suggested change, Tatara's third grade class took the opportunity to launch their unit on opinion writing by writing a persuasive essay to support their position.

Below are a few examples, two for each side, from Benson's 4th grade class.

The state bird should change to a Kirtland's Warbler

"I think the Kirtland's Warbler should change to the state bird because it is a very rare and unique bird, we have had the Robin for a long time, and most of all because we can protect them so they don't go extinct.

I think the Kirtland's Warbler should be the state bird because they are a very rare and unique bird. One reason is because they have a unique nickname. Another reason is because they have a unique habitat. And most of all because they have a unique yellow belly. And they are a very rare bird and are not seen very often because they were a endangered species.

We have had the Robin for a long time. We have had Robin for a little over ninety one years. And another reason is because Wisconsin and Connecticut already have the Robin as their state bird unlike the Kirtland's Warbler which is not a state bird anyware.

I think the Kirtland's Warbler should be the state bird because we can protect them so they don't go extinct. We can make controlled forest fires. And we can raise awareness about them. If they were our state bird more people would know about them.

I think the Kirtland's Warbler should change to the state bird because it is a very rare and unique bird, we have had the Robin for a long time, and most of all because we can protect them so they don't go extinct. I realize that you don't have to think this but I hope that you do."

By: Henry

"Our state bird should change to a Kirtland's Warbler because it's unique, it's rare and most of all because the Robin has been the state bird for 91 years.

Our state bird should change to the kirtland's warbler because it's unique. For example they live only in MI and the Bahamas. They are also unique because they have a bright yellow tummy and a pretty song or otherwise a call. They live in only jack pine forests. They have a very unique nickname, the bird of fire. They get its nickname because of their habitat which needs fire to grow.

Our state bird should change to the Kirtland's Warbler because it's rare. They are rare because of their habitat. Jack Pine forests grow only in certain parts of Michigan and Bahamas. One morning I woke up and looked out the window to see a robin. After that I started to see them everywhere. But one day I had just learned about Kirtland's Warbler so I kept a look out for one but never saw it.

Our state bird should change to the Kirtland's Warbler because we have had the robin for 91 years. Some people are getting a little bored of the Robin from what I've heard. I am also getting bored of the robin. It's true, the Robin has been the state bird for 91 years. I've seen a Robin but I've never seen a kirtland's warbler.

Our state bird should change to a Kirtland's Warbler because it's unique, it's rare and most of all because the Robin has been the state bird for 91 years. I realize that if the Kirtland's Warbler was the state bird it wouldn't be as rare and more people will know about it.

By: Niamh

The robin should stay the state bird

"The Robin should stay the state bird because robins are good for the environment, most people know the robin, and most of all because robins have safe habitats.

Our state bird should stay as the robin because robins are good for the environment. For example, Robins eat earthworms and beetles. One reason why it is good that robins eat

beatles and earthworms is that they would be overpopulated. One time when I was outside walking around I saw a robin and it was eating an earthworm! Then I continued walking. I was so happy because I saw a robin eating an earthworm.

Our state bird should stay as a robin because most people know the robin but not alot of people know the kirtlands warbler. For example you can see robins all over michigan for the whole year. Another reason is because if the state bird stays as the robin even more people would know the robin. Also the robin has been the state bird of Michigan for 91 years. Why would we need to change it?

The robin should stay as the state bird because of robins safe habitat. One reason is that robins live in all types of trees. Another reason is that robin habitats don't need fire to grow unlike the kirtlands warblers that lives in jack pine trees that need fire for the trees to grow. Also because robins live in all types of trees, not just one, you can see robins more.

The state bird should stay as the Robin because Robins are good for the environment, most people know the Robin, and Robins have safe habitats. Other people should care about this because we want people to know our state bird. Also why would we need to change the state bird because there are bigger problems going on in the world, and Michigan."

By: Brooke

"I think our state bird should stay a robin because they are good for the environment, they have a beautiful song, and most of all because they will probably not go extinct.

I think our state bird should stay a Robin because they are good for the environment because they eat worms and other bugs. One time I was walking on a trail and I had a bucket of worms. There were Robins surrounding me and they just flew down into the bucket and ate the worms.

I think our state bird should stay a Robin because one time I was outside playing and heard a Robin's beautiful song. The Robin's song makes people feel calm.

I think our state bird should stay a Robin because they will probably not go extinct because the Robin has been the state bird for 91 years. They have a huge population. One time I went outside and there was so many Robins. The Kirtland's warbler might go extinct, so we should keep the Robin.

I think our state bird should stay a Robin because they are good for the environment, they have a beautiful song, and they probably won't go extinct. This is important because other people should think about the bill to change the state bird."

By: Elenore