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Birds of the Rocky Mountains -- Paul A. Johnsgard

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***Birds of the Rocky Mountains*—Species Accounts, pages
323–353: Warblers**

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Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)

Identification: Males in spring plumage are easily identified by their bright yellow crown and yellow wing-patch, and their black cheek- and throat-patches. Females also have a rather large area of yellow on the wings, and a dark gray throat and facial patch. Their buzzy song consists of one zee note followed by three to five more on a distinctly lower pitch.

Status: An accidental vagrant over most of the region, but reported from 9 latilongs (and at least 18 times as of the late 1970s) in Colorado, including Rocky Mountain N.P., where reported in July of 1974.

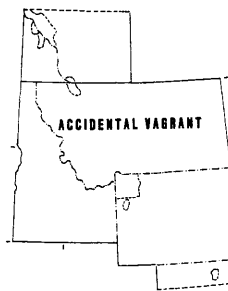
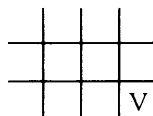
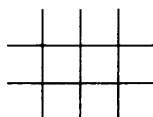
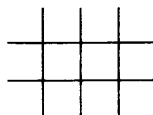
Habitats and Ecology: During the migration period, this species is likely to be found in various open habitats, but on the breeding ground it is primarily associated with forest-edge habitats having a dense undergrowth of ferns and other moisture-loving plants. It occurs in both upland and lowland habitats, including hillside thickets, overgrown pastures, brushy fields, and aspen-lined edges of forests.

Seasonality: The Colorado records are mainly for the second half of May, and again in mid-September. There are no other regional records.

Comments: This eastern species of warbler ranges from the southeastern states to southern Canada, and its nearest breeding area to the Rocky Mountains is in north-central Minnesota. In some areas the golden-winged and blue-winged warblers overlap and occasionally hybridize, producing a variety of hybrid types that are fully fertile.

Suggested Reading: Ficken & Ficken, 1962, 1968a; Murray & Gill, 1976; Eyer, 1963.

LATILONG STATUS



Tennessee Warbler (*Vermivora peregrina*)

Identification: This warbler is an inconspicuous, vireo-like species that is mostly yellowish green above and below, with faint pale wing-bars and a strong white eye-stripe, lined with black below. During the breeding season the underparts are mostly whitish, but they are more yellowish in the fall. The usual song is a series of loud and staccato *tsseet* notes, gradually speeding up and often ending in a trill.

LATILONG STATUS

M	S	M	
	s		
?	M		M

M			M
	M	M	M
	M	M	

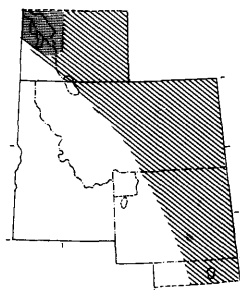
		M	
	M	M	M
			M

Status: A summer resident and local breeder in the northwestern part of the region, and a variably common spring and fall migrant east of the mountains elsewhere in the region. An occasional breeder in Banff and Jasper N.P., and perhaps some of the other Canadian montane parks. Reported as summering in Clearwater National Forest (Idaho), but not proven to breed there.

Habitats and Ecology: The usual breeding habitat consists of coniferous boggy areas such as those of spruce and tamarack or white cedar, usually where sphagnum mosses are abundant. It also occurs on brushy hillsides, along forest clearings, and deciduous forests, and in Alberta favors deciduous or mixed woods that have poplars or aspens present. Foraging is done rather high up in the crown foliage, although nesting is on the ground, usually in sphagnum-covered hummocks.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from May 2 to 27, and from September 25 to October 7, while in Wyoming they are from May 12 to June 13, and from August 28 to October 5. In their Alberta breeding grounds the birds are usually present from mid-May to mid-September. Egg records for Alberta range from June 1 to 16.

Suggested Reading: Bowdish & Philipp, 1916; Bent, 1953.



Orange-crowned Warbler (*Vermivora celata*)

Identification: A dingy and nondescript warbler, with no bright markings anywhere; its generally olive-green color is marked only with a brighter yellow eye-stripe and yellow undertail coverts. Its song is a series of rather weak staccato trilled notes that typically becomes lower and slower toward the end, and somewhat similar to that of a chipping sparrow.

Status: A summer resident in most wooded areas throughout the region, at least at lower elevations. Present and probably breeding in all the montane parks, but common only in the more northerly ones.

Habitats and Ecology: A variety of woodland and brushy habitats are used by this species for breeding, ranging from riparian woodlands, pinyon-juniper habitats, and aspen groves. In montane areas they favor willow or alder thickets near streams, or willow thickets at treeline, while at lower elevations they tend to breed along riverine woods or in brushy vegetation surrounding beaver ponds in northern coniferous woodlands. On migration the birds are found in a wide variety of brushy or wooded habitats, but favor the brushy areas of river bottoms.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 19 to November 10, with a few later stragglers, while in Wyoming the species has been recorded from early May to October 25. In Montana and southern Alberta the birds arrive in early May and remain until late September or early October. There are few specific nesting records for the region, but in Colorado the birds nest from June to late July, while in Montana active nests have been seen as late as August 17.

Comments: This is a rather widespread and adaptable warbler that because of its drab color and rather weak song is much more likely to be overlooked than many of the more spectacularly plumaged birds.

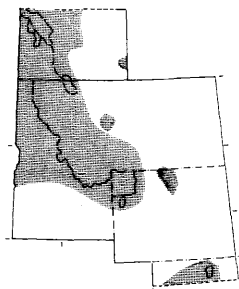
Suggested Reading: Bent, 1963.

LATILONG STATUS

s	s	S	
	S	s	s
S	s	S	M

s	s	s	M
	S	M	s
s	s	s	S

M	s	S	M
	S	M	M
V	s	s	S



Nashville Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla*)

Identification: Like the other *Vermivora* species, this is a rather dull-colored species, with a rather bright yellow belly, breast, and throat, and a conspicuous white eye-ring. Females are less colorful than males, but show the same general pattern. The male's song is a series of slow and high-pitched *see-it* notes followed by a trill of rapid *ti* notes.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	M
s	s	
S	s	s

M	M		M
	V		
	M		

	M	M	
V	V	V	M

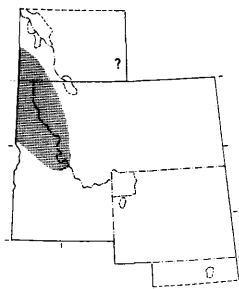
Status: A local summer resident in the northwestern part of the region, south to about west-central Montana and adjacent northern Idaho. A vagrant or rare migrant in the montane parks. Reported as present in summer but of uncertain breeding status in the Cypress Hills.

Habitats and Ecology: Moderately open deciduous woods, or the deciduous portions of mixed woods, are the primary breeding habitats of this species. It seems limited to those woodlands sufficiently open to allow for the growth of shrubbery under which nesting occurs. Forest areas that allow for feeding at heights of 25–40 feet seem preferred, although some foraging in shrubbery also occurs. On migration a wider array of habitats are used, but riparian woodlands are apparently favored.

Seasonality: Colorado migration records are from April 24 to May 23, and from September 1 to November 21, while in Idaho the records extend from April 21 to September 17. In Alberta there are records from April 30 to September 3. There are few regional breeding records, but fledged young have been observed in Montana in July, while in the Cypress Hills of Alberta this species has been observed feeding a fledged cowbird in late August, suggesting local nesting.

Comments: Nesting occurs on the ground in this species, often in clumps of sphagnum mosses concealed from above by overhanging vegetation, making the nests extremely hard to locate.

Suggested Reading: Johnson, 1976; Lawrence, 1948; Bent, 1953.



Virginia's Warbler (*Vermivora virginiae*)

Identification: Another dingy *Vermivora* species, which is quite similar to an orange-crowned warbler, but has a definite white eye-ring and a yellow-tinged breast and undertail area. Its song is a rapid series of accelerating weak notes that may end on some lower notes.

Status: A local summer resident in the southernmost part of the region, including extreme southern Idaho and northwestern Colorado. A common breeder in Rocky Mountain N.P., and a probable breeder in Dinosaur N.M., but absent from the other montane parks. In Rocky Mountain N.P. nesting occurs at lower elevations of the eastern slope, such as Moraine Park.

Habitats and Ecology: In Idaho this species is essentially limited to mountainsides that are covered with dense thickets of mountain mahogany; more generally it is associated with scrubby oak, open pinyon-juniper woodlands, and similar semi-arid and brush-dominated habitats. In Colorado the typical nesting habitats are where scrub oaks meet the ponderosa pine zone, at 5,000 and 7,000 feet elevation. The trees and taller shrubs provide singing and foraging posts, while nests are located at ground-level under bushes.

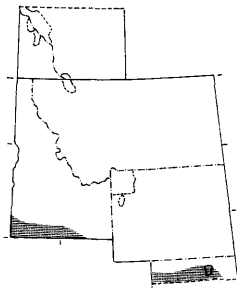
Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 29 to October 20, and probably a similar phenology applies to Idaho. Colorado egg records are from June 1 to 26, although nestlings have been observed as early as June 5.

Comments: The Virginia's warbler is an extremely close relative (some would say only a subspecies) of the Nashville and Colima warbler complex, and these three have non-overlapping breeding distributions.

Suggested Reading: Jackson, 1976; Bent, 1963.

LATILONG STATUS

		s	
	M		M
s	S	s	S



Northern Parula (*Parula americana*)

Identification: Males of this species have a unique breast-band of black and red surrounded by a bright yellow throat and breast. Females also have a fairly bright yellow throat and a bluish back, and both sexes have broad white wing-bars and white eye-rings. The song is a rising, buzzy trill that ends abruptly on a lower note.

LATILONG STATUS

	V		

		V	
			V
			V

Status: A rare migrant east of the mountains in the region; accidental farther west. Absent from the montane parks except Rocky Mountain N.P., where an accidental vagrant (one record). Reported three times from Montana, from 8 Wyoming latilongs, and from 12 Colorado latilongs. The nearest breeding areas are in southern Manitoba and northern Minnesota.

Habitats and Ecology: On migration these birds are likely to be seen in riverine forests or other deciduous forest areas, but on the breeding grounds the birds are closely associated with swampy woodlands, especially those with mosslike lichens (*Usnea*) or "Spanish moss" (*Tillandsia*).

Seasonality: There are relatively few regional records, but in Colorado the species has been observed from April 3 to May 27, and from September 22 to October 24.

Comments: The nest of this species is especially interesting, and consists of a hanging mass of inconspicuous lichens, which is often further concealed by a curtain of *Usnea* lichens.

Suggested Reading: Graber et al., 1983; Bent, 1953.



Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)

Identification: This is the most uniformly yellow of all the warblers, without any white present in the plumage. Males have a series of reddish brown breast streaks, while females are generally duller and more olive-yellow throughout, with only faint brownish streaking. The song is a distinctive "Tseet-tseet-tseet-sitta-sitta-see" (or "Sweet, sweet, sweet; summer's sweet").

Status: A local summer resident throughout the region in suitable habitats, including the montane parks, where abundant to uncommon, and probably breeding in all.

Habitats and Ecology: Generally moist habitats, such as riparian woodlands and brush, the brushy edges of marshes, swamps, or beaver ponds, and also drier areas including roadside thickets, hedgerows, orchards, and forest edges. A combination of open areas and dense shrubbery seem to be important for breeding, although migrant birds are rather more widely distributed.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 30 to October 7, and Wyoming records are from May 2 to September 14. In Montana and southern Alberta the birds normally arrive before the middle of May and leave by mid-September. Egg records in Colorado are from June 18 to July 6. In Wyoming eggs or unfledged young have been noted from June 1 to July 25.

Comments: This is one of the most widespread and abundant of North American warblers, and is often called "the wild canary" by laymen. This species is very often the victim of parasitic egg-laying by cowbirds, although it typically deals with such alien eggs by simply building a new level of nest above the old clutch and begins again.

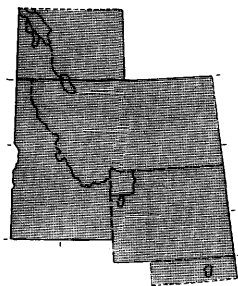
Suggested Reading: Schrantz, 1943; Frydendall, 1967.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	S	s
s	S	S	S
S	S	S	S

S	S	S	S
s	S	S	S
s	S	S	S

S	s	S	S
s	S	S	S
S	S	S	S



Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*)

Identification: Breeding males have a bright chestnut-colored breast and a yellow crown, with otherwise white underparts and white cheeks. Females have the same general patterning but are much less colorful. The song is a distinctive whistled "Pleased, pleased, pleased to meecha," in a similar but more rapid manner than the yellow warbler.

LATILONG STATUS

V		
V		V

		V
	V	
	V	

V		V
		s

Status: A rare migrant in the region east of the mountains, and a vagrant farther west. The nearest breeding areas are in east-central Alberta and also in the front range area of Colorado (Georgetown latilong, possibly also Fort Collins latilong).

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species is generally associated with low shrubbery, forest edges and clearings, briar thickets, overgrown pastures, and similar rather open and dry areas having scattered trees and shrubs. In Alberta the birds inhabit fairly open but mature deciduous woodlands with loose understories of cranberries and dogwoods.

Seasonality: Migration records are few, but in Colorado the birds have been reported from April 29 to August 25. In central Alberta it normally arrives in mid-May, and probably normally has left by the end of August, although actual departure dates are lacking.

Comments: This is an open-country species of warbler that is generally much easier to observe than many of the other brightly colored species. It is highly active, and sometimes flies out to capture flying insects in a flycatcher-like manner.

Suggested Reading: Ficken & Ficken, 1962; Tate, 1970; Cripps, 1966.



Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*)

Identification: This eastern warbler is the only species that has the combination of a yellow breast and throat and white tail-patches. Males have blackish streaking on the breast, large white wing-bars, and a song that is similar to that of the yellow warbler but has fewer syllables and sounds like "Wee-o, wee-o, wee-chy."

Status: A local summer resident in the northwest-ern corner of the region, south to the vicinity of Banff N.P., although not yet proven to breed there. A rare migrant farther south to the east of the mountains, and a vagrant in Rocky Mountain N.P. Reported from 8 Montana latilongs, 7 Wyoming latilongs, and 11 Colorado latilongs.

Habitats and Ecology: In Alberta breeding occurs in open coniferous and mixed forests, especially areas of young spruce and pines only about 6 to 8 feet high and which are not too dense. In some areas open coniferous bogs that are dominated by white cedars or other species are preferred, and likewise coniferous forest edges, second-growth following logging, and other habitats dominated by bush and saplings are also used.

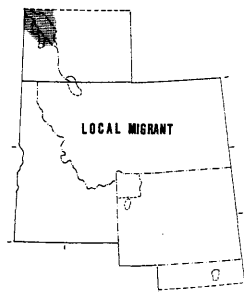
Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 25 to May 22, and from November 13 to December 3. In Alberta the birds arrive shortly after the middle of May, and leave early in September. There are no nesting records for the region, but records from farther east suggest June nesting.

Comments: Magnolia warblers build their nests in low trees, typically small conifers, from 1 to 8 feet above ground, and they are usually well concealed and placed near the tip of a horizontal branch. Wing- and tail-spreading displays, which exhibit the white wing markings, are used for advertising the territories by males and for aggressively posturing toward other birds.

Suggested Reading: Kendeigh, 1945; Bent, 1953.

LATILONG STATUS

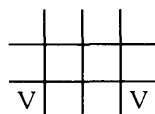
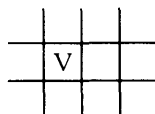
	V		
V			V
			V
			V
			V
			V



Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*)

Identification: Males of this rare species have white wing-patches, a heavily streaked and tiger-like black-and-yellow breast, and generally a yellowish face that sets off a chestnut ear-patch. Females also have a strongly streaked breast and a somewhat yellowish face, but have little white on the wings and no chestnut on the cheeks. The male's song is a weak, thin and repeated *seet* note.

LATILONG STATUS



Status: A rare migrant in the easternmost parts of the region; accidental farther west, and a vagrant in the montane parks. Reported at least once in Montana and Wyoming, and from 6 Colorado latilongs. The nearest breeding area is in north-central Alberta.

Habitats and Ecology: In Alberta the nesting habitat consists of mature spruce stands in coniferous or mixed woods. Fairly open stands of tall conifers, or the edges of coniferous forests, especially if birches or hemlocks are present. On migration a much broader array of habitats are used, and they are often found in deciduous trees.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from May 10 to June 16. In Alberta the birds usually arrive about the middle of May, and are generally gone by mid-September. There are no specific breeding records for the region.

Comments: Cape May warblers are prone to nest very high in tall coniferous trees, and thus very little has been learned of their breeding biology and behavior. Their nests are almost invisible from the ground, and are built of mosses such as sphagnum.

Suggested Reading: Walley, 1973; Bent, 1953.



Yellow-rumped Warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)

Identification: Males of this species have a distinctive combination of a yellow rump, a yellow flank patch, a yellow crown and (usually) a yellow throat, but otherwise are mostly bluish gray above and white below. Females also have yellow rumps and yellow flank markings, but otherwise are rather dull-colored. The male's song is a slow, trilling whistle that may rise or fall at the end.

Status: A common and widespread species in wooded areas throughout the region; perhaps the commonest breeding warbler. A common to abundant breeder in all the montane parks.

Habitats and Ecology: This species breeds in a wide array of coniferous forests, from the ponderosa pine zone upwards, and also breeds in riparian forests with conifers present. Habitats range from open, park-like ponderosa pine communities through dense montane forests to timberline species, foraging from low branches to the highest crown levels. During winter the habitats used are more varied, and include berry-eating and nectar-drinking to aerial flycatching.

Seasonality: One of the most hardy warblers, with Colorado records extending occasionally over winter. Wyoming records are from April 20 to mid-October, and in Montana and southern Alberta the birds are usually present from late April to early October. Colorado egg records are from June 19 to July 6, while in Montana and Wyoming egg records extend from June 10 to 27, with nestlings reported as early as June 5.

Comments: This species occurs as an eastern form ("myrtle warbler") that has a white throat, and a yellow-throated race ("Audubon's warbler"), a form that breeds in the Rocky Mountain region.

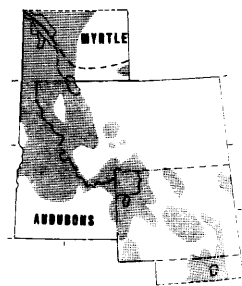
Suggested Reading: Morse, 1980; Hubbard, 1969; Ficken & Ficken, 1966.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	S	
s	S	S	S
S	S	S	S

S	s	s	s
s	S	S	S
s	S	S	S

s	s	S	s
M	S	s	S
S	S	S	S



Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*)

Identification: The head of this species is strongly marked with black and white (white eye-stripes and white chin-stripes), the breast is black, and the underparts are white with black flank striping. Females are similar but have mostly whitish breasts and more grayish heads; both sexes have small but distinctive yellow spots in front of the eye. The song is a *weezy-weezy-weezy-weezy-weet*.

LATILONG STATUS

V		V

M		s
s	s	
S	s	M

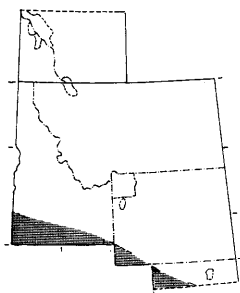
Status: Limited to the southernmost portions of the region, including southern Idaho, southwestern Wyoming (*American Birds* 35:964), and northwestern Colorado. Common only in Dinosaur N.M., and a probable breeder there.

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species is closely associated with pinyon-juniper woodlands, and in Colorado they have been found nesting at about 7,000 feet elevation. In Idaho they nest on low ridges covered by large, gnarled junipers. Elsewhere they have been found breeding in oak woodlands, and in general they seem to prefer trees with dense and stiff foliage, of relatively low stature, and in dry environments. The birds forage in dense terminal foliage, and nest at medium heights.

Seasonality: In Colorado they have been reported from April 25 to September 7. Eggs have been reported in Colorado and northern Utah from June 11 to July 19, and nestlings seen during the latter part of June in Idaho.

Comments: This is another of the southwestern chaparral species that barely reaches the region covered by this book, and is more likely to be seen at Dinosaur N.M. than in any of the montane parks.

Suggested Reading: Grinnell & Storer, 1924; Stein, 1962.



Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*)

Identification: This beautiful western warbler is perhaps best identified by the black (males) or gray (females) cheek patch surrounded by yellow, and with black spots extending down a yellow-tinted breast. Males have a large black throat-patch and are a brighter yellow throughout than females. The song is usually six to eight repeated notes of one pitch, followed by three or four very rapidly repeated notes on a higher or lower pitch.

Status: A summer resident in the northwestern part of the region, south at least to west-central Montana and possibly farther. Reported as an occasional breeder in Yellowstone N.P. by some early observers, but currently believed to be only a migrant. Also reported to be a confirmed breeder in Clearwater N.F., Idaho, possibly representing its southernmost limits.

Habitats and Ecology: This is a crown-level forager in tall conifers, favoring dense and mature montane forests. This general adaptation seems to be true during the non-breeding season as well as when nesting. Nesting appears to be in spruces and firs, sometimes within 15 feet of the ground, but rather few nests of this species have been described. In Alberta the nesting habitat consists of dense stands of spruce or fir, often with a stream or a willow-lined swamp nearby.

Seasonality: Colorado migration records are from May 7 to 26, and again from August 19 to October 29. Idaho records are from May 1 to September 16, and fledged young have been observed in early July. In Alberta the birds typically arrive during the last week of May, and leave by early September. Wyoming records extend from May 11 to November 13. Eggs have been reported in Montana as early as June 2, and in Washington egg records extend from May 24 to June 24.

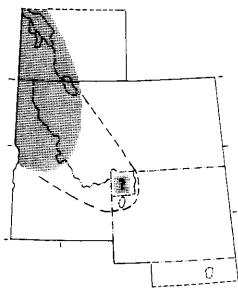
Suggested Reading: Stein, 1962; Bent, 1953.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	S	
s	S	S	S
S	s	S	

M	M		
	M	M	
	M	M	M

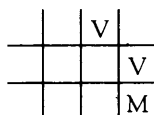
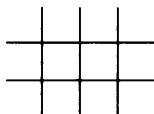
		M	M
	M	M	M
M	M		M



Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*)

Identification: Quite similar in appearance to the closely related Townsend's warbler, but both sexes lack dark cheek markings, and have no yellowish tinges on the underparts below the breast region. The golden cheeks and gray to black breast area provide a distinctive combination of colors. The song is a series of about four *see* notes that end with two final notes that are accented and clearer whistled notes, sounding something like "Zee-zee-zoo'-zee."

LATILONG STATUS



Status: A rare migrant in the eastern part of the region; accidental elsewhere, including the montane parks, where an irregular vagrant. The nearest breeding area is in northern Alberta (Athabaska drainage). Reported from 2 Montana latilongs, 3 Wyoming latilongs, and 10 Colorado latilongs.

Habitats and Ecology: Associated during the breeding season with mature and rather open coniferous or mixed forests, especially those with pines present. It also has been reported from some tall but second-growth timber and also with scattered trees in pastures or hillsides. In Alberta it seems to be associated with mature spruce stands.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from May 4 to 24, and from September 16 to November 24. In Alberta the birds usually arrive about the middle of May, and are present until about mid-September.

Comments: This is the ecological equivalent of the Townsend's warbler in eastern areas, and the two also are somewhat similar in voice and appearance, suggesting a common ancestry. The ranges of the two species approach one another in Alberta, but are not known to be in contact.

Suggested Reading: Mores, 1980; Stein, 1962; Pitelka, 1940; Nice & Nice, 1932.



Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*)

Identification: Adult males are distinctive, with brilliant orange-red throat color, and with patches of bright orange on the crown, above the eye, and behind a small black cheek-patch. There is also a large white wing-patch. Females have a yellowish throat and upper breast, a yellow eye-stripe, white wing-bars, and streaked flanks. The male's song is extremely high-pitched, and is terminated by a very high-pitched trill.

Status: A rare migrant in the eastern parts of the region; a vagrant elsewhere, including the montane parks. The nearest breeding area is probably in central Alberta or central Saskatchewan. There are records for 5 Montana latilongs, 6 Wyoming latilongs, and 9 Colorado latilongs.

Habitats and Ecology: In Alberta breeding birds are associated with heavy stands of spruce and fir in mixed forests, while farther east the birds occur in a variety of coniferous and deciduous forest habitats. However, mature coniferous forests, especially those in swampy areas and with *Usnea* lichens present, seem to be the favored breeding habitats. In any habitat, the birds tend to forage high in the trees, and nests are typically placed very high in tall trees as well.

Seasonality: There are few regional records south of Canada, but in Colorado the birds have been reported from May 9 to June 12. In Alberta they arrive about the middle of May, and remain for an uncertain period, but probably no later than the end of September.

Comments: This is one of the most beautiful of warblers and one of the hardest to see at close range, since it always forages at considerable height, much like the Townsend's and black-throated green warblers.

Suggested Reading: Bent, 1953; Lawrence, 1953b.

LATILONG STATUS

V			
V			V

	V		V

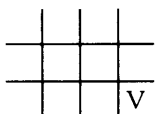
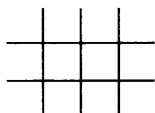
			V
			V



Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*)

Identification: This is a rather modestly colored warbler with only a yellow to whitish eye-stripe and a yellow throat and breast to give it color; it also has white wing-bars and white underparts but is otherwise generally grayish above, with blackish spotting on the back. Its song is a rapid, staccato, musical trill, speeding up toward the end.

LATILONG STATUS



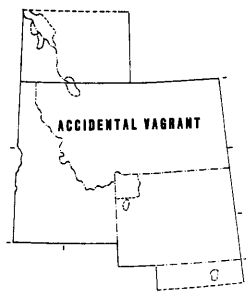
Status: An accidental vagrant in the southern part of the region; the nearest breeding areas are in southwestern Colorado. Reported during July and September in Rocky Mountain N.P.

Habitats and Ecology: Associated with the ponderosa pine and to a lesser extent the juniper zones in southern Colorado, up to about 8,500 feet. Extends into desert scrub and riparian habitats during the non-breeding season, as well as into other coniferous forest types. Elsewhere it is generally limited to sparse stands of small pines, from 15 to 30 feet tall.

Seasonality: Reported in Colorado from April 25 to September 4, and with egg records for May, but actively singing males noted as late as June.

Comments: This species is a bird of the open pine forests, where it forages in the upper levels of trees, and occasionally flies out to catch insects in a flycatcher-like manner.

Suggested Reading: Webster, 1961; Bent, 1953.



Palm Warbler (*Dendroica palmarum*)

Identification: This is a distinctly brownish warbler, with a chestnut crown, a whitish eye-stripe, yellow under tail coverts, and a somewhat yellowish throat that is streaked with brown. The birds wag their tails almost constantly, and their song is a buzzy trill much like that of a chipping sparrow, usually of six or seven notes.

Status: A rare migrant over the eastern part of the region; accidental in the western areas and the montane parks. There are at least 10 Montana sightings, records from five Wyoming latilongs, and from 14 Colorado latilongs. The nearest breeding area is in central Alberta, south to about Grande Prairie, Elk Island N.P., and Cold Lake.

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season these birds are associated with dense boggy areas dominated by larch, spruce, and white cedar, and with alders, willows, and cranberry thickets present. Nesting is done on the ground, in fairly dry sphagnum mosses. Outside of the breeding season and on migration the birds are seen in various habitats such as roadside shrubbery and deciduous trees.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from May 12 to 20, and from September 16 to December 17. In Alberta the birds usually arrive during the first week of May, and remain until at least the middle of October. Egg records in Alberta are from May 30 to June 16.

Comments: This warbler is obviously poorly named, at least insofar as its breeding habitats are concerned, and might better have been called the "muskeg warbler" or some such name. It is also not very warbler-like in appearance, and instead has a head pattern and song somewhat reminiscent of a chipping sparrow.

Suggested Reading: Bent, 1953; Welsh, 1971; Graber et al., 1983.

LATILONG STATUS

V			
		V	
V			

			V
	V		

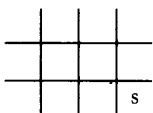
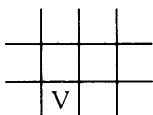
		V	
			V
V			M



Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*)

Identification: Males of this species are easily identified by their chestnut crown, throat, breast, and flanks, with a contrasting buffy white neck-patch and white wing-bars. Females are much more difficult to identify, and have a small amount of chestnut on the crown, throat, and sides, but otherwise are generally dull-colored. The male's song is a *seetzy-seetzy-seetzy-see*, given in a high and weak voice.

LATILONG STATUS



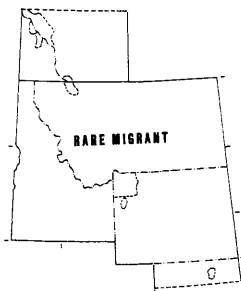
Status: A rare migrant in the eastern parts of the region; accidental in western areas and in the montane parks. The nearest breeding areas are in central Alberta, south to about Cold Lake and perhaps to Jasper N.P. (where rare).

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species is associated with coniferous forests, especially those in rather swampy areas and with birches or maples present, and also with mixed forests having clearings or edge areas. In Alberta it is found in extensive stands of mature spruce or mixed spruce, larch, and pine. It may also occur in mixed forests, but only those that are dominated by conifers.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from May 11 to 25, and from August 22 to October 1. In Alberta the birds arrive about the third week of May, and remain until about mid-September. There are apparently no regional egg records.

Comments: This species is a low-level forager, generally searching for insects on branches below the main tree foliage, and its nests are likewise typically placed less than 25 feet above the ground level.

Suggested Reading: Mendall, 1937; Bent, 1953; Graber et al., 1983.



Blackpoll Warbler (*Dendroica striata*)

Identification: Males of this species are distinctively patterned in black and white, with no yellow or other colors present. The crown is black, the cheeks are white, and the flanks are heavily spotted with black and white. Females are much more drab, but have a spotted throat and flanks, white wing-bars, and white tail spots. The male's song is a very high-pitched series of notes on a single pitch and loudest in the middle.

Status: A local summer resident in the montane forest of the northwestern corner of the region, south at least through Banff N.P. and Bragg Creek; a migrant in the eastern parts of the region east of the mountains.

Habitats and Ecology: In Alberta the favored breeding habitat consists of mixed woodland, especially spruce and aspen or alder regrowth on previously burned areas. In northern Alberta they inhabit deciduous shrubs as frequently as young coniferous growth. Outside the breeding season they occur over a much broader array of wooded habitats.

Seasonality: Migration records in Colorado are from April 29 to May 27; fall records are apparently lacking. In Alberta the birds usually arrive about the middle of May, and are gone by the end of September. Egg records seem to be lacking for the region.

Comments: Although not very colorful, this is one of the more attractive warblers, and one that can usually be seen very easily during migration, as it tends to forage low in the trees and in rather open situations, where the male's contrasting plumage can be easily observed.

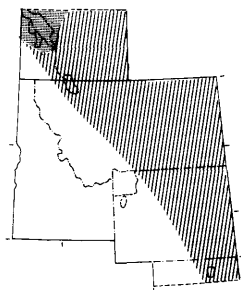
Suggested Reading: Morse, 1979; Bent, 1953; Graber et al., 1983.

LATILONG STATUS

M	M		
			M
V	M	M	

M		M	M
	V		

M		M	M
		M	M
			M



Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)

Identification: This distinctly plumaged warbler can be readily identified by its strongly striped black and white plumage, with a strongly striped crown, black and white striping on the back, and heavy black spotting on the white breast and flanks. The male's song is a series of six to eight high, double whistling notes, with the first syllable of each doublet stressed and the second syllable lower. No other warbler crawls up and down the trees in a nuthatch-like manner.

LATILONG STATUS

		V	
			?

			M
		M	

		M	M
	M		M
M			M

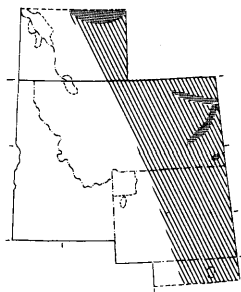
Status: A local summer resident in the northeastern parts of the region, and a rare migrant east of the mountains throughout the region. An accidental vagrant in the montane parks, except for Banff, where occasional but breeding is unproven.

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species inhabits deciduous or mixed woods bordering lakes and streams, or in shrubbery around muskeg areas. It also breeds in immature or scrubby trees on hillsides or ravines, and in riverside forests in grassland areas.

Seasonality: Records in Colorado mostly extend from April 9 to November 30, with rare records to December 24, while in Wyoming they are from May 5 to 25, and from August 20 to September 23. In Montana and southern Alberta the birds are usually present from the first half of May to early September. There are no egg records for the region, but probably nesting occurs mainly during June.

Comments: Because this species forages in a nuthatch- or creeper-like manner, it is not so dependent on flying insects, and so tends to be an earlier spring and later fall migrant than the more typical warblers.

Suggested Reading: Bent, 1953; Smith, 1934; Graber et al., 1983.



American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

Identification: Males are readily identified by their bright orange patches on their flanks, wings, and tail, and an otherwise mostly black and white color. Females exhibit yellow patches on the flank, wings, and tail where the males are orange, and both sexes often can be seen flitting about in the trees, where their wing and tail markings flash brightly. The song of the male is usually a series of 5 or 6 rapid notes with the last or last two notes strongly accented and downslurred.

Status: A relatively common summer resident in woods over most of the region, including montane forests. Present and variably common in all the montane parks, but rarer southwardly, and apparently absent from Rocky Mountain N.P. during the summer (but breeding in the nearby foothills).

Habitats and Ecology: Breeding habitats of this species include moist bottomland woodlands, the margins or openings of mature forests, young or second-growth stands of various types of forests, and especially deciduous forests. The presence of nearby water and of a brush layer seem to be important habitat components.

Seasonality: Records in Colorado extend from April 30 to September 14, plus a late record of November 14. In Wyoming the records extend from April 30 to September 12, and in Montana and southern Alberta the birds are present from about the middle of May until the latter part of September. In Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana there are records of eggs or active nests from June 5 to 30, and records of nestlings for the first half of August.

Comments: Redstarts are among the most visible and active of the warblers, with almost constant singing and flying about capturing insects on the wing as frequently as foraging in the foliage.

Suggested Reading: Ficken, 1962, 1963; Bent, 1953.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	S	
s	S	S	s
S	S	S	S

s	s	S	s
s	S	s	
M	M	s	M

M		M	S
	s	M	M
M	S		S



Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*)

Identification: Males of this species are mostly a bright golden yellow on the head and underparts, and almost uniformly dark grayish blue on the back, wings, and tail, except for white tail patches. Females are similar, but much less colorful on the head and underparts. The male's song is a series of loud, clear, ascending notes.

LATILONG STATUS

	V	
	V	

		V
		M

Status: An accidental vagrant or rare migrant in the region, with no records for Montana, 2 reports for Wyoming, and reports for 8 Colorado latilongs. Reported once for Yellowstone N.P. (Auk 49:91-2) and once for the Jackson Hole area. The nearest breeding area is in easternmost Kansas.

Habitats and Ecology: Breeding habitats consist of moist bottomland forests and wooded swamps or periodically flooded woodlands in the vicinity of running water or pools. Nesting occurs in old woodpecker holes or other natural cavities, usually over water.

Seasonality: The relatively few Colorado records are from May 13 to August 25. Egg records from Kansas are from May 11 to July 10.

Comments: This species of warbler is centered in the southeastern United States, and is the only warbler of this region that nests in tree cavities. Often these nest holes are only five or six feet above water, and frequently are old downy woodpecker holes that are lined with mosses, grasses, or other vegetation to make them suitable for nesting.

Suggested Reading: Walkinshaw, 1953; Bent, 1953; Graber et al., 1983.



Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthos vermivorus*)

Identification: This is the only warbler that has a strongly striped black and orange-yellow head, with clear buffy-orange underparts. There are no white wing-bars, tail-patches, or other bright colors present. The birds forage on the ground in dense vegetation. The male's song is a chipping sparrow-like series of rapid and sharp notes.

Status: A rare migrant or vagrant in the region, with no Montana records, only one for Wyoming, and 11 latilong records for Colorado. The nearest breeding region is in eastern Oklahoma.

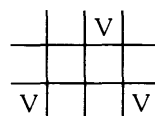
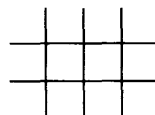
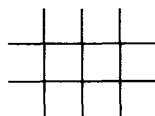
Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species inhabits wooded hillsides with medium-sized deciduous trees and an undergrowth of small shrubs and saplings, particularly where there are streams or swampy areas nearby. Nesting occurs on the ground, under shrubs or sometimes under a canopy of dead leaves at the base of a tree.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 22 to May 7, and again for late October. There are no regional egg records.

Comments: This is an extremely poorly studied species, which is relatively elusive and often overlooked because of its song's similarity to that of a chipping sparrow.

Suggested Reading: Bent, 1953; Graber et al., 1983.

LATILONG STATUS



Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*)

Identification: This ground-foraging warbler has a chestnut brown crown bordered with black, a white eye-ring, and with bold black spotting on the white breast and flanks. It is similar to the northern waterthrush, but that species lacks the white eye-ring and black-and-brown crown. Its song is a very loud, repeated *teacher, teacher, teacher* . . . of about 10 or 12 notes that gradually rise in volume.

LATILONG STATUS

			M

s	s		s
		M	

M		s	s
	M		M
			M

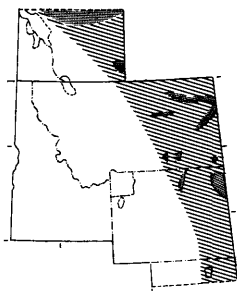
Status: A local summer resident east of the mountains in Alberta, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, and a rare migrant or vagrant in the mountains, including the montane parks.

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species occupies well-drained, bottomland deciduous forests, and well-shaded and mature upland forests, especially on north-facing slopes or shady ravines. In Alberta the birds favor deciduous or mixed woods in which the undergrowth is not too dense for ground foraging, and avoid the darkest coniferous forests.

Seasonality: Colorado records extend from May 6 to October 14. In Montana and southern Alberta the birds usually arrive during the second or third week of May, and remain until the latter half of September. Colorado egg records are from June 1 to 23, and in Montana nesting has been noted in June and young observed in July.

Comments: The ovenbird is one of the most abundant warblers in eastern deciduous forests of North America, but in this region it is at the edges of its range. In many ways it acts more like a small thrush than a warbler, and indeed has the general plumage characteristics of the forest-dwelling thrushes. Like them too, it has a much louder song than do most warblers.

Suggested Reading: Hahn, 1937; Bent, 1953; Graber et al., 1983.



Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*)

Identification: This species rather closely resembles the previous one, but instead of having a white eye-ring it has a white eye-stripe, and it is uniformly dull brown on the crown. Its underparts are white with black striping, and the species forages on the ground, walking in the same manner as the ovenbird. However, it teeters and bobs its tail almost constantly while walking, something in the manner of a spotted sandpiper. Its song is loud and robust, with many notes that usually end in a downslur, sounding like "Twit-twit-twit-chee-chee."

Status: A local summer resident in the northwestern portions of the region, south to about the Wyoming border. Breeding occurs in the montane parks south at least to Glacier N.P. and perhaps to Yellowstone, although the latter is still unproven.

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species inhabits woodlands with ponds, lakes and streams, especially those with brushy bogs and swampy areas of forest. Standing-water habitats are favored over those with moving streams, and in Alberta the birds are found in deciduous forests that have heavy underbrush and are often partially or recently flooded.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 15 to May 28, and from August 13 to October 28. Wyoming records extend from May 10 to September 13, and Montana records from mid-May to late September. The birds usually arrive in central Alberta during the third week of May, and some occasionally remain as late as early October. There are rather few regional breeding records; egg records from British Columbia are from June 5 to 25, and in North Dakota eggs have been found in mid-July.

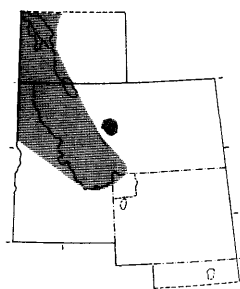
Suggested Reading: Eaton, 1957; Bent, 1953.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	S	s
	s	s	
S	S	s	s

S	s	s	M
s	M		
	M	M	M

		M	
	M		M
V	M		M



MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*)

Identification: This is the only gray-headed warbler, and one which in addition has an incomplete white eye-ring and an underpart coloration that is mostly yellow. Foraging is done close to the ground, and the song of males is a series of *chu-weet* notes that ends in a downslurred buzzy trill.

LATILONG STATUS

S	S	S	s
s	S	S	S
S	S	S	s

S	S		s
s	S	S	S
s	S	S	S

s	s	s	s
S	S	S	s
S	S	s	S

Status: Widespread in woodlands and brushy areas throughout the region, including montane areas; relatively common and a probable breeder in all the montane parks.

Habitats and Ecology: Generally associated with brushy thickets, especially riparian woodlands. Less often it occurs in dense deciduous woods or mixed woodland on upland slopes, or in mature riverbottom forests. In Alberta the birds are usually found close to water in thick brushy growth, in prairie coulees, mountain slopes with dense shrubbery, or along forest clearings.

Seasonality: Colorado records extend from April 24 to October 8, and in Wyoming from May 7 to October 13. In Alberta they arrive on breeding areas in late May, and are mostly gone by the middle of September. Colorado egg records are from June 1 to July 5, and early June appears to be the nesting period for Wyoming. In Washington there are egg records from May 29 to June 22.

Comments: This is a close relative of and an ecological replacement form of the mourning warbler of eastern North America, and which has a breeding range reaching central Alberta, close to the eastern limits of the MacGillivray's warbler.

Suggested Reading: Griscom et al., 1957; Bent, 1953.



Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)

Identification: Males of this water-loving species are uniquely patterned with a black mask through the eyes, and otherwise are mostly yellowish on the underparts. Females are quite dull, and have no trace of the mask, but do have a yellowish throat and breast. The male's song, a loud, repeated *witchity*, usually allows a person to identify the species' presence long before it is observed.

Status: A summer resident throughout the region, including montane areas, and a common to uncommon breeder in all of the montane parks except Rocky Mountain N.P., where rare.

Habitats and Ecology: Moist to wet ground, with associated vegetation such as tall grasses, shrubs, and small trees, are the primary breeding habitat, although at times the birds extend to upland thickets of shrubbery and low trees. Willow thickets around beaver ponds, the edges of muskegs, and scrub alders are among its favorite nesting areas.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 18 to October 4, and Wyoming records are from April 16 to October 16. In Montana and southern Alberta they are usually present from mid-May to mid- or late September. Colorado and Wyoming egg records are from June 9 to 25, and active nests in Montana have been noted from May 28 to June 29.

Comments: This species and the yellow warbler may well be the most widespread warblers of the region, but whereas the yellow warbler prefers dry thickets, this species is mostly limited to wet ones.

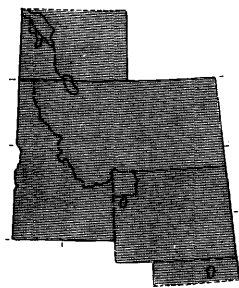
Suggested Reading: Stewart, 1953; Hofslund, 1959.

LATILONG STATUS

s	S	S	s
s	S	S	s
S	S	S	s

S	S	s	S
s	S	M	S
S	S	s	S

M	M	S	S
M	s	s	s
S	S	s	S



Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*)

Identification: This is the only warbler in which the male has a yellow face bounded above by a black crown and below by a black breast, the two black areas connected by a narrow black band. The underparts are bright yellow, and the tail has white spotting. Females are similarly yellow, with white tail markings, but lack the black "hood" and breast markings. The male's call is loud and clear, and usually of repeated *weet-a* notes.

LATILONG STATUS

		V
		V
		M

Status: A rare migrant or vagrant east of the mountains; accidental in the montane areas. There are no Montana records, only 3 for Wyoming, and records from 9 Colorado latilongs. The nearest breeding area is in eastern Oklahoma.

Habitats and Ecology: On its breeding grounds this species is associated with thick bottomland woods and wet, open woods, especially those of a swampy nature. Extralimital sightings in this region have been of vagrant birds usually seen in gardens, hedges, and similar suburban sites.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 8 to May 18. Breeding in the central Great Plains apparently occurs in late May and June.

Comments: This is clearly a species well out of its range and habitat in the Rocky Mountains, and reflects the abilities of birds to move well away from their expected localities. Most often these are immature birds, but at least some of the Colorado records are of adult males in breeding plumage.

Suggested Reading: Griscom et al., 1957; Bent, 1953; Graber et al., 1983.



Wilson's Warbler (*Wilsonia pusilla*)

Identification: This little yellow warbler is distinctively marked with a black "skullcap" in males; there is no white on the wings or tail. Females are similarly yellowish, but have only a dusky cap, and somewhat resemble a female yellow warbler. The male's song is a series of short descending, slurred and staccato *chi* notes that drop in pitch at the end.

Status: A widespread summer resident in woodlands throughout most of the region, including the montane parks, where generally common and probably breeding in all.

Habitats and Ecology: On their breeding grounds these birds inhabit willow, alder thickets along rivers or beaver ponds, brushy edges of lake-shores, the edges of mountain meadows, timberline areas of low shrubby vegetation, and sometimes aspen thickets. In Colorado they regularly breed at altitudes of more than 10,000 feet, near timberline, especially in willow thickets around high mountain lakes.

Seasonality: Colorado records are from April 15 to November 6, and Wyoming records extend from May 4 to November 10. In Montana and southern Alberta the birds are usually present from about the middle of May until the end of September or early October. Colorado egg records are from June 1 to July 3, and in Montana and Wyoming the records extend from June 6 to 27. Dependent young have been seen in late July in Banff N.P.

Comments: This is the most widespread species of the genus *Wilsonia* in North America, breeding from coast to coast, and from Alaska to northern Mexico, in a wide variety of climates and plant habitats.

Suggested Reading: Stewart, 1973; Harrison, 1971; Stewart et al., 1977.

LATILONG STATUS

s	S	S	M
s	s	S	M
S	s	s	M

s	s	M	M
s	S	S	
s	S	s	M

s	M	M	M
M	M	s	M
S	S	S	S



Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*)

Identification: Males of this attractive warbler have yellow "spectacles," a bright yellow throat, and yellow underparts, the two yellow areas separated by a black "necklace." Females also have spectacle-like markings around the eyes and bright yellow underparts, but the "necklace" markings are barely apparent. The song of the male is rapid and variable, usually of repeated *ditchety* phrases, and ending with a single *chip*.

LATILONG STATUS

		M	

			M

	M		
			M

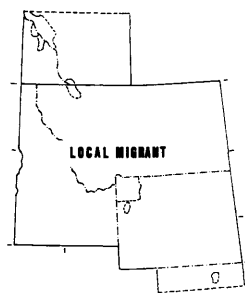
Status: A local and rare migrant east of the mountains, with two Montana records, one Wyoming record, and five Colorado records. There are June records for Banff and Jasper, but the nearest known breeding area is in the general vicinity of Lesser Slave Lake.

Habitats and Ecology: On its breeding grounds this species seeks out thick stands of willow and alder along streamsides, or dense shrubs in swampy forest areas. It also breeds in mature mixed or deciduous forests, and in the heavy undergrowth of regenerating deciduous forests. Nesting is done on the ground, often under tree roots, in a bank cavity, or in a rotted and moss-covered stump.

Seasonality: Most of the regional records are for the second half of May or the first half of June, but there are also records for the first half of September. The birds arrive on their central Alberta breeding areas in late May or early June, and are gone by early September. There are no regional egg records.

Comments: This is a ground- and low-level foraging warbler, using similar habitats to those of the MacGillivray's warbler, in considerably wetter situations.

Suggested Reading: Krause, 1965; Bent, 1953.



Yellow-breasted Chat (*Icteria virens*)

Identification: This very large warbler is nearly 8 inches long, and has conspicuous "spectacles" as well as bright yellow underparts and gray to olive-green upperparts. Its voice is extremely unusual for a warbler, consisting of a strange medley of loud and clear whistles intermixed with squeals, squawks, and other unusual notes, in seemingly random order. The birds inhabit thick underbrush, and thus are more often heard than seen.

Status: A summer resident at lower altitudes over most of the drier portions of the region, generally under 7,000 feet. A vagrant only in the montane parks south of Canada, and a possible occasional breeder at Dinosaur N.M.

Habitats and Ecology: During the breeding season this species occurs along the shrubby coulee areas of the plains, the oak and mountain mahogany woodlands of the foothills, along alder and willow-lined creeks of the prairies, brushy forest edges, and in shrubby overgrown pasturelands.

Seasonality: Colorado records extend from May 6 to October 3, and those from Wyoming are from May 10 to September 5. Montana and Idaho records are from May 10 to early September. Egg records in Colorado are from June 6 to 28, and in Montana and Wyoming extend from June 11 to July 23.

Comments: This species is perhaps the most unusual of all the New World warblers, both in terms of its anatomy and its behavior, and perhaps should be removed from the group altogether. In its ecology it approaches the catbird and other "mimic thrushes," with a high degree of territoriality.

Suggested Reading: Dennis, 1958; Thompson & Nolan, 1973; Bent, 1953.

LATILONG STATUS

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