



WARBLERS OF OHIO *field guide*

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



INTRODUCTION

Warblers (also known as wood warblers) are one of the highlights of the avian world, particularly in spring as they don spectacular breeding plumages and sing complex symphonies of song. Without a doubt, warblers are one of the favorite groups among birders. Each spring, as the birds begin to journey from their wintering grounds in Central and South America to their northern breeding sites, a flurry of excitement runs through the birding community. Birders gather en masse in areas of suitable habitat, large and small, to view the migration spectacle of these colorful birds.

Warblers are members of the *Parulidae* family, also known as New World warblers, which comprises more than 100 species. Central and North America have the greatest diversity, with about 90 species, while another 26 species occur strictly in South America. Thirty-seven species of warblers breed in eastern North America, and 24 species regularly nest in Ohio. Including migrants that pass through on their way to more northerly breeding grounds, 36 species occur annually in Ohio. Four other vagrant species have been recorded, bringing Ohio's list of warblers to 40 species.

The 36 regularly occurring Ohio species are described in this book.

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This booklet depicts both the male and female breeding plumages of each warbler species. For some species, males (♂) and females (♀) are visually indistinguishable. Those species are identified by a breeding adult (♂♀) symbol rather than by male or female symbols.

Common Name → PRAIRIE WARBLER

Scientific Name → *GETOPHARUS DISCOLOR*

Species Description and information →

Seasonal Abundance Chart by Month →

Male Photo →

Female Photo →

Ohio Range Map* →

Global Range Map →

KEY FIELD MARKINGS
Males are bright yellow below with black streaking on their flanks. Their head is yellow with an olive-colored crown, black nape, and black moustachial under the eye. They have a distinct colored patch on their back. Females are a paler yellow with heavy streaks on the sides. Their head can range from yellow to green with a distinct moustachial under the eye.

HABITAT AND NESTING
Dependent on locally accustomed habitats like old fields, young clearcuts, and cedar barrens for nesting. These habitats are not generally highly valued or intentionally managed for, making distribution spotty. Focus are mostly restricted to the southeastern portion of the state.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE
Rising series of short, clear notes - 200-200-200-200-200-200.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE CHART BY MONTH
A bar chart showing the seasonal abundance of the Prairie Warbler from May to November. The abundance is low in May, increases significantly in June and July, peaks in August, and then gradually declines through September and October, with very low abundance in November.

OHIO RANGE MAP*
A map of Ohio with shaded regions indicating breeding density. Darker green regions indicate areas of higher breeding density. The map shows high density in the western and central parts of the state, with lower density in the eastern part.

GLOBAL RANGE MAP
A map of the United States and Canada showing the distribution of the Prairie Warbler. The species is found in the eastern United States and southeastern Canada.

WARBLERS OF OHIO

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The species in this booklet are arranged in taxonomic order and separated by genus. This type of arrangement reflects the apparent evolutionary history of warblers, beginning with the species that are thought to be most primitive.

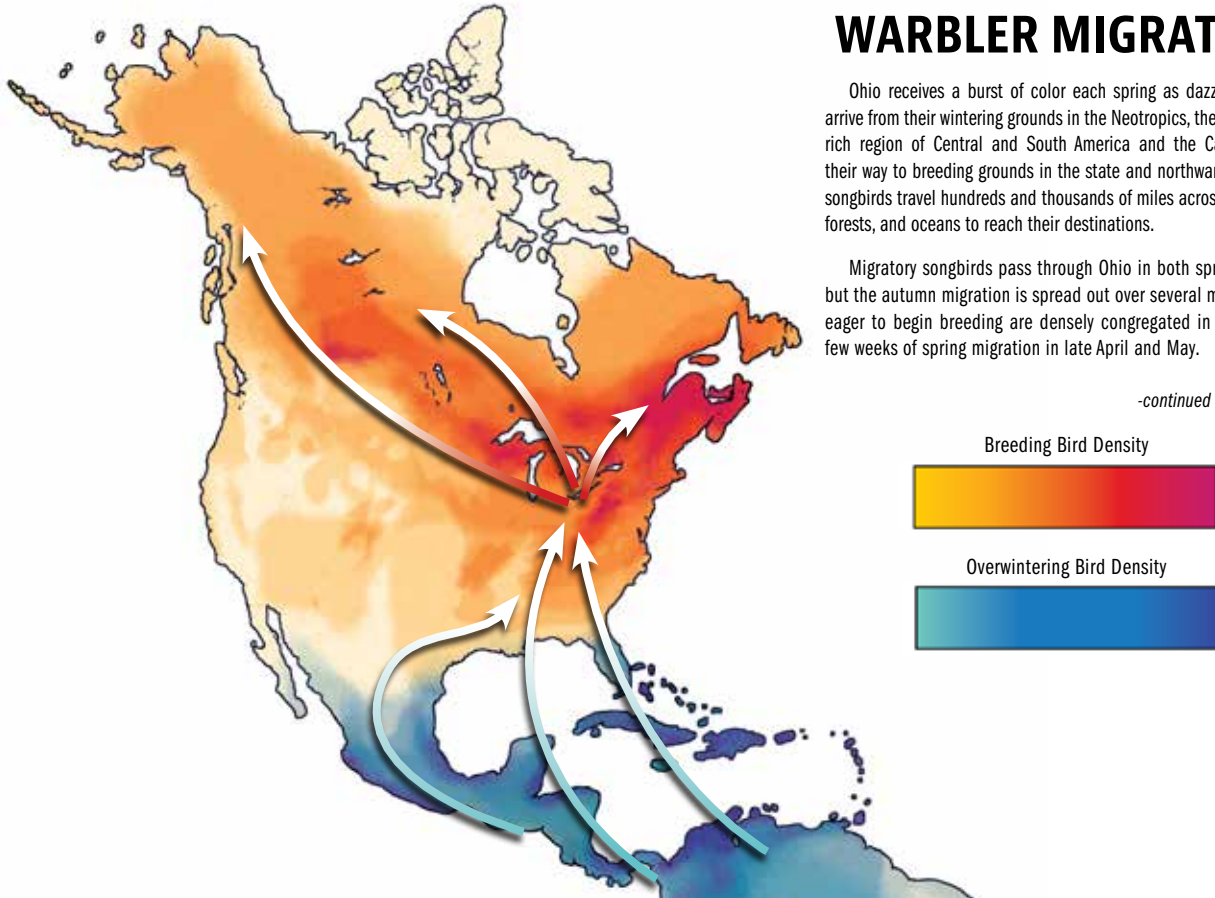
ON THE COVER
PROTHONOTARY WARBLER
PHOTO BY TIM DANIEL

WARBLER MIGRATION

Ohio receives a burst of color each spring as dazzling warblers arrive from their wintering grounds in the Neotropics, the biodiversity-rich region of Central and South America and the Caribbean, on their way to breeding grounds in the state and northward. These tiny songbirds travel hundreds and thousands of miles across mountains, forests, and oceans to reach their destinations.

Migratory songbirds pass through Ohio in both spring and fall, but the autumn migration is spread out over several months. Birds eager to begin breeding are densely congregated in the frenzied few weeks of spring migration in late April and May.

-continued on next page



The globe-trotting journeys of migratory birds would not be possible without the right habitat. Most songbirds migrate at night, dropping into suitable habitats during the day to rest and refuel. During migration, any slice of available habitat could hold warblers, although some areas concentrate birds. Riparian corridors, urban woodlots, and the shores of Lake Erie are magnets for birds eager to rest and feed.

Weather patterns play a big role in migration. Watch the forecast for steady winds out of the southwest which aid spring songbird flights. After a May night of southerly winds, hotspots can see an astounding abundance of birds.



BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER
Photo by: Tim Daniel



PROTHONOTARY WARBLER
Photo by: Nina Harfmann

WARBLER MORPHOLOGY

The wide array of colors and patterns sported by warblers is one of the reasons they are so fascinating to birders. In general, males are more brightly marked than females, although only about a dozen of the 36 regular Ohio species look markedly different between males and females. Spring females mostly look like duller versions of the males. In fall, the males of many species molt into drabber plumage and more closely resemble females. Immature warblers are also com-

mon during the fall and these birds display much less colorful plumage.

All warblers are highly insectivorous, at least for much of the year. Some species become seasonally frugivorous (fruit-eating), usually in winter. Others may occasionally adopt a nectar-foraging strategy. As is typical of birds that glean mostly for small insects, warblers have small, slender bills. The most hyperac-

tive species typically have rictal bristles. These stiff hairs surround the bill and increase the gape area of the mouth – a big advantage for birds attempting to capture small flying insects.

Warblers are small birds, less than a quarter the size of an American Robin. The average warbler is about 5 inches long and weighs less than 10 grams, the equivalent of just a few pennies.



BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER



YELLOW WARBLER



NORTHERN PARULA



CERULEAN WARBLER

FIELD MARKINGS

Each bird species has characteristic markings which differentiate them from other species. Making a positive identification of a bird is much easier with a good field guide and a general understanding of the most identifiable field marks. While many warblers look different in the spring than in the fall, key field markings are present in every season. Breeding plumages are shown below.

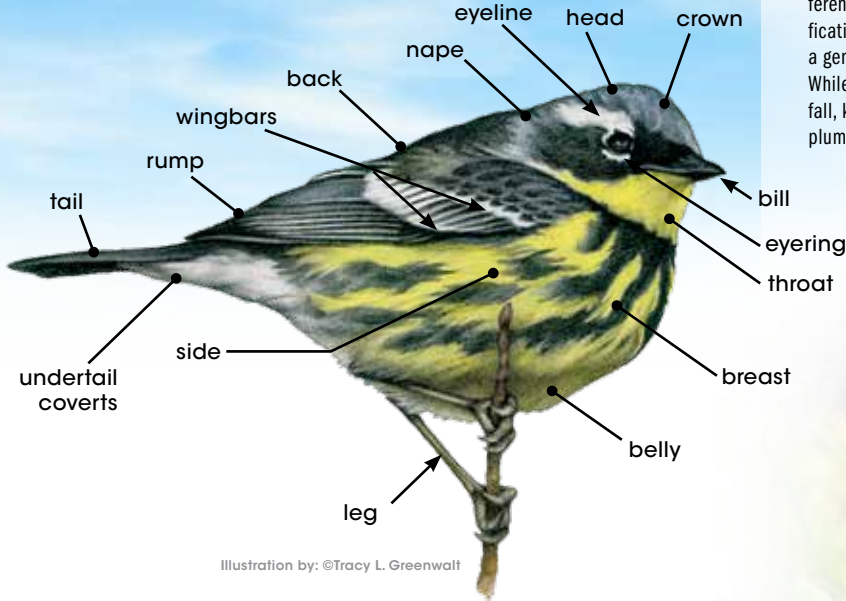
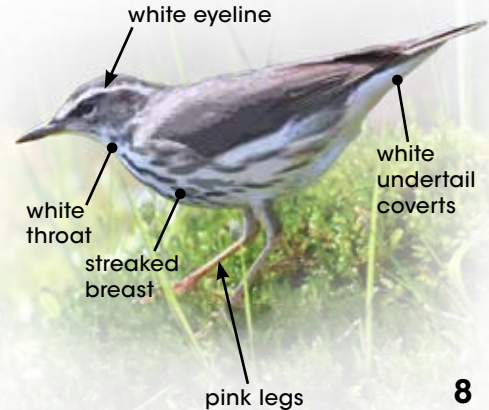
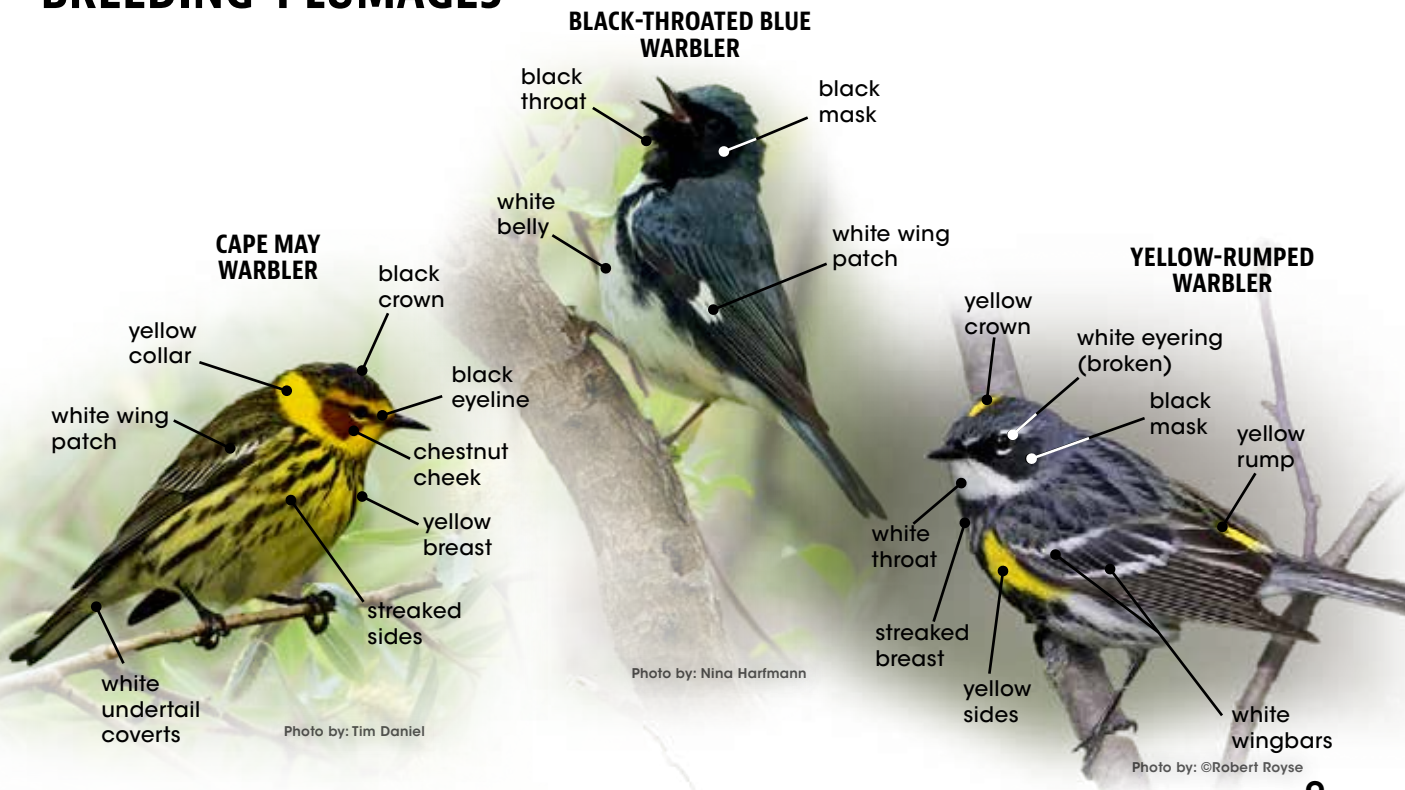


Illustration by: ©Tracy L. Greenwalt

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH



BREEDING PLUMAGES





PRAIRIE WARBLER
Photo by: Nina Harfmann

SONGS AND CALLS

Warblers can be hard to spot, especially as the trees leaf out in late spring. Listening for their songs can help you locate them, and even identify them. Birds sing for many reasons, including to attract mates, warn off rivals, and announce territorial boundaries. Warblers have a wide variety of songs, each specific to a certain species. Learning the different melodies can open a whole new world of birding.

Warblers make a variety of sounds or calls other than their songs. Calls are usually short and simple, often just one note, whereas songs can be long and musical. Calls are used to announce a threat, beg for food, and keep in touch.

When listening to a bird song, there are several key features that will help identify the composer.

PITCH - Most birds sing in a characteristic range. Nearly all warblers use higher notes, like Cape May warblers, but some species, like the blue-winged warbler, sing at a lower pitch.

RHYTHM - The tempo of songs can vary greatly among warblers. The fast-paced, insect-like trill of a worm-eating warbler stands in stark contrast to the warbling melody of the yellow-rumped warbler.

TONE - The tone of a song can be helpful when sorting through similar-sounding notes. Does the song sound squeaky like a black-and-white warbler, buzzy like a northern parula, or loud and ringing like an ovenbird?

QUICK GUIDE TO SONGS

Songs of the 36 annually occurring warblers are described below.
Keep in mind that much variation occurs among individual songs.

OVENBIRD

Teacher-teacher-teacher (emphatic, rising)

WORM-EATING WARBLER

Mechanical and insect-like trill

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH

Tree-tree-tree, terwitter-witter-wit

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH

Tree-tree-tree, tee-tee-tee-tee, chew-chew-chew

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER

Beeee-bz-bz-bzz (buzzy)

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER

Beee-buzz

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

Wee-see; wee-see; wee-see (like a squeaky, revolving wheel)

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

Weat-weat-weat-weat-weat (loud, clear)

TENNESSEE WARBLER

Two rapid trills in succession, speeding up at the end

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER

Thin trill, trailing at end

NASHVILLE WARBLER

Trill in two parts – *see-weef-see-weef-see-weef; see-see-see-see*

CONNECTICUT WARBLER

Chippy-chipper-chippy-chipper-chippy-chipper-chip (loud, ringing)

MOURNING WARBLER

Chirry-chirry-chirry; chorry-chorry (loud, rolling)

KENTUCKY WARBLER

Churry-churry-churry (like a galloping horse)

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT

Wichety-wichety-wichety-wich (loud, fast)

HOODED WARBLER

Tweety-weety-weety-chow! (loud, clear)

AMERICAN REDSTART

Tzee-tzee-tzee-tzeeee (high, variable)

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

Ch-ch-chattanooga-choo-choo (clear, distinct)

CAPE MAY WARBLER

Seet-seet-seet-seet (thin, high-pitched)

CERULEAN WARBLER

Zee-zee-zee-zeezeze-eeet (fast, buzzy; rising at end)

NORTHERN PARULA

Zz-zz-zzz-zzzeee-zap (thin, buzzy)

MAGNOLIA WARBLER

Weeta-weeta-weeteo (short, sweet)

BAY-BREASTED WARBLER

Teesi-teesi-teesi (rapid, high-pitched)

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER

Zip-zip-zip-titititi-tseeee (high, thin; ending on high note)

YELLOW WARBLER

Sweet-sweet-sweet, I'm-so-sweet (fast, bright)

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

Pleased-pleased-pleased-pleased-ta-meetcha

BLACKPOLL WARBLER

Zi-zi-zi-zi-zi-zi (high, thin)

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

Zree-zree-zreee! (slow, raspy)

PALM WARBLER

Trill (weak and buzzy)

PINE WARBLER

Chipping trill

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

Simple warble- *sidl-sidl-sidl-sidl-seedl-seedl-seedl*

YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER

Teeew-teeew-teeew-teeew-tew-tew-twi (clean, ringing)

PRAIRIE WARBLER

Zee-zee-zee-zee-zeezeeee (steady rise in pitch)

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

Zee-zee-zee-zee-zoo-zee (buzzy)

CANADA WARBLER

Fast jumble of notes, ending in *picket-wip*

WILSON'S WARBLER

Che-che-che-che-che (sweet, rising)

HABITATS

The various species of warblers occupy a range of habitats, but most are found in forested landscapes. Habitat preferences cover a broad suite of forest types, from upland oak-hickory woodlands to floodplain forests dominated by sycamores. Some nesting warblers depend on hemlock gorges, which are a rare and localized Ohio habitat. Species like American redstart and hooded warbler are understory specialists; they use dense shrub zones below the main forest canopy.

A few species of warbler occur in open successional habitats, such as old brushy fields, as is the case with the prairie warbler. Common yellowthroats and yellow warblers reach peak abundance in wetland habitats. Pine warblers are aptly named – they invariably occur in stands of pine. Louisiana waterthrushes are riparian dwellers, living along small streams and often foraging on rocky shores or eroding banks.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife owns and manages more than 750,000 acres, much of which is outstanding warbler habitat. Nearly all 24 warbler species that regularly breed in Ohio nest on division lands, many in large numbers. Of equal importance is the role wildlife areas play as migratory stopover sites. Division-owned or -managed lands occur across the state, providing Neotropical migrants with vital resting and refueling stops.





YELLOW WARBLER

Photo by: ©Heather I. Hubbard

FINDING WARBLERS

The best time to find warblers is during the flood of spring migration, at least for the novice warbler-watcher. Early to mid-May brings the greatest numbers and diversity of species, and the males look resplendent in bright breeding plumage. Plus, they are singing. More warblers pass through in fall, their numbers bolstered by juveniles hatched that breeding season, but colors are muted and the birds are not singing, so the show isn't as spectacular as in spring.

Ohio has many great places to seek warblers. Keep in mind that virtually any place, from suburban yards to large wildlife areas, can host warblers in migration. Likewise, at least some species of warbler breed in every Ohio county, so the warbler-conscious observer shouldn't have to go far to find them, even in summer.

Beware, many warblers frequent the tops of trees. Be prepared to spend much time looking upwards. Veteran warbler-watchers are prone to developing a temporary condition known as "warbler neck."



BOARDWALK AT MAGEE MARSH WILDLIFE AREA

photo by: ©Jim McCormac

ECOTOURISM

Ohio is a great place for birds and birders. More than 450 bird species have been recorded in the state. Warblers are a big part of Ohio's birdlife, and their numbers and diversity draw people from all over North America – and beyond – to the Buckeye State. Huge waves of nearly every species found in the East sweep through Ohio en route to breeding grounds. Spring fallouts can be stupefying; birders have recorded as many as 35 warbler species in one day, many in staggering numbers.

The wave of birds brings with it an influx of those hoping to catch a glimpse of these feathered wonders. Tens of thousands of birders take to the field each spring to pursue warblers, many traveling long distances to bird their favorite hotspots. Local and out-of-state birders contribute millions of dollars in economic impact each year. Restaurants, lodging, gas stations, convenience stores, and all manner of businesses near birding hotspots see a boom in business during this time.

Ohio's public lands are well suited for both birds and birders. Whether you live in an urban or rural area, or somewhere in between, you never have to look far to find an incredible place to view birds. It is everyone's responsibility to support and protect these natural spaces. Help do your part to keep these areas clean, safe, and funded so both wildlife and wildlife watchers can thrive.

BIRDING ETHICS

1. THE WELL-BEING OF THE BIRDS (AND OTHER WILDLIFE) SHOULD ALWAYS COME FIRST.

- a. Be aware of sensitive species that might be vulnerable to disturbance.
- b. View from a distance where you are not agitating birds or modifying their behavior, especially near nests.
- c. Limit the use of audio calls. Audio calls should never be used during the breeding season or in heavily birded areas.
- d. Keep dogs on leashes in areas with ground-nesting birds.
- e. Watch for other wildlife such as turtles, frogs, and snakes crossing roadways and parking lots.

2. KEEP WILDLIFE HABITATS HEALTHY.

- a. Support the protection of important wildlife habitats.
- b. Stay on all designated trails and do not trample vegetation.
- c. If birding in a group, make sure it is not so large that it is damaging the habitat.
- d. Don't litter! Anything you bring should be taken with you and properly disposed of.

3. BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS.

- a. Never enter private property without permission.
- b. Follow all traffic rules, drive the speed limit, don't park on the road, and keep your eyes on the road.
- c. Be polite to fellow birders and non-birders alike and share your knowledge when appropriate.



YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER
Photo by: ©Larry Imhoff

WARBLER HOTSPOTS

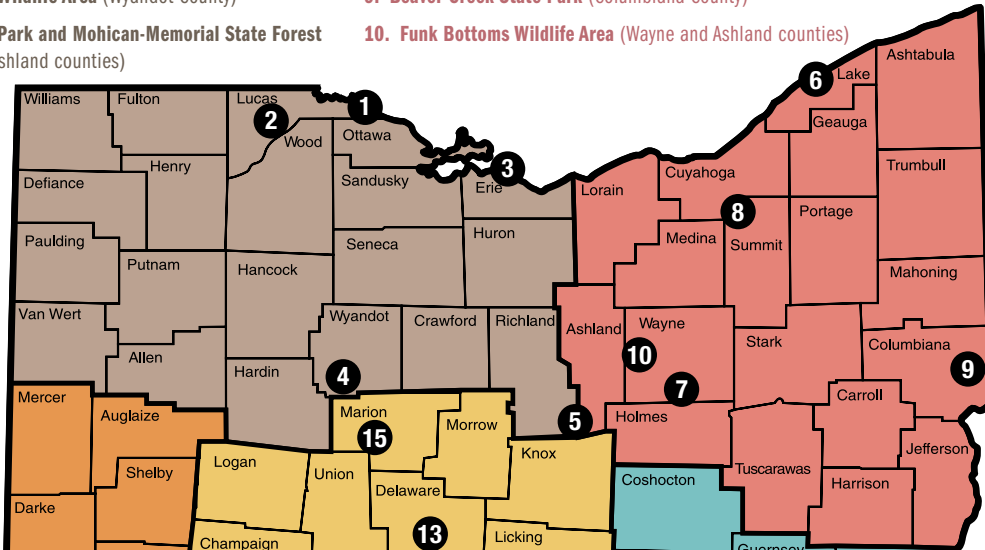
Ohio offers some of the richest warbler-watching anywhere in North America. Finding your new favorite birding spot doesn't mean you have to travel far; great birding abounds throughout the Buckeye State. The following are some of Ohio's best locations to seek warblers.

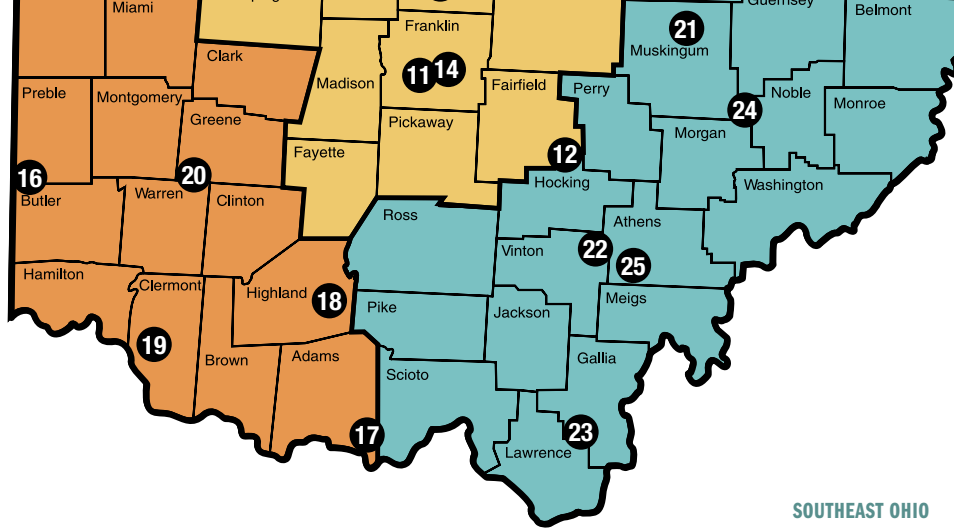
NORTHWEST OHIO

1. **Magee Marsh Wildlife Area** (Ottawa and Lucas counties)
2. **Oak Openings Metropark** (Lucas County)
3. **Pipe Creek Wildlife Area** (Erie County)
4. **Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area** (Wyandot County)
5. **Mohican State Park and Mohican-Memorial State Forest** (Richland and Ashland counties)

NORTHEAST OHIO

6. **Headlands Dunes State Nature Preserve** (Lake County)
7. **Killbuck Marsh Wildlife Area** (Holmes and Wayne counties)
8. **Cuyahoga Valley National Park** (Cuyahoga and Summit counties)
9. **Beaver Creek State Park** (Columbiana County)
10. **Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area** (Wayne and Ashland counties)





CENTRAL OHIO

- 11. **Greenlawn Cemetery** (Franklin County)
- 12. **Clear Creek Metro Park** (Fairfield County)
- 13. **Alum Creek State Park** (Delaware County)
- 14. **Scioto Audubon Metro Park** (Franklin County)
- 15. **Big Island Wildlife Area** (Marion County)

SOUTHWEST OHIO

- 16. **Hueston Woods State Park** (Butler and Preble counties)
- 17. **Shawnee State Forest** (Scioto and Adams counties)
- 18. **Rocky Fork State Park** (Highland County)
- 19. **East Fork State Park** (Clermont County)
- 20. **Spring Valley Wildlife Area** (Green and Warren counties)

SOUTHEAST OHIO

- 21. **Tri-Valley Wildlife Area** (Muskingum County)
- 22. **Zaleski State Forest** (Vinton and Athens counties)
- 23. **Crown City Wildlife Area** (Gallia and Lawrence counties)
- 24. **Appalachian Hills Wildlife Area** (Guernsey, Morgan, Muskingum, and Noble counties)
- 25. **Lake Snowden** (Athens County)

OVENBIRD

SEIURUS AUROCAPILLA



Ovenbirds are more commonly heard than seen. Rather un-warbler-like in appearance and behavior, this species looks more like a small thrush than a warbler and spends most of its time on the ground in the leaf litter. Take note of the chicken-like walk.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Rather chunky for a warbler, both males and females are tan-olive above with heavily streaked breasts on white underparts, and have pink legs. The orange crown is bordered by black lines and a white eyering is clearly visible.

HABITAT AND NESTING

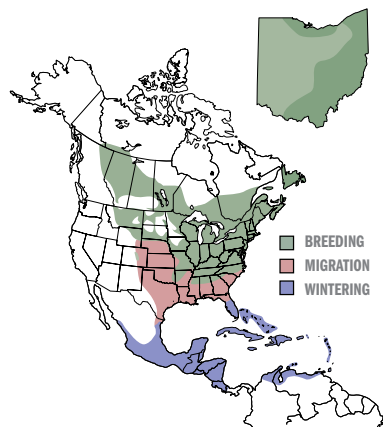
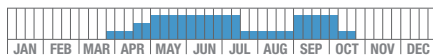
Nests throughout the state in mature deciduous woodlands or mixed forests, generally in well-drained sites that have sparse understory growth. Their name

comes from the shape of their nests, which are built on the ground and resemble an old-fashioned oven.

SONG

A loud, ringing *tea-cher, tea-cher, tea-cher* that ascends in volume as the song progresses.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



WORM-EATING WARBLER

HELMITHEROS VERMIVORUM



Photo by: ©Tyler Ficker



Photo by: Nina Harfmann

While worm-eating warblers don't actually eat many worms, they do consume a large number of caterpillars. Using a unique foraging technique, they move between hanging clusters of dead leaves and use their heavy, spike-like bill to probe for the larvae of moths and other insects. These warblers tend to be skulky and well-hidden.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females are olive-tan above with tan-white underparts. A buff-colored head is broken up by distinct black stripes and an eyeline.

HABITAT AND NESTING

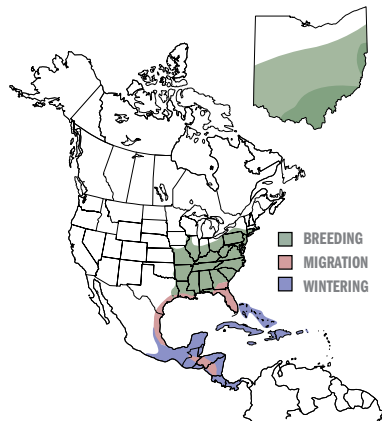
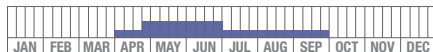
Nesting occurs primarily in southern Ohio, but some breeding pairs can be found further north. Nesting habitat

is restricted to steep, heavily forested slopes with well-developed understories. Worm-eating warblers prefer to forage in the undergrowth, or on tree trunks and limbs.

SONG

A dry or husky trill with notes delivered too fast to count. Insect-like in tone.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



■ BREEDING
■ MIGRATION
■ WINTERING

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH

PARKESIA MOTACILLA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: Tim Daniel

Louisiana waterthrushes are one of the earliest migrants to arrive in spring, often seen and heard by late March. They are also among the first warblers to depart, with most leaving Ohio by early August. These waterthrushes rarely venture far from their breeding habitat, and all have normally established territories before the similar-looking northern waterthrushes arrive. Any waterthrush seen after May 1 outside of the breeding habitat of this species is far more likely to be a northern.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males and females are both brown above with white-cream underparts streaked with brown and a plain white throat. Streaking is not as heavy as the northern waterthrush. Take note of the bold white eyeline and pink legs. This species constantly bobs its tail as it walks.

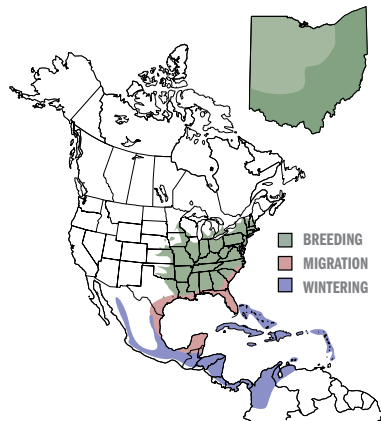
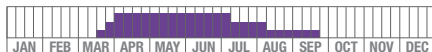
HABITAT AND NESTING

Nesting occurs almost exclusively along small to medium-sized rocky streams buffered by large stands of mature forest. Louisiana waterthrushes forage along stream edges, and often venture out to rocks in the middle of the stream. They are most abundant in southern Ohio.

SONG

A loud, sweet series of clear whistles, followed by a quick, slurred jumble of notes.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH

PARKESIA NOVEBORACENSIS



Photo by: @Robert Royse



Photo by: @Tyler Ficker

Northern waterthrushes are common migrants, but rare Ohio nesters. They are easily confused with the Louisiana waterthrush in appearance, but northerns migrate through Ohio much later in spring, often once Louisianas have established territory. Northern waterthrushes are almost always associated with standing water in swampy woodlands and forage heavily from the ground.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males and females are both brown above with a heavily streaked cream-colored underside. Some individuals can have a more yellow-toned underside. The bold eye stripe is more buff-colored and the legs are duskie and less pink than those of the Louisiana waterthrush. This species constantly bobs its tail as it walks.

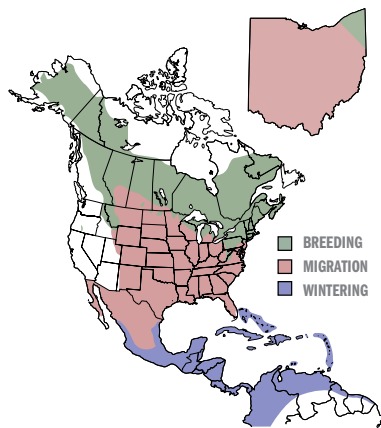
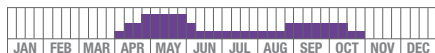
HABITAT AND NESTING

Nesting is rare in Ohio and occurs mostly in the northeastern portions of the state. Nesting habitat includes large, undisturbed swamps and low-lying wet woods. Nests are built on or near the ground, often hidden in downed tree roots, underneath creek banks, or in the base of fern clumps.

SONG

Song is loud and evenly paced; ends with a *chew-chew-chew* in lower rapid notes.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER

VERMIVORA CHRYSOPTERA



Photo by: ©Luke Seitz



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency

This is one of Ohio's rarest breeding warblers, and in general the species is declining, particularly in areas where hybridization with blue-winged warblers occurs. Where the two species co-occur, replacement by the blue-winged warbler can occur within only 20-50 years.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

An overall silvery-gray bird with flashes of yellow on the wings and a bright yellow cap. Males have a black throat and mask with two white facial stripes, while females have a gray mask and throat.

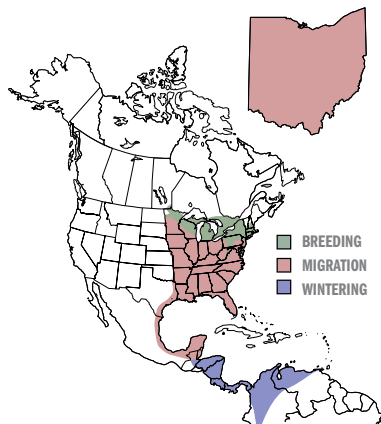
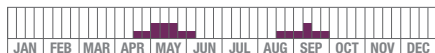
HABITAT AND NESTING

Nesting is rare in Ohio and is strongly associated with early successional forest habitats, including dense patches of shrubs and saplings with some taller trees. During migration, these warblers forage at low to mid-level in scrub-shrub and open forest habitats.

SONG

Typically gives a buzzy high note, followed by two to four lower buzzy notes - *bee-bz-bz-bzz*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BLUE-WINGED WARBLER

VERMIVORA CYANOPTERA



Photo by: Tim Daniel

♂



♀

Photo by: Tim Daniel

Blue-winged warblers arrive in Ohio in late April and early May and are one of the earlier warblers to depart, with most breeding adults leaving Ohio by the beginning of August. Feeding mostly on caterpillars, crickets, and spiders, blue-wingeds can often be seen hanging upside down as they forage among the leaves.

This species is known to hybridize with the golden-winged warbler where habitats overlap, producing the Brewster's and Lawrence's hybrids.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males have a bright yellow head and underparts, with an olive-colored back. The tail and wings are blue-gray with two prominent white wingbars. A thin black eyeline reaches from the base of the bill past the eye. Females and immatures look similar but more muted.

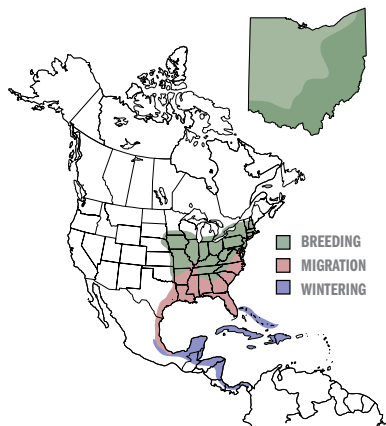
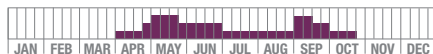
HABITAT AND NESTING

Breeds throughout the state but becomes very local if not absent from heavy agricultural regions. Peak numbers are in unglaciated hill country and southern counties with plenty of red cedar and brushy habitats. Overall prefers scrub-shrub thickets and brushy fields adjacent to forests.

SONG

Males give a loud, buzzy two-note song often rendered as *bee-buzz*, with the first part higher and the second lower and rougher.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

MNIOTILTA VARIA



Photo by: Tim Daniel

♂



Photo by: Nina Harfmann

♀

Once known as the pied creeper, black-and-white warblers forage along the surface of tree trunks and branches in a similar manner to a nuthatch or brown creeper. These warblers have an extended hind claw on their feet which aids in gripping bark. This species is a good example of how knowing songs will aid in finding birds. Black-and-white warblers are not rare but can be quite inconspicuous and easily missed on their breeding grounds. Familiarity with their song will result in finding many more birds.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females display a striking pattern of black and white stripes over the entire body. Bold stripes stand out on the head with a large white patch on the wings. Females tend to be slightly paler than males.

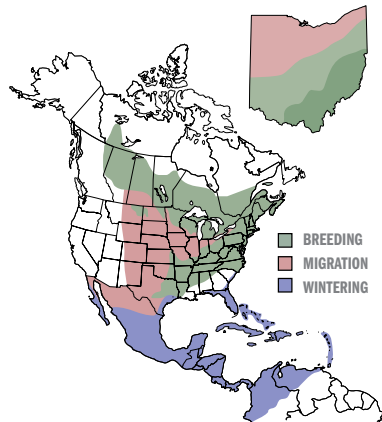
HABITAT AND NESTING

Nests in mature deciduous woodland with plenty of large trees, ranging from riparian terraces to upland forests. Primarily nests in the southern and eastern parts of Ohio.

SONG

A high-pitched, evenly paced series of paired notes - wee-see wee-see wee-see; sounds like spinning a squeaky wheel.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

PROTONOTARIA CITREA



Photo by: Nina Harfmann



Photo by: Nina Harfmann

Prothonotary warblers are the only cavity-nesting warblers in eastern North America and populations have been greatly bolstered by placing nesting boxes in suitable habitat. They will also use cavities created by downy woodpeckers. These brightly colored warblers seem to glow in the often dimly lit wooded swamps.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are a brilliant yellow-gold with an olive back and bluish-gray wings. The black eye stands out against a fully yellow head. Females are paler than males and their crown and nape are often washed with green.

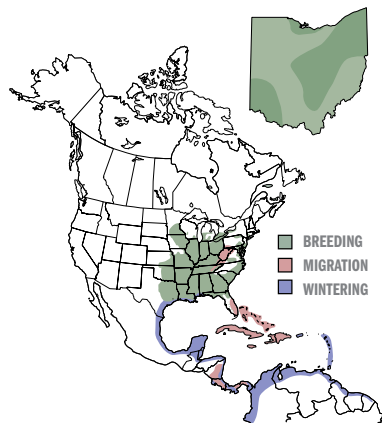
HABITAT AND NESTING

Wet woods with plenty of standing dead timber have the best populations. Also found frequently in riparian forests and in woods bordering lakes and reservoirs. Nests are almost always near water.

SONG

A loud and far-carrying group of 4-14 high pitched notes-*weat-weat-weat-weat*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



TENNESSEE WARBLER

LEIOTHLYPIS PEREGRINA



Photo by: ©Robert Royce



Photo by: ©A. Viduetsky

Tennessee warblers are late migrants in spring, with the peak passage through Ohio from mid- to late May. They normally forage high in the canopy of trees, which are leafed out by the time they pass through. Knowing the song is extremely helpful in locating this often hard-to-spot species.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are yellow-green above with a whitish eyebrow that separates a gray cap and a dark eyeline. Females are a soft yellow-green throughout and have a dusky eyeline. Look for white undertail coverts, which separate this species from similar-looking orange-crowned warblers.

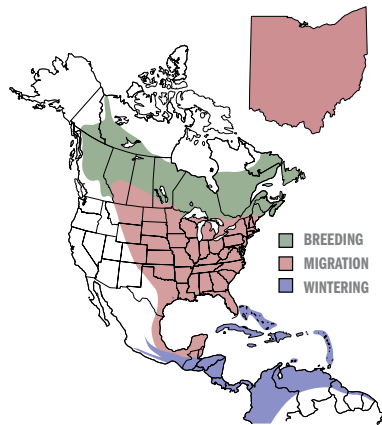
HABITAT AND NESTING

Tennessee warblers do not nest in Ohio. Instead, they breed in the boreal forests to the north. Prefers young, regenerating woodlands that are made up of mostly coniferous or a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees.

SONG

A loud, staccato series of two short trills, the first higher pitched, the second trill dropping slightly, followed by a longer series of loud, uniform sharp chips.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER

LEIOTHLYPIS CELATA



Photo by: ©Tyler Ficker

♀



Photo by: ©Dori Eldridge

♀

One of the less common visitors to Ohio, orange-crowned warblers are more easily found in the western U.S., however, a small number are found in Ohio each year. Those that do migrate through Ohio tend to spend much of their time foraging in lower brushy forest undergrowth, giving birders good views.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females are an overall yellow-olive color with a faint eyeline. The orange crown is often obscured. Immature birds are grayer than adults with a broken eyering and faint eyeline. Note the yellowish undertail coverts which set the orange-crowned apart from the Tennessee warbler.

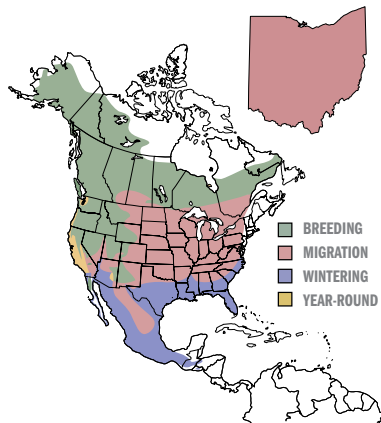
HABITAT AND NESTING

Orange-crowned warblers do not nest in Ohio. Instead, they breed in the western U.S. and northern boreal forests. During migration, look for this species in brushy forest undergrowth and adjacent to scrub-shrub habitat, including parks and backyards.

SONG

Series of two trills. The first set of trills is louder, much faster, and higher pitched, followed by a slower, lower series of musical chips.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



NASHVILLE WARBLER

LEIOTHYPIS RUFICAPILLA



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency



Photo by: ©Daniel Irons

Peak spring migration of Nashville warblers is in the first half of May when many of the trees are leafed out. Learning the song will greatly help birders locate this warbler, which often forages in the mid- to upper half of the canopy.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Yellow below with an olive-green back and no wingbars. In males, the bright yellow throat stands out next to the gray hood. Females are paler than males. A white eyering is easily visible, but the chestnut-colored crown patch is usually hidden.

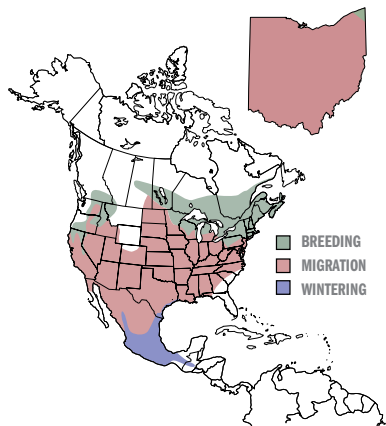
HABITAT AND NESTING

Rare and sporadic breeder in Ohio with only three nests confirmed in the state. Nests to the north in a variety of open woodlands, often with lots of brushy understory, and along bog margins.

SONG

Rapid series of see-weet notes, followed by a lower, bubbling trill.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



CONNECTICUT WARBLER

OPORORNIS AGILIS



Photo by: @Bruce Miller



Photo by: ©Tom Murray



Connecticut warblers are a prized find for many birders and sightings always generate much excitement. The number of Connecticut warblers moving through Ohio is far less than many other species. They are late migrants, passing through from mid-May to early June. Often found in dense brush, Connecticut warblers can be extremely difficult to spot as the vegetation becomes fully leafed out.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Large, skulking warbler with a bold white eyering. Adult males have an olive-gray back, gray hood, and yellow undersides. Females look similar to males but are often paler. Note the tendency to walk instead of hop along the ground.

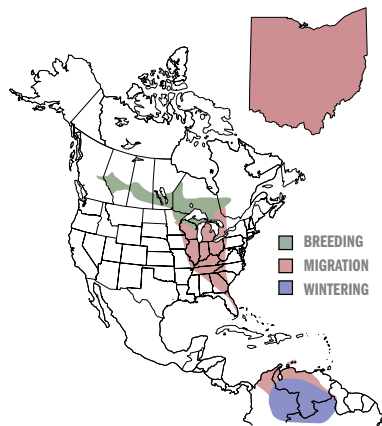
HABITAT AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Breeds primarily in open coniferous forests of bog margins, sometimes old logged-over sites that are regenerating. During migration can be found foraging on the ground in dense forest undergrowth. Prefers thickets near drainage ditches and wetland levees.

SONG

A series of loud, snappy notes – *chippy-chipper-chippy-chipper-chippy-chipper-chip*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



MOURNING WARBLER

GEOTHLYPIS PHILADELPHIA



Photo by: ©Doug Gordon

♂



Photo by: ©Tom Murray

♀

Mourning warblers are late migrants, passing through Ohio in late May and early June. Unlike many species that migrate over the Gulf of Mexico, mourning warblers follow coastlines and avoid open water crossings. During nesting, both males and females have been observed pretending to have broken wings to distract predators close to their nests.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Chunky warbler with an olive-gray back, yellow underside, and dark gray hood. Lacks wingbars and eyerings. During spring, males display a black chest. Females look similar but are overall paler. Note the tendency to hop while foraging on the ground instead of walking.

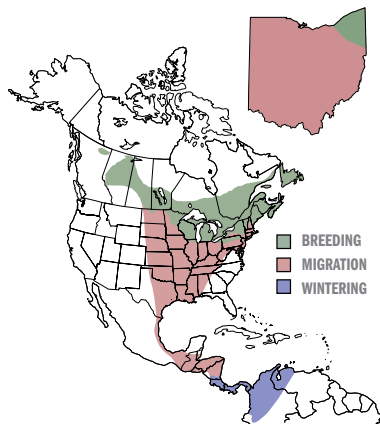
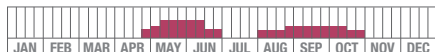
HABITAT AND NESTING

Very rare Ohio breeder and only in the northernmost counties; more often breeds in the boreal forests to the north. During migration, mourning warblers can be found foraging low to the ground in dense thickets and scrub-shrub in open forests or near clearings.

SONG

A rapid, husky forceful *churee-churee-churee* ending in a few rapid and slightly more musical notes.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



KENTUCKY WARBLER

GEOTHLYPIS FORMOSA



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency

Ohio is near the northern limits of Kentucky warblers' breeding range and they become increasingly scarce northward in the state. By far the greatest densities occur in the large forests of southeastern Ohio, where they can be quite common. Kentucky warblers can be frustratingly difficult to observe as they lurk in the dense, shady forest understory. Knowing the song is the key to finding these beautiful warblers.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Adult males are entirely yellow below and olive-green above. They have striking black sideburns, a black cap, and long, pale pink legs. Females look similar but with grayer sideburns and a smaller, more mottled cap.

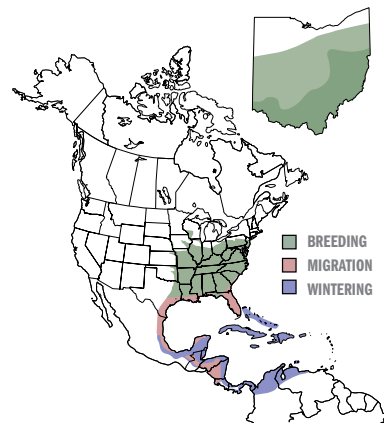
HABITAT AND NESTING

Kentucky warblers frequent dense woodland understorey, preferring shaded undergrowth near swamp edges. Nesting occurs in the southeastern portion of the state in areas with well-developed ground cover, shrubs, and saplings.

SONG

A rich monotone chanting that resembles the sound of hoof beats from a distant galloping horse - *churry-churry-churry*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



COMMON YELLOWTHROAT

GEOTHLYPIS TRICHAS



Photo by: Bruce Miller



Photo by: ©VIREO R. & N. Bowers

Common yellowthroats are one of the most common breeding warblers in Ohio and much of the East. They are hardy warblers, and a few can be found in Ohio and similar latitudes each winter. Many more yellowthroats will be heard than seen as they are often drawn to marshes with dense cattail stands.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males look like masked bandits. Their black mask is edged in white and stands out against a yellow throat. Females are brownish above with a paler yellow throat and breast.

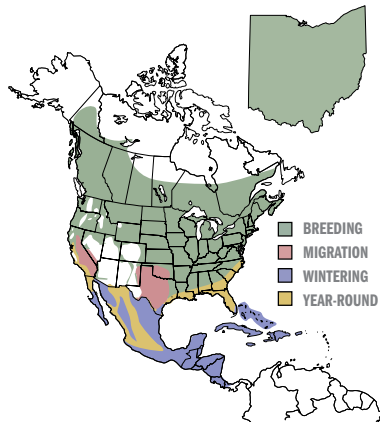
HABITAT AND NESTING

Common yellowthroats breed across Ohio. Peak numbers occur in wet, shrubby meadows and marshes. They also occupy drier thickets, scruffy woodland borders, and successional fields.

SONG

Loud and fast *wichety-wichety-wichety-wich.*

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



HOODED WARBLER

SETOPHAGA CITRINA



Photo by: Nina Harfmann ♂



♀ Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency

These gorgeous warblers breed commonly in eastern deciduous forests and are most easily detected by song in their densely vegetated haunts. As a morphological adaptation to life in perpetual shade, they have the largest eyes of any warbler. Hooded warblers are typically hyperactive, flitting through vegetation in pursuit of insects, all the while fanning their tails to reveal white flashes in the outer tail feathers.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females have a bright yellow head and olive-yellow wings and back. Males display a black hood and throat. Some females show a partial black crown, but the amount of black varies greatly. Note tendency to fan tail to show white undertail feathers.

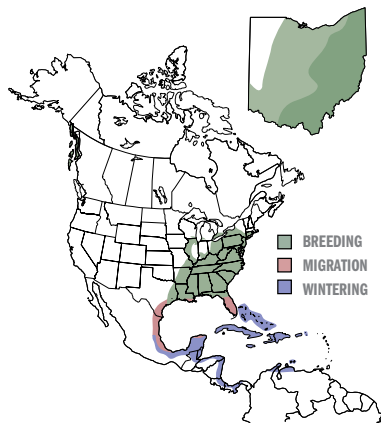
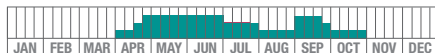
HABITAT AND NESTING

Occupies the understory of dense forests, typically near habitat edges and forest canopy gaps, always where a well-developed dense understory of saplings and shrubs occurs. Breeds primarily in southern Ohio where large tracts of deciduous forest are present.

SONG

A loud, clear *tweety-weety-weety-chow!* A commonly delivered secondary song is softer and more jumbled but still retains the clear whistle quality.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



AMERICAN REDSTART

SETOPHAGA RUTICILLA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency

American redstarts are one of the most conspicuous warblers in coloration and habits. They are hyperactive, constantly darting and lunging after insects. Redstarts are abundant in Ohio during migration, reaching their peak in mid-May. The males do not acquire their striking breeding plumage until the summer of their second year.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are black with bright orange flashes on their wings, tail, and upper flanks. Females have a gray head and olive-colored back and display yellow flashes. Flicks wings and tail nearly constantly.

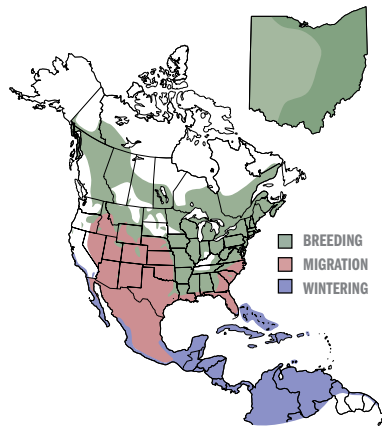
HABITAT AND NESTING

Common breeder in Ohio, preferring the dense shady understory shrubs of forests. Redstarts reach their peak numbers on lower slopes and stream terraces. Nests are most often found in Ohio hill country and counties bordering Lake Erie. During migration, redstarts prefer young forests and forage in the low- to mid-canopy.

SONG

High, variable *tzee-tzee-tzee-tzeeee* ending with an upward or downward inflection.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

SETOPHAGA KIRTLANDII



Photo by: ©Jeff Rzepka



Photo by: ©Dominic Sherony

Kirtland's warblers are one of the rarest species in the U.S., however, populations have grown in the last several decades thanks to habitat management and restoration efforts. They were removed from the federal endangered species list in 2019. Due to their narrow breeding habitat, which lies almost entirely in Michigan, most of the population probably migrates through Ohio, but only a few are detected each year.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Large warblers with a steel-gray head and white eye crescent which is more visible in males. The gray wings and back have black streaking, while the throat and underside are bright yellow. Females are overall paler than males. Frequently bob their tails.

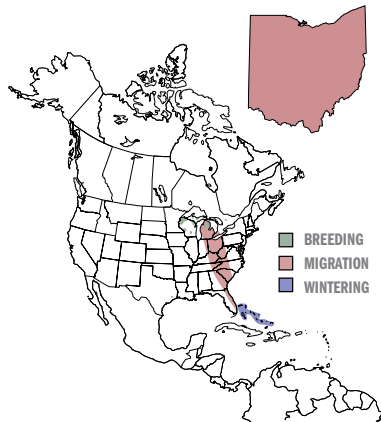
HABITAT AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Kirtland's warblers are very picky about breeding habitat and only nest in young jack pine stands, almost exclusively in northern Michigan with a few nests in Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada.

SONG

A clear, distinct *ch-ch-chattanooga-choo-choo*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



CAPE MAY WARBLER

SETOPHAGA TIGRINA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: ©Paul Reeves Photography

Cape May warbler populations can vary considerably in number from year to year. Their ecology is closely linked to that of the spruce budworm, a pest of coniferous trees in their northern breeding grounds. In budworm outbreak years, Cape Mays have higher nesting success and Ohio may see more of them in the fall and the following spring.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are green-gray above with yellow underparts, both of which are heavily streaked, and have a white wing patch, yellow collar, and distinct chestnut-colored cheek. Females are similar, though paler overall and lacking the cheek patch.

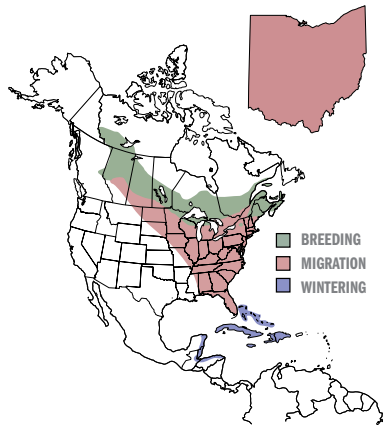
HABITAT AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Breeds in the conifer-dominated boreal forest of Canada and the northern U.S., particularly where black spruce is common. During migration, Cape Mays use a variety of habitats and tend to be found in the mid-canopy, occasionally straying to urban parks and backyards.

SONG

Very high pitched and fast *seet-seet-seet-seet*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



CERULEAN WARBLER

SETOPHAGA CERULEA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: ©Matt Mason

Often the poster child of declining Neotropical birds, cerulean warblers have seen significant population declines due to habitat loss and degradation. Large southeastern Ohio woodlands support some of the best remaining breeding populations. Ceruleans are canopy specialists, typically remaining high in the crowns of trees, contributing to 'warbler neck' for those attempting to observe them.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males have a sky-blue back with black streaking, two white wingbars, and a white neck and underparts with a blue-black necklace. Females are bluish-green above with a slight yellow wash below. White wingbars and a pale eyebrow are also present.

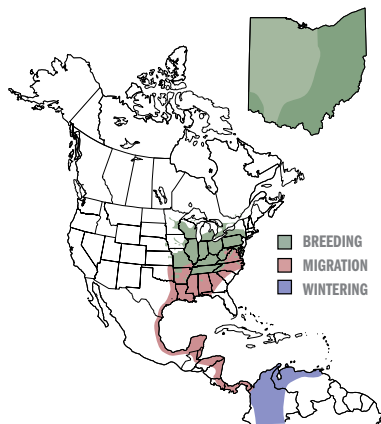
HABITAT AND NESTING

Most cerulean warblers breed in upland oak-hickory forests, but some also use mature riparian woodlands. They are area-sensitive and generally require large unfragmented woodlands and reach peak abundance where uneven-aged trees create a non-uniform canopy.

SONG

A fast, buzzy zee-zee-zee-zeezeze-eeet which rises at the end.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



NORTHERN PARULA

SETOPHAGA AMERICANA



Photo by: ©Robert Royse



Photo by: ©Matthew Studebaker

This is Ohio's smallest warbler, and it normally stays high in the treetops, giving the observer a true appreciation of "warbler neck" when viewed for any length of time. Peak movement through Ohio typically occurs in the second week of May.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are bluish above with an olive-colored back patch, a mostly white belly, and striking yellow-orange throat with a black- and chestnut-colored band. Also note the white wingbars and eye crescents. Females are similar but paler, greener, and lacking the rusty throat.

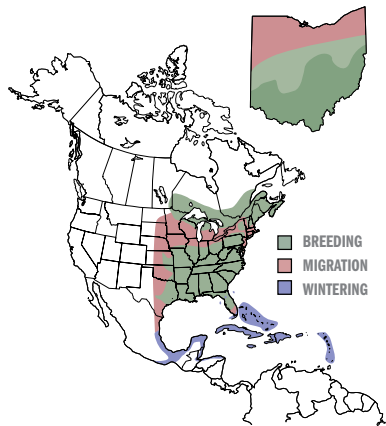
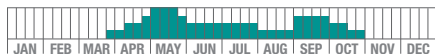
HABITAT AND NESTING

A rare breeder in the state, becoming more common. Most nests are located in the southern two-thirds of Ohio, with occasional breeders found along Lake Erie. Breeds in riparian forests along streams lined with hemlocks. Parulas will use a variety of habitats, including urban parks and backyards, during migration.

SONG

The song is composed of a long series of rapidly repeated and ascending buzzy notes terminating in a sharp ending note that sounds like *zap!* - *zz-zz-zzz-zzzeee-zap.*

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



MAGNOLIA WARBLER

SETOPHAGA MAGNOLIA



Photo by: ©Paul Reeves Photography



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency

Male magnolia warblers in breeding plumage are perhaps Ohio's most striking warbler and one of the most common migrants. They are sometimes called the "field mark bird," as many identifying characteristics are obvious on the male.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are gray-blue above and bright yellow below with a large white wing patch. They have distinctive black streaking on the breast that radiates from a black neckband. Their heads are gray with a black mask and white eyebrow. A white under-eye crescent is also present. Females are gray-green above and yellow below, with very limited streaking. They have a gray head, broken white eyering, and two white wingbars.

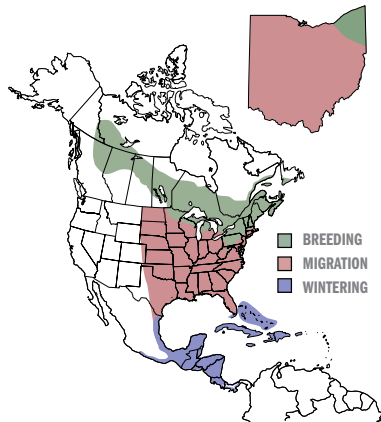
HABITAT AND NESTING

Magnolias are rare breeders in Ohio and nests are primarily found in large hemlock gorges. Most breed in the boreal coniferous forests to the north. During migration, magnolia warblers occupy the low- to mid-canopy and use a variety of habitats, including forested areas and scrub-shrub habitats.

SONG

Short, sweet *weeta-weeta-weeto*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BAY-BREASTED WARBLER

SETOPHAGA CASTANEA



Photo by: ©Robert Royse



Photo by: ©Brian Zwiebel

The number of bay-breasted warblers that travel through Ohio each year is closely linked to the abundance of spruce budworm, a pest of the coniferous trees of their northern breeding grounds. In budworm outbreak years, bay-breasted warblers have higher nesting success and Ohio may see more of them in the fall and the following spring. They have a prolonged fall migration, stretching from mid-August to mid-October.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males have a dark gray, streaked back and two thin white wingbars. Their crown, throat, and upper flanks are a rich, dark bay color. A cream-colored patch on the side of the neck contrasts with their black mask. Females are more subtly patterned with a gray-streaked back and tan undersides. The two white wingbars stand out and a hint of bay color can be seen below the cheek.

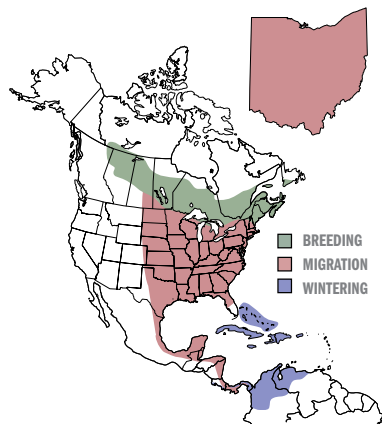
HABITAT AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Occupies mature coniferous boreal forest, especially where bogs create scattered breaks in the woodlands. During migration, bay-breasted warblers sluggishly forage in the mid-canopy of various forests, including urban parks.

SONG

Very high-pitched *teesi-teesi-teesi*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER

SETOPHAGA FUSCA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: ©Paul Reeves Photography

Male Blackburnian warblers are a sight to behold, with their flame-orange face and throat. Blackburnians are fairly common in Ohio during spring migration and are rarely seen at eye-level outside of migration, preferring to spend their time in the treetops. These warblers typically feed at or near the ends of branches.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are black-gray above with orange to white underparts and a bold white wing patch. Their bright orange throat, face, and crown are striking and starkly contrasted by a black face triangle. Females are paler overall with two bold white wingbars. They display a gray face triangle.

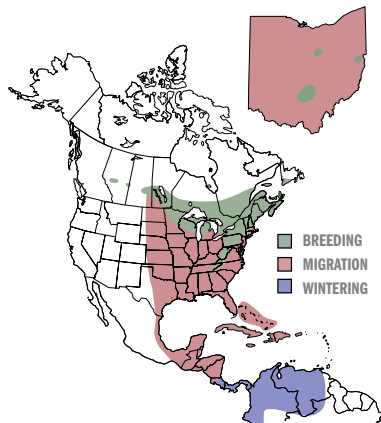
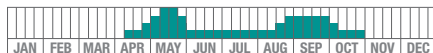
HABITAT AND NESTING

Very rare breeder in Ohio, with nests confined almost exclusively to the largest and least disturbed hemlock gorges. Most Blackburnians breed in the boreal forests of the north and upper elevations of the Appalachian Mountains.

SONG

Very high pitched *zip-zip-zip-zip-titititi-tseeee*, ending on high note.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



YELLOW WARBLER

SETOPHAGA PETECHIA



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency



Photo by: Tim Daniel



One of Ohio's most common warblers, both in migration and breeding season, yellow warblers reach peak abundance in wetlands with plenty of willows. This is the broadest-ranging North American warbler, occurring over nearly the entire continent. Easily seen and heard throughout the spring and summer.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females are bright yellow overall, with females slightly duller. A beady black eye is striking against the yellow, with no additional eye markings. Males show heavy chestnut-colored streaking on their breasts.

HABITAT AND NESTING

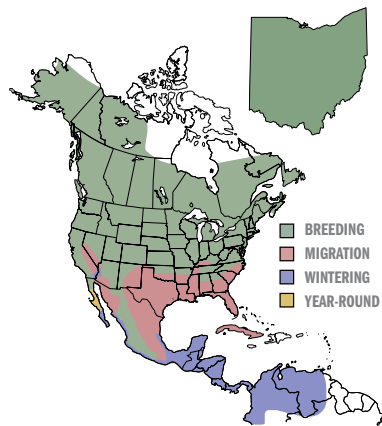
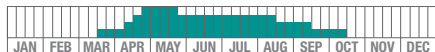
One of the most common breeding warblers, nesting in every county. Prefers shrubby riparian habitats bordering lakes, marshes, and other wetlands. Females build small

cup-shaped nests from grasses and bark shavings. Nests are often parasitized by brown-headed cowbirds. If this occurs, females will add additional nesting material over the original set of eggs and lay new eggs.

SONG

'Sweet-sweet-sweet, I'm-so-sweet,' is a commonly used mnemonic for the cheery song of the yellow warbler. In general, the song has a loud, ringing, somewhat slurry quality which usually ends on a rising note.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

SETOPHAGA PENNSYLVANICA



Photo by: ©Michelle Nyss

♂



Photo by: ©Gerald A. DeBoer

♀

Chestnut-sided warblers are one of the earlier spring migrants, arriving in Ohio by early May. These warblers benefited when many of Ohio's forests were logged as they prosper in edge habitats and early successional woodlands. Chestnut-sided warblers often forage with their tail raised and wings drooped, mostly near the outer branches of shrubs and small trees.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

These warblers have an olive-gray back and bright white underside. Males have a bright yellow crown, bold black eyeline and cheek patch, and extensive chestnut-colored sides. Males and females look similar, but females are paler overall.

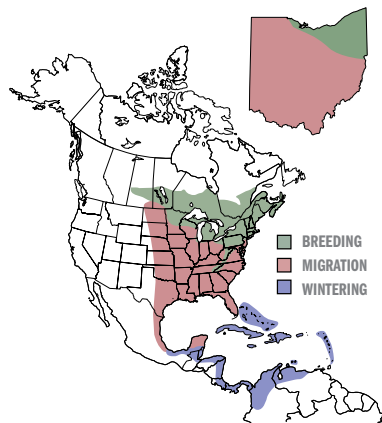
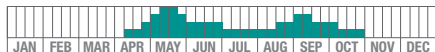
HABITAT AND NESTING

Most individuals breed in areas further north, but a small population nests in Ohio. They favor early successional forest habitats, breeding in forest edges, thickets, and disturbed clearings. Most nests are found in the northeastern portion of the state.

SONG

Lively and sweet *pleased-pleased-pleased-pleased-ta-meetcha!* Song has a distinctive accented ending.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BLACKPOLL WARBLER

SETOPHAGA STRIATA



Photo by: @Bruce Miller ♂



♀
Photo by: Meredith Gilbert

Blackpoll warblers are true champions of long-distance migrations, nesting in the northern reaches of Canada and Alaska, and wintering as far south as Argentina. During their fall migration, they take an epic transoceanic course, flying nonstop from the eastern seaboard over the Atlantic Ocean to their wintering grounds. In the spring, they stop over in the Caribbean Islands before continuing north over land to their breeding grounds.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are grayish above and white below, with extensive black streaking on their sides and a bold black cap and white cheek patch. Females look similar to males but are paler with a finely streaked gray cap. Note the orangish legs on both males and females.

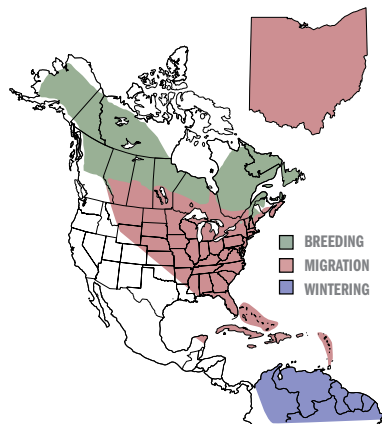
HABITAT AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Breeds further north primarily in stunted coniferous forests dominated by fir and spruce. During migration, can be found foraging in the mid-canopy in a variety of forests and adjacent scrub-shrub habitats.

SONG

A high *zi-zi-zi-zi-zi-zi*. Their song sounds almost like a tiny helicopter approaching and slowly passing.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER

SETOPHAGA CAERULESCENS



Photo by: ©Brian Lasenby ♂



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency ♀

Black-throated blue warblers are one of the most sexually dimorphic warbler species. Males and females look so different that they were originally described as two different species. Thankfully, while some species molt into hard-to-identify fall plumages, black-throated blue males maintain their distinct black-and-blue plumage year-round.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males have a midnight blue back and tail and white undersides, with a bold black face, throat, and sides. Females are a plain grayish-olive color, although some have blue tints, with a tan eyeline. Both males and females have a distinctive white square on their wings.

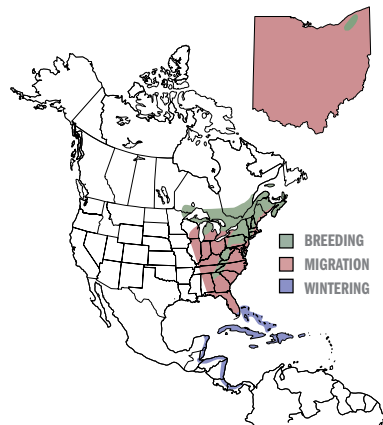
HABITATS AND NESTING

Very rare breeder in Ohio with only a handful of nesting records. Breeds mostly in large tracts of mature deciduous and mixed evergreen-deciduous woodlands with thick understory, to the north and in high elevations of the Appalachian Mountains. During migration, they occupy low- to mid-canopies in areas with dense vegetation.

SONG

A rich, burry, multi-parted song that ascends; zree-zree-zree.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



PALM WARBLER

SETOPHAGA PALMARUM



Photo by: Nina Harfmann



Photo by: Tim Daniel

Though palm warblers have a name that might imply a tropical bird, they are actually one of the northernmost breeders of all warblers. There are two distinct subspecies of palm warbler: western and yellow. Western palm warblers migrate through the Mississippi Valley and are frequently seen in Ohio, while the more colorful yellow subspecies is primarily found along the Atlantic coast.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females look similar and have a gray-brown back with underparts that range from whitish to yellow and are heavily streaked. They have a deep chestnut-colored cap, yellow eyebrow, and yellow throat. Note tendency to forage on the ground and constantly bob tail.

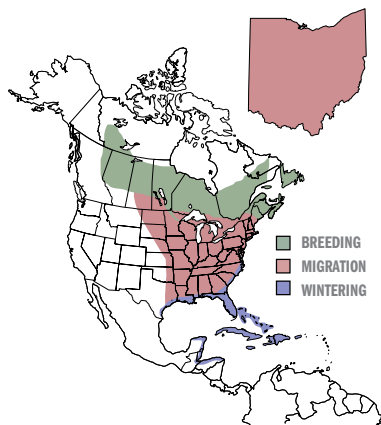
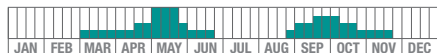
HABITAT AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Breeds in open spruce and tamarack woodlands in and around bogs in Canada and the northern United States. During migration, palm warblers forage on the ground or lower canopy in open scrub-shrub habitats, forest edges, and overgrown pastures or other clearings.

SONG

Simple, buzzy trill that fades in and out.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



PINE WARBLER

SETOPHAGA PINUS



Photo by: ©Robert Royse



Photo by: ©Robert Royse

Aptly named, pine warblers are nearly always found around pines, even in migration if that habitat is available. Pine warblers are short-distance migrants and one of the earlier species to arrive in the spring. In the fall, they often linger and a few of these hardy warblers may overwinter in the state. Pine warblers are the only warbler species that regularly consumes seeds.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males have a yellowish-olive back, yellow to white underparts, and gray wings. The wings have two bold white-wingbars and their sides are lightly streaked. Females look similar but are overall paler. Note the broken yellow eyering and white lower belly and undertail coverts.

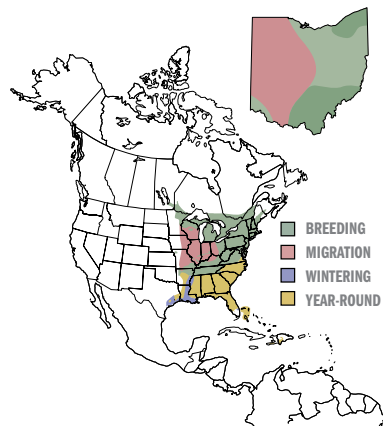
HABITATS AND NESTING

Pine warblers nest primarily in older growth stands of pine forest in eastern and southern Ohio but will sometimes occupy pine plantations like those found in the Oak Openings region.

SONG

A one-pitched musical trill, extremely similar to chipping sparrow and dark-eyed junco songs.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER

SETOPHAGA CORONATA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: Tim Daniel

Yellow-rumped warblers are Ohio's most abundant migrant warbler and occur nearly everywhere and in all types of habitats. Scores pass through in April and early May, and oftentimes yellow-rumps greatly outnumber all other species combined. They are also one of the hardiest warblers and are frequently encountered in winter. There are two U.S. subspecies, myrtle and Audubon's, of which only myrtle occurs in Ohio.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are blue-gray above with white underparts. Both the wings and sides are heavily streaked. They have a bright yellow crown, flanks, and rump, with a black mask and chest patches and white throat. Females look similar but the colors are more muted. Note the incomplete white eyering, particularly in fall.

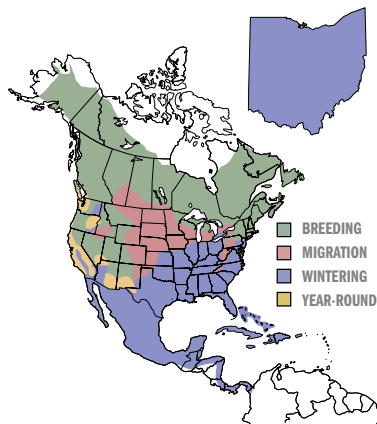
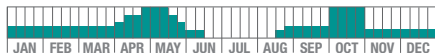
HABITATS AND NESTING

Does not nest in Ohio. Breeds in the boreal forests to the north. During migration, can be found in most forested and scrub-shrub habitats, including backyards and urban parks.

SONG

A slow, sweet warble or trill - *sidi-sidi-sidi-sidi-seedi-seedi-seedi*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER

SETOPHAGA DOMINICA



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: Nina Kammann

Once known as the sycamore warbler, yellow-throated warblers most often occur along streams where sycamore trees grow, although small numbers also use upland pine stands. Yellow-throated warblers return to Ohio in early spring and can be found in breeding locations by early to mid-April. These warblers spend much of their time in the highest branches of the trees, contributing to an observer's warbler neck.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Both males and females are gray above with white undersides bordered by streaks of black. They have a bright yellow throat, black triangular face mask, and white eyebrow.

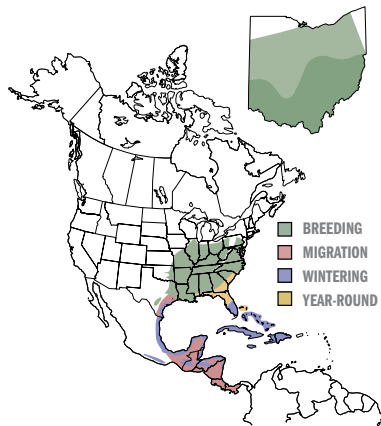
HABITATS AND NESTING

Nests are found primarily in riparian forests where large sycamores are common. Small numbers use upland pine groves and mature deciduous-pine forests. Breeding in Ohio is highest in the southern half of the state.

SONG

A loud, clear descending series of paired notes, usually with a slurred ending note.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



PRAIRIE WARBLER

SETOPHAGA DISCOLOR



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: ©Agami Photo Agency

Prairie warblers are small, even for a warbler, with adults averaging less than eight grams in weight. While most of Ohio's warblers are woodland species, prairie warblers prefer overgrown fields, cedar glades, and other scrubby early successional habitats. Prairie warblers do not spend extended periods of time in Ohio, with most arriving in late April and departing by early July.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are bright yellow below with black streaking on their flanks. Their head is yellow with an olive-colored crown, black eyeline, and black semicircle under the eye. They have a chestnut-colored patch on their back. Females are a paler yellow with blurry streaks on the sides. Their head can range from yellowish to grayish with a darker semicircle under the eye.

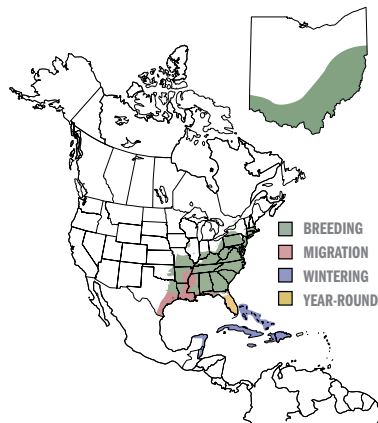
HABITAT AND NESTING

Dependent on scrubby successional habitats like old fields, young clearcuts, and cedar barrens for nesting. These habitats are not generally highly valued or intentionally managed, making distribution spotty. Nests are mostly restricted to the southeastern portion of the state.

SONG

Rising series of short, clear notes - zee-zee-zee-zee-zee-zeeeee.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

SETOPHAGA VIRENS



Photo by: Tim Daniel



Photo by: ©Stubblefield Photography

Black-throated green warblers are a common migrant in both spring and fall. Total numbers of several hundred in a day during peak migration periods is not unheard of. These warblers are early migrants, often returning by the first week in April. Males are persistent singers and may deliver up to 460 songs in an hour.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are yellowish-green above, with a white underside and gray wings marked by two bold white wingbars. They have a bold black throat and black streaking down their sides. Their face is yellow with a dusky ear patch and crown. Females look similar but have a whitish-yellow throat and are much paler overall.

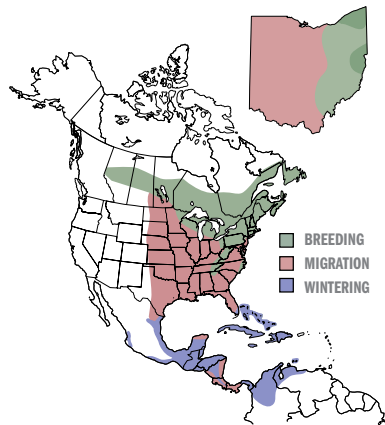
HABITAT AND NESTING

Largely confined to hemlock gorges as a nester, although occasionally breeds in pine plantations or very rarely in large older-growth deciduous woodlands. During migration, they forage low in the canopy of various forests, edges, and scrub-shrub habitats.

SONG

One of the easiest warbler to learn; buzzy zee-zee-zee-zee-zoo-zee.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



CANADA WARBLER

CARDELLINA CANADENSIS



Photo by: ©Brian Zwiebel



Photo by: ©Bruce Miller

Canada warblers are a colorful and energetic species, and one of the last warblers to migrate through the state in spring and the first to leave in the fall to return south. These warblers fly more than 3,000 miles from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds. They can be difficult to find due to declining population numbers, and finding more than a few in one day is noteworthy.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males have a plain slate-gray back and head which lack any markings. A dark, streaked necklace stands out against their bright yellow underside and throat. They have a bold white eyering and black stripe below their eyes. Females look similar but are paler overall and have a very faint necklace.

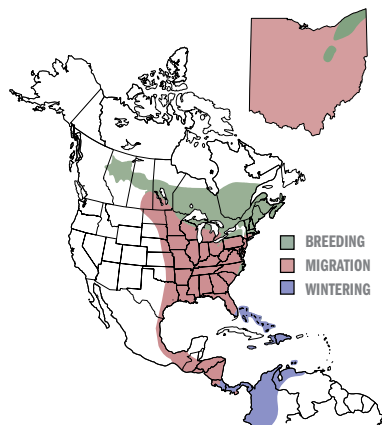
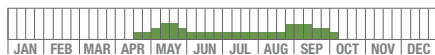
HABITAT AND NESTING

Very rare breeder in Ohio. Nests can be found in a variety of mixed coniferous-deciduous forests, especially moist sites with canopy disturbances, dense understory vegetation, and ground cover.

SONG

A loud, rapidly delivered jumble of notes ending in *picket-wip*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE



WILSON'S WARBLER

CARDELLINA PUSILLA



Photo by: Nina Harfmann



Photo by: ©Vegabond54

This is possibly Ohio's most hyperactive warbler, constantly flitting about the vegetation chasing after insects and making short flycatcher-like sallies to grab prey. Fortunately, they tend to remain low in shrub zones, often at or below eye level. Wilson's warbler is typically one of Ohio's later migrant warblers, and individuals are still passing through Ohio on their way north in early June.

KEY FIELD MARKINGS

Males are olive-yellow above with bright yellow underparts and head. They have a bold, solid black cap that covers most of the top of the head. Females look similar but have a duller, more olive-colored cap.

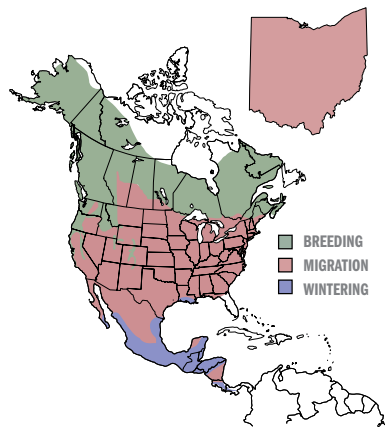
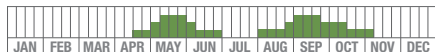
HABITATS AND NESTING

Does not breed in Ohio. Nesting occurs further north in dense, shrubby wetlands with thick herbaceous ground cover. Migrants frequent similar habitat where available as well as the undergrowth of thin forests and adjacent scrub-shrub habitats.

SONG

A sweet, slightly accelerating song of similar notes – *che-che-che-che-cheh*.

SEASONAL ABUNDANCE





PRAIRIE WARBLER
Photo by: Nina Harfmann



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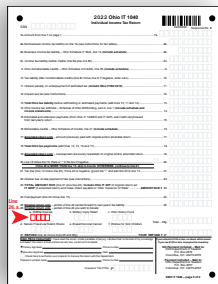
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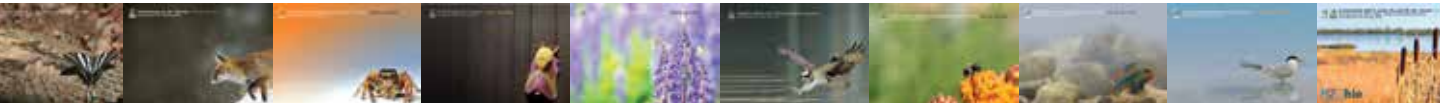
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