

# CORKSCREW HAUNTS & HABITS: WARBLERS

For monthly observation frequencies dating to 1998, visit [www.corkscrew.audubon.org/Wildlife/Wildlife.html](http://www.corkscrew.audubon.org/Wildlife/Wildlife.html)  
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## American Redstart (AMRE)

*Setophaga ruticilla*

The American Redstart prefers second-growth, deciduous woodlands, usually with a canopy of larger, mature trees. During migration, it may be found wherever there are trees or large shrubs. The redstart moves continuously as it forages, seeking insects and spiders. It is very good at capturing flying insects, frequently making long and twisted pursuits of prey. Less commonly, it eats berries and weed seeds. From April to June, the male sings a rapid, high-pitched song.

*not present in June or July*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Bay-breasted Warbler (BBWA)

*Dendroica castanea*

The Bay-breasted Warbler is an uncommon migrant through Florida. It is deliberate in its actions, often affording the observer ample opportunity to observe the subtle color differences between this species and the closely related Blackpoll in the fall. It prefers to forage from mid story levels to the tops of deciduous and coniferous trees. It feeds primarily on insects.

*extremely rare spring and fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: only observed three times since records have been kept: once each in February, October, and November*

## Black-and-white Warbler (BAWW)

*Mniotilta varia*

A Black-and-white Warbler forages by creeping along trunks, limbs, and larger branches of trees and shrubs, seeking insects and spiders in the bark crevices. It ranges from just above ground to the treetops. Hind toes and claws are proportionately longer than those of most other warblers, enabling it to cling to the trunk and under-surface of limbs. It is in wooded habitats. One or more individuals often forage with groups of titmice and other small woodland birds.

*rarely present in June*

*most frequently seen: December-January-February*

## Black-throated Blue Warbler (BTBW)

*Dendroica caerulescens*

The Black-throated Blue Warbler is found in most hardwood forest habitats when migrating as well as thickets of Wax Myrtle, citrus groves, and yards. With body plumage fluffed, wings drooped, and tail slightly elevated, it forages with deliberate movements, usually within the canopy from just above the ground to mid-story levels of trees and shrubs. It eats insects and spiders, often catching its prey on the wing. Occasionally weed seeds are taken.

*uncommon spring and fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Black-throated Green Warbler (BTBW)

*Dendroica virens*

As a migrant, the Black-throated Green Warbler occurs in most woodland habitats, including citrus groves and yards. In winter, it is partial to tropical hammocks. It is an active species, foraging from mid-story to upper-story levels in tall shrubs and trees.

*uncommon spring and fall migrant, winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: March*

## Blackburnian Warbler (BLBW)

*Dendroica fusca*

Typically, the Blackburnian Warbler forages high in the canopy, frequently in loose groups. It is mainly insectivorous and captures prey while on the wing. Occasionally it supplements its diet with wild berries.

*extremely rare spring and fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: only seen four times since records have been kept: once each in March, April, October, and December*

## Blackpoll Warbler (BLPW)

*Dendroica striata*

Blackpoll Warblers frequent most habitats with trees and tall shrubs from pine forests to coastal strands and wooded yards. In spring, they typically forage high in the canopy although they may descend to near the ground where there are tall weeds or other dense ground covers. They are primarily insectivorous. In fall, they regularly forage at mid-story levels. They eat spiders and their eggs, plant lice, and scale insects when passing through Florida in the fall. They may also take wild berries and seeds.

*very rare spring and fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: April*

## Blue-winged Warbler (BWWA)

*Vermivora pinus*

The Blue-winged Warbler is found in a variety of habitats with trees, saplings, and shrubs of varying size. It usually forages from the ground to mid-story levels of mature trees, usually in the outer canopy. It eats spiders and insects, especially caterpillars. Its movements are deliberate and it sometimes hangs upside down while foraging. Migration often coincides with those of other warbler species, so it may be seen with them. It rarely sings its wheezy song here in spring.

*rare spring and fall migrant, winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: October*

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## Canada Warbler (CAWA)

*Wilsonia canadensis*

When migrating, the Canada Warbler frequents a variety of habitats with dense, bush growth. Usually it does not make itself conspicuous, preferring to keep to the dense undergrowth. It is often a slow, lethargic feeder, lower in shrubs and Wax Myrtle.

*extremely rare fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: only seen four times since records have been kept (three times in September)*

## Cape May Warbler (CMWA)

*Dendroica tigrina*

Usually a treetop species, the Cape May Warbler may also forage in Wax Myrtles, or other shrubs while migrating. It is an active feeder and will chase other small birds away. Its diet mainly consists of insects and spiders.

*rare spring migrant*

*most frequently seen: April*

## Chestnut-sided Warbler (CSWA)

*Dendroica pensylvanica*

It breeds in North Florida, but is a migrant in South Florida. When migrating, it prefers mature forests, swamps, and wooded yards. Rarely does it forage above mid-story levels. It flits through the foliage seeking insects, plumage fluffed, wings drooped, and tail elevated, occasionally hovering at a branch tip or catching prey in the air.

*uncommon fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Common Yellowthroat (COYE)

*Geothlypis trichas*

The Common Yellowthroat is found wherever there is ample ground cover, usually in a wet areas. It is more often seen around coastal and freshwater marshes, and around low, moist vegetated areas in pinelands and prairies with fairly dense ground cover. It less frequently inhabits dry, upland pine woods with undergrowth. Common Yellowthroats are insectivores, specializing in bees, wasps, and ants but also eating caterpillars, beetles, grasshoppers, and various insect larvae. Spiders are also a favorite food.

*spring and fall migrant, winter resident, some nest here*

*most frequently seen: October through March*

## Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA)

*Vermivora chrysoptera*

The Golden-winged Warbler forages from just above the ground to mid-story levels seeking insects and spiders. Often it hangs upside down from a branch in the outer canopy while foraging, and it is one of several warblers known to probe into hanging clusters of dead leaves.

*rare fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Hooded Warbler (HOWA)

*Wilsonia citrina*

The Hooded Warbler inhabits the dense understory of mixed hardwood forests, usually bordering a river, stream, or cypress swamp. It is rather active and usually remains in view for just a short time before disappearing into the dense vegetation. It is an insectivore but also eats spiders and occasionally roundworms. It has a habit of spreading, then closing its tail, exposing large white areas.

*fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: September*

## Louisiana Waterthrush (LOWA)

*Seiurus motacilla*

The Louisiana Waterthrush prefers woodlands along rivers and streams with a preference for rapidly moving water. Occasionally, it may be found in a swamp. Most foraging is done on the ground. As it walks, its whole back end tends to sway and pump up and down. It eats insects, spiders, and occasionally small fish.

*spring and fall migrant, winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: August-September-October*

## Magnolia Warbler (MAWA)

*Dendroica magnolia*

The Magnolia Warbler is an active feeder, foraging at mid-story levels in tall shrubs and trees, sometimes descending to high weeds in fall. It flits among the outer foliage, wings drooped, tail slightly elevated and spread, revealing the broad, white bands starting halfway toward the tip. It feeds on insects and spiders, frequently catching its prey in the air.

*uncommon fall migrant, winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Nashville Warbler (NAWA)

*Vermivora ruficapilla*

During migration, the Nashville Warbler seeks mature or second-growth forests with shrubby undergrowth in dry, upland situations or along rivers. It is an active species and during fall, it tends to forage nearer the ground than in spring, when it sometimes ascends to the treetops. Along its main migration routes, it travels in loose flocks, but is usually seen alone when in Florida. It feeds mainly on insects and their eggs.

*incredibly rare fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: only seen once since records have been kept*

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## Northern Parula (NOPA)

*Parula americana*

In spring or early summer the male Northern Parula delivers its familiar song – an ascending, buzzy trill with a single note near the end. When breeding, it inhabits hardwood forests, pine-oak woodlands, and cypress and hardwood swamps wherever Spanish Moss thrives. During migration and winter, individuals are found with flocks of titmice, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and other small birds. The parula forages from low shrubs to treetops. It is an active species, hovering at the tip of a branch or hanging upside down to secure prey. Ants, bees, and wasps amount to as much as 50% of its diet. Other insects include caterpillars and maggots, beetles, weevils, scale insects, bugs, and grasshoppers.

*year round resident, nests here*

*most frequently seen: March-April-May*

## Northern Waterthrush (NOWA)

*Seiurus noveboracensis*

While migrating, the Northern Waterthrush is partial to areas of standing or running water such as edges of lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and even temporary rain pools. Waterthrushes constantly teeter on the front end of the body as they walk or pause. They forage on the ground, walking along muddy shores, on leaf litter, or shrubs or fallen logs. They wag only their tails, while the Louisiana wags its whole back body. They eat insects, spiders, small mollusks, crustaceans, and occasionally minnows.

*spring and fall migrant, winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Orange-crowned Warbler (OCWA)

*Vermivora celata*

While in Florida, the Orange-crowned Warbler inhabits thickets of Wax Myrtle, medium-sized oaks, and other leafy trees, the brushy understory of woodlands and swamps, citrus groves, and wooded yards. Its movements are rather deliberate as it forages from the ground to mid story levels of trees and shrubs. The species is mainly insectivorous but takes wild berries and citrus fruit during winter and occasionally visits bird feeders for suet, peanut butter, and seeds. Sometimes it probes into hanging clusters of dead leaves in search of prey. Some individuals may be with titmice, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and other small arboreal species in winter.

*winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: January*

## Ovenbird (OVEN)

*Seiurus aurocapillus*

The Ovenbird favors woodland thickets where it walks on leaf litter and fallen logs, feeding on insects, spiders, gastropods, and occasionally on weed seeds. It sometimes ascends to walk on lower, large horizontal of limbs close to the ground, especially ones covered in ferns and bromeliads.

*spring and fall migrant, winter resident*

*most frequently seen: January-February*

## Palm Warbler (PALM)

*Dendroica palmarum*

Palm Warblers are found in open hardwood and pine forests, marshes, prairies, coastal strands, cultivated fields, parks, and yards. Hopping and continuously bobbing its tail, a Palm Warbler forages from the ground, infrequently to the upper-story level in trees, usually in spring. Primarily an insectivore, it occasionally takes berries and seeds.

*spring and fall migrant, winter resident*

*most frequently seen: December through March*

## Pine Warbler (PIWA)

*Dendroica pinus*

The Pine Warbler inhabits pine flatwoods. So partial is it to pines that it seldom is seen in other types of trees, even when migrating. Primarily a treetop species, it will occasionally forage at lower levels, especially during winter. It sometimes travels in groups with titmice and other small woodland birds in the winter. Mainly insectivorous, it also eats wild fruit and berries, pine seeds, and grass seeds during winter.

*year-round resident*

*most frequently seen: January-February*

## Prairie Warbler (PRAW)

*Dendroica discolor*

The Prairie Warbler inhabits forest edges and second-growth woodlands overgrown with shrubs. It is an active species foraging from low to mid story levels of trees and shrubs, often bobbing its tail. It feeds on insects and spiders, sometimes hovering at the tip of a branch to secure its prey.

*spring and fall migrant, winter visitor, nests here*

*most frequently seen: January*

## Prothonotary Warbler (PROW)

*Protonotaria citrea*

The prothonotary inhabits bottomland swamps with standing or slow-moving water. It often sings from lower limbs of Bald Cypress. Typically, it forages on or near the ground, even on floating debris, sometimes creeping about on limbs or tree trunks. It eats insects and spiders. Even during migration, it is seldom far from water and wetlands.

*spring and fall migrant, summer resident*

*most frequently seen: August*

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## Swainson's Warbler (SWWA)

*Limnothlypis swainsonii*

The Swainson's Warbler is usually in dense undergrowth on the edge of wet, lowland woods and flood plain swamps with briars, trees of various sizes, and Saw Palmetto. It is not a bird of the swamps, but is one of swamp borders. Rarely does it inhabit high, dry woodlands except when migrating. Most foraging is on the ground where it walks on fallen branches, leaf litter, or bare ground feeding on insects, spiders, millipedes, and centipedes. When flushed, it flies to a low perch and remains motionless for some time.

*incredibly rare fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: only seen once since records have been kept*

## Tennessee Warbler (TEWA)

*Vermivora peregrina*

While migrating, the Tennessee Warbler is found in open forests and second-growth woodlands with a dense understory. It forages in the outer canopy from mid-story levels to the treetops. Its movements are deliberate as it seeks insects and spiders. It supplements this diet with wild berries and seeds.

*very rare fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: October*

## Worm-eating Warbler (WEWA)

*Helmitheros vermivorus*

The Worm-eating Warbler prefers deciduous woodlands with a dense understory. It walks deliberately as it forages on the ground, on fallen logs, on the boardwalk, or in dense, woody tangles above the ground. Sometimes it feeds by probing into hanging clusters of dead leaves. It feeds on insects and spiders, taking large numbers of caterpillars.

*spring and fall migrant*

*most frequently seen: September*

## Yellow Warbler (YWAR)

*Dendroica petechia*

Yellow Warblers are migrants through Florida, preferring thick brush around streams or ditches; in their southward movement beginning in midsummer, they are often seen in Groundsel trees along the coast or in high weeds inland. The Yellow Warbler is an active species foraging at mid-story or low levels in trees and shrubs. It eats insects, spiders, and occasionally wild fruit.

*uncommon spring and fall migrant, winter visitor*

*most frequently seen: January*

## Yellow-breasted Chat

*Icteria virens*

The Yellow-breasted Chat inhabits overgrown fields, fencerows, and woodland edges, either upland or near water, where there are dense thickets of small trees and bushes, usually with a tangle of wood-stemmed vines. It seems to feed equally on insects and fruit pulp, with an occasional spider or small crustacean thrown in.

*rare spring migrant*

*most frequently seen: February*

## Yellow-rumped Warbler (YRWA)

*Dendroica coronata*

Yellow-rumped Warblers commonly inhabit thickets of Wax Myrtle. They feed on fruits of that plant, cedars, honeysuckle, Poison Ivy, viburnum species, smilax species, Saw Palmetto, citrus trees, and other plants, as well as insects, suet, and other items at feeders. When insects are active, they comprise a good portion of the diet and many are taken in flight. During migration and winter, the species is gregarious, sometimes in groups numbering more than 20 individuals and often including other species such as Palm, Black-and-white, and Orange-crowned Warblers. Yellow-rumped Warblers prefer areas of dense brush, and they forage from the ground to the treetops.

*winter resident*

*most frequently seen: December-January-February*

## Yellow-throated Warbler (YTWA)

*Dendroica dominica*

The Yellow-throated Warbler inhabits hardwood and pine forests and cypress and hardwood swamps with luxurious growths of Spanish Moss. Creeping somewhat like a Black-and-white Warbler, the Yellow-throated forages from mid story levels to the treetops, and from the trunk to the tips of branches. It eats insects and spiders, and during the winter occasionally visits feeders for suet, seeds, and even bread crumbs. During winter, individuals may be with groups of titmice, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and other small species.

*fall and early spring migrant, winter resident*

*most frequently seen: January-February*

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### References:

1. Stevenson, Henry and Anderson, Bruce. The Birdlife of Florida. University Press of Florida. Gainesville. 1994
2. Corkscrew volunteer observations