

BLACK-THROATED
GREEN WARBLER



GOLDEN-WINGED
WARBLER



CHESTNUT-SIDED
WARBLER



MAGNOLIA WARBLER



BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER



PROTHONOTARY WARBLER



BAYOU CITY BIRDING
ZINE #14

MIGRATORY WARBLER SAMPLER

Each spring and fall, 30+ species of warblers pass through town on their way to/from their nesting territories to the north. These tiny birds can be really hard to spot, and it takes time to learn their patterns and colors. Seven are shown here with the hope that you will want to learn about others. Those with the most yellow are shown first.

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YELLOW
WARBLER



GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER

WHEN: April-May (very uncommon in fall)

LOOK FOR: Yellow crown, black throat, and a black mask bordered by white. Gray back and upperside of tail. Gray wings are marked with a big yellow patch. Light gray breast/belly and underside of tail. Females have duller colors and a gray mask and throat.

FIELD NOTES: The dark mask/throat and gold wings make for an easy ID! If you have trees, bushes and a couple of bird baths in your yard, tired and thirsty warblers may spend the day with you. Breeds in the northeastern US and along the Appalachians.

1st SEEN ON AT

MAGNOLIA WARBLER

WHEN: April-May & September-October

LOOK FOR: Gray crown, white eyebrow, and black mask that fades in the fall. The yellow throat/breast/belly are marked with thick black streaks (see cover). Dark back, yellow rump and black upperside of tail. Gray wings have white wingbars. The underside of the tail is white at the base, and black at the end. Females have duller colors and thinner/grayer streaking.

FIELD NOTES: This little beauty could be a paint-by-numbers work of art. Breeds across Canada and in the northeastern US.

1st SEEN ON AT

PROTHONOTARY WARBLER

WHEN: March-May & July-September

LOOK FOR: Golden yellow head/breast/belly, olive-green back, dark blue-gray wings and upperside of tail. The area behind the dark legs to the tip of the tail is white, except for the dark edge across the end of the tail. Females have duller colors and a darker crown.

FIELD NOTES: The shiny black eye and long bill stand out on the yellow face. They are one of only two US warblers who lay eggs in holes in trees (other warblers build nests). Most breed in the southeastern US, going by the nickname of the Golden Swamp Warbler.

1st SEEN ON AT

YELLOW WARBLER

WHEN: April-May & August-October

LOOK FOR: Yellow face/throat/breast/belly and underside of tail. Dull yellow crown and greenish-yellow back. Wings and upperside of tail are darker and edged in yellow. Males have thin red streaks on the breast. Females have duller colors than males.

FIELD NOTES: The beady black eye and bill stand out on the bright yellow face. Birds often pump their tails up and down. They have a very large breeding range that stretches from Alaska to Newfoundland, including many parts of the US, Canada, and Mexico.

1st SEEN ON AT

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER

WHEN: March-May & August-November

LOOK FOR: Olive-green crown/back/eyeline/cheek contrast with the yellow face. Black throat and streaks down the flanks contrast with a white belly that shows a bit of yellow. Dark wings have two white wingbars. The tail is dark above and white below. Females have a light gray throat and less streaking on the flanks.

FIELD NOTES: On warblers having just a little bit of yellow, the location of that yellow is a great clue for an ID. Breeds in Canada, the northeastern US, and along the Appalachian Mountain range.

1st SEEN ON AT

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER

WHEN: April-May & September-October

LOOK FOR: Yellow crown and a black eyeline (that fades in fall) that drops through the eye and meets a rusty-red line along the flanks. White cheek/throat/breast/belly and underside of tail. The back is streaked. Black wings are edged in white and have two whitish-yellow wingbars. Females have less red on their flanks.

FIELD NOTES: Warblers show little bits of their bodies as they move around in trees and underbrush. Collect the clues to put together an ID. Breeds in Canada, the northeastern US, and the Appalachians.

1st SEEN ON AT

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER

WHEN: March-May & July-October

LOOK FOR: You've figured this out, right? No yellow here—just a bunch of black and white stripes, along with black spots under the base of the tail. Females have a white throat and less streaking underneath.

FIELD NOTES: Despite the great photo, Black-and-whites generally refuse to pose for a camera, spending most of their time blending into their surroundings or circling around tree trunks and limbs in search of insects. Breeds across Canada and in most of the eastern US. A few spend the winter here in Houston.

1st SEEN ON AT

LEARN MORE...

In spring—when their colors are brightest—migrating warblers fly long distances at night, traveling from Mexico and Central/South America to their breeding territories to the north. They take pit stops each day, feeding on insects and other invertebrates, bathing, and resting. To find them, go to a park in the early morning or just before sunset and watch for them as they move around in trees and the underbrush. Quiet places by a stream or wet/swampy area are the best.

Want more info? Use the Warbler Guide app to learn about 56 warbler species found in the US and Canada.

Download more of the Bayou City Birding Zines at WhiteOakBayou.org