

**BAYOU CITY BIRDING
ZINE #13
WINTER WARBLERS
& FRIENDS**

Warblers, kinglets, & gnatcatchers are little birds who use their thin bills to catch insects, spiders, and other invertebrates. Look for them in winter as they flit around, feeding in trees and in the underbrush below. Birds are shown in order of size, from tiny to the super-tiny.

© 2017 Wendy Wright, with photos by Ben Hulseley, Sharon Madison, Sue Orwig, Tom Elliott, and me



**COMMON
YELLOWTHROAT**

JUVENILE MALE



ADULT
MALE



**YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER
(MYRTLE WARBLER)**



WILSON'S WARBLER

See how the body shape changes when the neck is pulled in or held out.



MALE

FEMALE

PINE WARBLER



**RUBY-
CROWNED
KINGLET**



MALE

See how
sun & shade
change how
colors appear.



ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER



**BLUE-GRAY
GNATCATCHER**



LEARN MORE...

(Bird jargon with the Pine Warbler)

Dark “**crown**” (top of head), back and cheeks

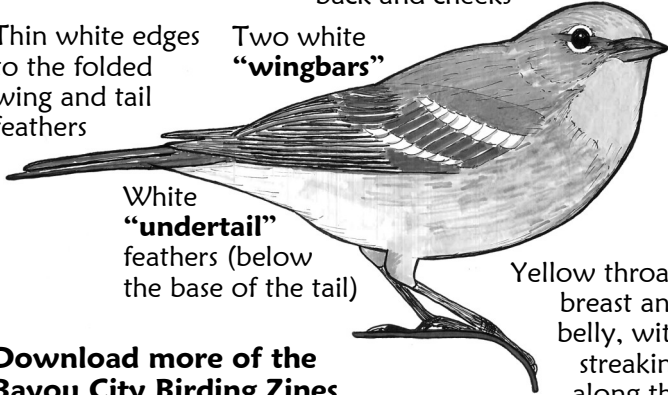
Yellow upper and lower “**eye arcs**”

Thin white edges to the folded wing and tail feathers

Two white “**wingbars**”

White “**undertail**” feathers (below the base of the tail)

Yellow throat, breast and belly, with streaking along the “**flanks**” (sides)



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

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (a warbler)

WHEN: Year round, but uncommon in summer

LOOK FOR: Adult male has a greenish-brown crown/back/wings/tail, large black “bandit’s” mask outlined above in white, yellow throat/upper-breast/undertail, and dirty-white belly. Juvenile male has a thin white eye ring and a hint of a mask. Female has no mask and looks like a faded-out version of a juvenile male.

FIELD NOTES: Most often found in marshy/swampy areas in reeds or close to the ground. Birds pump their tails up/down while feeding. They are shy and will jump out of sight soon after seeing you. So look fast!

1st SEEN ON AT

YELLOW-RUMPED (OR MYRTLE) WARBLER

WHEN: October through April

LOOK FOR: Brown crown/cheeks, white top/bottom eye arcs, brown streaked back, two white wing bars, white wing edges, yellow rump (see cover), white throat, white breast/belly with brown streaking, and some yellow on flanks. Colors become deeper and brighter just before they migrate north in spring.

FIELD NOTES: Yellow-rumps always hang out in groups. While most warblers only eat invertebrates, “butter butts” also eat berries, fruit, and seeds. Listen for their “check” call and you’ll find them everywhere!

1st SEEN ON AT

WILSON’S WARBLER

WHEN: September through early May

LOOK FOR: Male has a round black cap; the female’s is olive-green. Both genders have yellow eyebrows, bright black eyes, faint olive-green cheeks, olive-green back and wings (with thin yellow edges), yellow throat/breast/belly/undertail, and a long/thin gray tail.

FIELD NOTES: Wilson’s are always in motion, flicking their tails, hopping/flying/hovering between perches, and even hanging upside down. Look for them as they flit around the underbrush below trees that are close to water. Areas with willow trees are their favorites.

1st SEEN ON AT

PINE WARBLER

WHEN: Year round, but mostly hidden in summer

LOOK FOR: Look at the sketch of the Pine, pick out the markings like “eye arcs” and “wingbars,” and then compare these markings to those of the other birds. Their colors vary, with most males and a few females having lots of yellow, and with others much grayer.

FIELD NOTES: Pines feed at the top of tall pine trees in summer. In winter, they move down, feeding on invertebrates they find in the lower branches of trees and on the ground. They move more slowly than the other birds here, making them easier to ID.

1st SEEN ON AT

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

WHEN: September through April

LOOK FOR: Grayish-olive-green crown/cheeks/back, white eye arcs in front and back, dark wings/tail edged in yellow, two white wingbars (one is usually hidden), and dirty-white throat/breast/belly/undertail. Males raise hidden red feathers on their crown when excited.

FIELD NOTES: Kinglets look for invertebrates in the lower branches of trees and in the underbrush. They are always moving, hopping to a new twig every few seconds, flicking their wings to see what they can scare up, and darting out to catch insects that fly by.

1st SEEN ON AT

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER

WHEN: October through April

LOOK FOR: Gray head with faint white upper/lower eye arcs, grayish-green back, and grayish-yellow-green breast/belly/undertail with faint streaking. Males have orange crown feathers they keep hidden 99.99% of the time. Females are even grayer than males.

FIELD NOTES: Orange-crowns are equal-opportunity eaters, searching for invertebrates in trees and then looking for those hiding under leaves on the ground. As acrobats, they stretch to grab prey that is just out of reach, and can dangle upside down. They also hover.

1st SEEN ON AT

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER

WHEN: August through April

LOOK FOR: Bluish-gray crown/cheeks/back, white eye ring, dark wings, and white throat/breast/belly/undertail. The outer tail feathers (which show below) are white, and the upper/inner tail feathers are black.

FIELD NOTES: Even though they are just 4” long, Gnatcatchers are easy to spot as they look for invertebrates on the outer branches of trees. They are always in motion, hopping or flying from twig to twig and twitching their long tails. They talk to each other with high-pitched buzzy/whiny calls that sound like “spree.”

1st SEEN ON AT