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Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*

The Yellow-throated Vireo, with its yellow throat and breast, is fairly common in spring and summer throughout the eastern United States and southern Canada. In the winter it ranges from southern Mexico and the Florida Keys to northern South America, Cuba, and the Bahamas. Winter reports in Florida outside of the Keys are very rare and may be misidentified *Pine Warblers*.

Habitat. Usually found in live oak hammocks, mature pine forest, or mixed turkey oak and pine woodlands, Yellow-throated Vireos also occur in cypress swamps or mixed forests along rivers (Howell 1932). The species also frequents residential areas with mature trees (Stevenson and Anderson 1994).

Howell (1932) states that 95% of this bird's diet is composed of insects, with a few spiders and fruit making up the remainder. Nearly half of the diet consists of butterflies and moths, mostly in the larval stage.

According to Sprunt (1954), the nest of the Yellow-throated Vireo is "by far the handsomest" of the vireo family. Cup-shaped, it is suspended between the crotch of a tree limb and is usually placed >8 m (25 ft) above the ground. It is built of plant fibers and strips of bark, lined with grass and pine needles, and is decorated on the outside with lichens. The 3 or 4 pinkish-white eggs are marked with brown at the large end. Both parents incubate the eggs for 14 days. The young leave the nest at 14 days of age (Ehrlich et al. 1988). This species is a common cowbird host.

Seasonal Occurrence. The Yellow-throated Vireo arrives in Florida as early as the first part of March, but migration peaks between mid-March and mid-April. Eggs are laid from April to June (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Two broods may be raised each year. Fall migration occurs between mid-September and mid-October.

Status. The Yellow-throated Vireo breeds in Florida in the Panhandle and in the northern half of the peninsula. It has been slowly extending its breeding range southward. Howell (1932) listed Brooksville as the southernmost breeding locale on the west coast. Since then, first breeding records have been obtained for Orange County in 1951 (Mason 1952) and Pasco County in 1979 (Lopez and Courser 1981). During the Atlas project, breeding was confirmed in these counties, as well as Hillsborough and Polk counties. "Possible" breeding was recorded south Collier County.

Because it stays high in the canopy, the Yellow-throated Vireo is difficult to see. However, its song can be heard throughout the breeding season. Observers who are not familiar with the song may have overlooked this species.

Bill Pranty



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