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Yellow-throated Warbler

Dendroica dominica

As a breeding bird, this attractive wood-warbler is restricted to the eastern United States, mostly south of the Mason-Dixon line. In Florida it is found in the Panhandle and northern peninsula. It is a fairly common, but somewhat local breeder. Florida is represented by two breeding subspecies: *D. d. stoddardi* in most of the Panhandle; and *D. d. dominica* of the peninsula (Stevenson 1976). The accuracy of this subspecific designation is uncertain.

Habitat. The Yellow-throated Warbler is found in sand pine forests or pinelands mixed with mixed cypress or live oak in south Florida and in mixed hardwood and pines in north Florida. Its diet is almost entirely composed of animal matter. Howell (1932) lists beetles, moths and their larvae, flies, bugs, grasshoppers, locusts, crickets, scale insects, and spiders in stomachs of birds collected in Florida. Its feeding behavior is characterized by active creeping along branches and trunks of trees and probing into crevices in the bark with its long bill.

Yellow-throated Warblers construct a nest of grasses, bark, and stems in hanging clumps of Spanish moss from 3 to 20 m (10 to 75 ft) above the ground. Florida nests usually contain 3 or 4 eggs that are laid from April to June (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). The eggs are whitish, marked with reddish-brown and lavender (Sprunt 1954). Some details of their breeding biology are not known, such as the time required for fledging. Incubation is believed to take 12 or 13 days (Ehrlich et al. 1988). Howell (1932) states that 2 broods are raised per year.

Seasonal Occurrence. During fall migration Yellow-throated Warblers peak between early August and mid-October, but are found regularly after mid-July. Spring migrants are generally spotted between early March and mid-April. Breeding has been confirmed April through June (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). This species winters throughout the state.

Status. The southernmost breeding range of the Yellow-throated Warbler in the state is difficult to determine because spring migrants often sing, and fall migration begins in early July (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). Although many "possible" and "probable" breeding records exist south of Hillsborough, Polk, and Brevard counties, it is not known whether these represent breeding birds or migrants. On 17 May 1993 Stotz (in Pranty 1993b) observed 1 fledgling being fed by 2 adults at Avon Park Air Force Range in Highlands County. The only southern confirmed breeding record, apparently the first ever for south Florida, was obtained on 16 July 1989, when R. Loftin (VRF 1989) observed 2 adults feeding 2 juveniles in Fort Myers in Lee County.

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Sponsored by Aubry and June McCallum



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