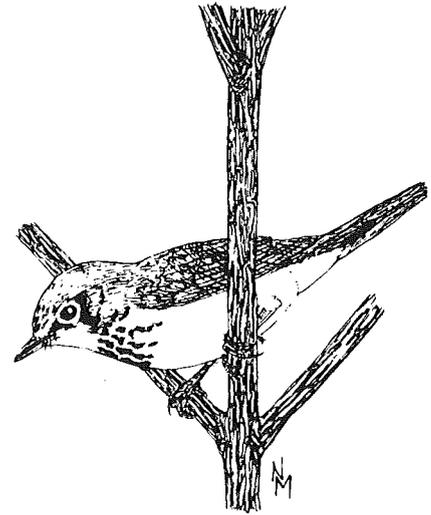


## Canada Warbler

*Wilsonia canadensis*

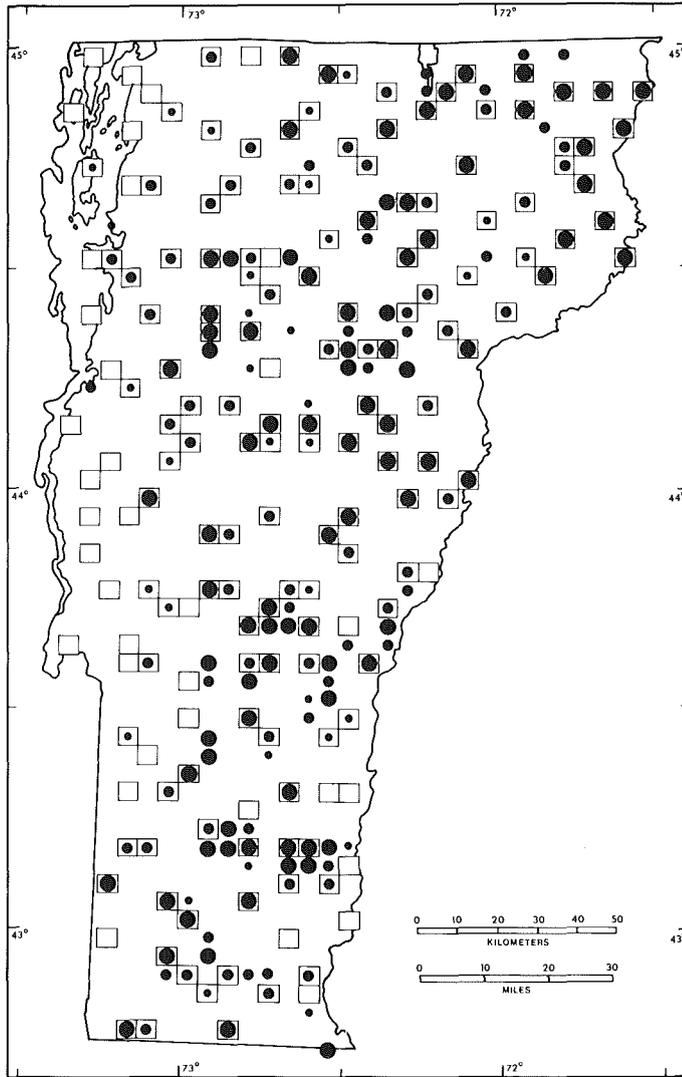
The Canada Warbler occupies a variety of habitats associated with northern hardwood and coniferous forests. Some unifying characteristics of these habitats include low, thick, deciduous growth, an uneven forest floor, and damp conditions. Given these requirements, the species' habitats include reforested talus slopes, clear cuts, hemlock ravines, subalpine forest, bogs, and willow, alder, and cedar swamps. Kendeigh (1945a) indicated that cover for the nest site, usually provided by an overhanging bank, log, stump, or mossy hummock, may be an important habitat requirement. Foliage density may also be important, as the species does nearly all of its foraging below 5 m (16 ft).

Canada Warblers migrate fairly late in the spring. They usually arrive in Vermont during the second week of May (an extreme date is May 1). They begin to leave by early August and are scarce after the first week of September; the latest record is for September 29. Once on territory, the Canada Warbler is easily detected by its song. The song is generally delivered from a low perch, and consists of a *chip* followed by an explosive jumble of short notes that invariably ends with a three-note phrase, the last note of which is loud and rising in pitch. Once located, birds on nesting territory may be lured into view with swishing or squeaking sounds. Such sounds often elicit agitated behavior—wing flipping, bill cleaning, and sharp *chup* calls—from one or both of the adults. When the observer nears the well-concealed ground nest, the birds will descend to the ground and put on a distraction display with fanned tail and wings fluttering above the back. The easiest way to confirm nesting, however, is to encounter the parents carrying food for the young. Atlas Project data underscore this fact, as in 63% of the confirmations the FY code—for parents with food—was used. The fact that only 5% of all confirmations referred to the location of a nest reflects how difficult the nest is to find.



Canada Warblers are single-brooded, and the period for confirmation of their breeding extends from the end of May, when nest building is under way, to late July, when the latest breeders have fledged their young. Egg dates are almost nonexistent for Vermont: only one clutch is recorded for the state. Dates for fledged young are from June 27 to July 31 (only five records). From this range, dates for eggs may be roughly estimated to fall between the first week of June and the first week of July; data from surrounding states and provinces indicate an egg range from late May to late June (Forbush 1929; Bent 1958; Bull 1974). Clutch size is somewhat variable, ranging from 3 to 5 eggs; 4 or 5 are laid with equal frequency.

The Canada Warbler is common in eastern Vermont and the Green Mountains. In the Champlain Lowlands it is very local, being limited to scattered swamps; and in the Taconic Mountains it is uncommon. The species' status has apparently changed little in the last 75 years, although it may have increased since the early twentieth century as forest cover has increased (Davenport 1907; Fortner et al. 1933). Many local and statewide listings of birds from the early years of this century reveal that the Canada Warbler's numbers were limited, and that it was found largely in more mountainous areas. Atlas Project data indicate that the Canada Warbler was found in fewer than



**No. of priority blocks in which recorded**

TOTAL 142 (79%)

Possible breeding: 22 (15.5% of total)

Probable breeding: 54 (38.0% of total)

Confirmed breeding: 66 (46.5% of total)

**Physiographic regions in which recorded**

	no. of priority blocks	% of region's priority blocks	% of species' total priority blocks
Champlain Lowlands	14	45	10
Green Mountains	50	93	35
North Central	19	100	13
Northeast Highlands	16	100	11
East Central	18	95	13
Taconic Mountains	8	50	6
Eastern Foothills	17	71	12

half of the priority blocks in the Champlain Lowlands and in only half of the blocks in the Taconic Mountains, and was absent from fewer than a third of those in the Eastern Foothills. Distribution in the Eastern Foothills shows that the species is most scarce in the southern Connecticut River valley, though present in the hills just west of the valley. These data seem to indicate a close correlation of the distribution of the Canada Warbler with cool, moist climates, as it is least common in warm, dry regions.

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