

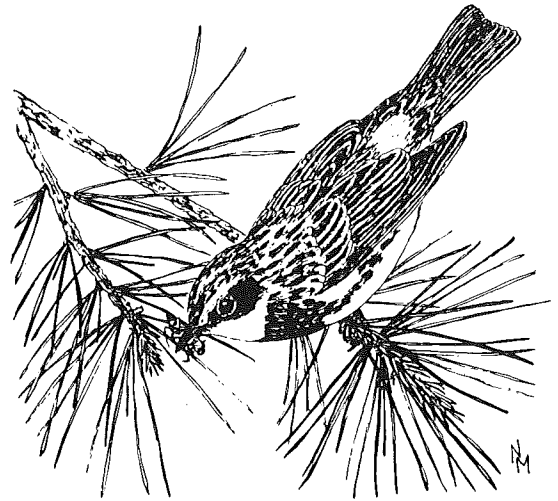
Yellow-rumped Warbler

Dendroica coronata

Yellow-rumped Warblers occur in a variety of open coniferous or mixed woodlands, and edge situations where conifers are prominent. The species breeds across much of Canada and the northern U.S. In Vermont, and in the White Mountains of New Hampshire (Sabo 1980), the species is most uniformly distributed in stunted subalpine spruce-fir woodland. Metcalf (1977) found densities of 25 pairs per 40.5 ha (100 a) in coniferous forest. Yellow-rumps are also found in spruce bogs, along the edges of low-elevation mature spruce-fir forest, in tall open stands of white pine and, occasionally, in hemlock.

Because of its predilection for ground and aerial foraging and for long flights across its territory (MacArthur 1958), the Yellow-rumped Warbler is easier to see than most wood warblers. As with other warblers, the song calls attention to the bird on breeding territory. The song is an erratic, shivering trill with a rather thin, bell-like quality that distinguishes it from the more robust trill of the Dark-eyed Junco. Most (61%) confirmations of breeding during the Atlas Project were obtained via the FY code (parents observed with food for young). The fledglings of this species have a distinctive, harsh begging call that makes them easy to detect; 20% of Vermont confirmations were for dependent young.

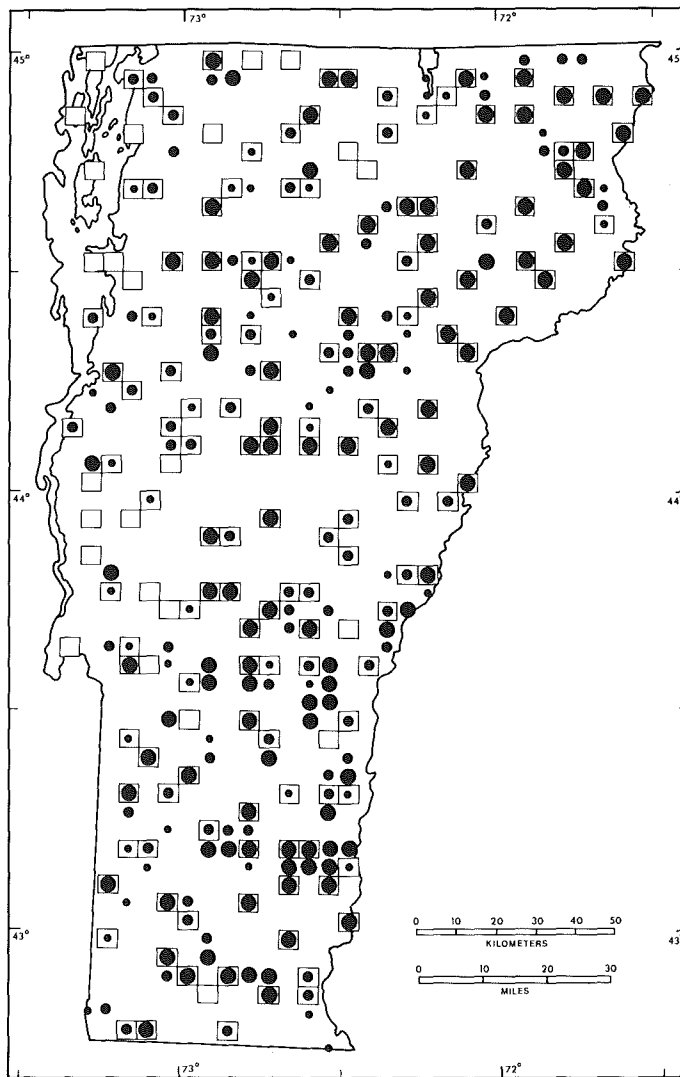
Yellow-rumped Warblers winter farther north than any other wood warblers; they have been found in southern Ontario and coastal Maine (AOU 1983). Yellow-rumps arrive in Vermont in early and mid April; the spring return movement peaks in late April and early May. Breeding behavior is most evident by late May. The nest is a fairly bulky structure of twigs, strips of bark, moss, and lichen, lined with feathers—often those of the Ruffed Grouse (Harrison 1975). The nest is generally placed on a side fork more than halfway out from the trunk of a conifer, 1.2–15.2 m (4–50 ft) up (Harrison



1975); the average nest height is 4.6–6.1 m (15–20 ft) from the ground (Bent 1953; MacArthur 1958).

The eggs, white with red-brown spots and blotches arranged in a wreath about the large end, number from 3 to 5. MacArthur (1958) determined that an average clutch numbered 4.1 eggs, on the basis of 24 records. Four egg dates from Vermont range from June 2 to July 17. The incubation period lasts from 12 to 13 days (Bent 1953). Nestling dates have never been reported in Vermont; nestlings have been noted in New York State from early June until early September (Bull 1974; Cook 1982). The young remain in the nest for 12 to 14 days (Bent 1953); dependent young have been recorded in Vermont on seven dates from June 23 to August 5. Autumn migration is first evident in late August, and peaks in late September or early October. Most Yellow-rumps have left the state by late October; however, a few are seen annually into November and even into early winter. In fall and winter they supplement their normally insectivorous diet with fruit and berries.

Historically, the Yellow-rumped Warbler was considered common only at high elevations and in the northeastern part of the state (Fortner et al. 1933). During the Atlas Project, the species was reported from 86% of the priority blocks, indicating a great increase in distribution. Much of the aban-



No. of priority blocks in which recorded

TOTAL 154 (86%)

Possible breeding: 27 (17.5% of total)

Probable breeding: 46 (30.0% of total)

Confirmed breeding: 81 (52.5% of total)

Physiographic regions in which recorded

	no. of priority blocks	% of region's priority blocks	% of species' total priority blocks
Champlain Lowlands	17	55	11.1
Green Mountains	49	91	31.8
North Central	19	100	12.3
Northeast Highlands	16	100	10.4
East Central	19	100	12.3
Taconic Mountains	12	75	7.8
Eastern Foothills	22	92	14.3

done agricultural land in Vermont at low elevations has been taken over by white pine, and at higher altitudes by red spruce and balsam fir, creating favorable nesting conditions for Yellow-rumped Warblers. Possibly because of its adaptability or the scarcity of other conifer-nesting *Dendroica* warblers, of the boreal warblers the Yellow-rumped is the most frequently encountered in the Champlain Lowlands.

WALTER G. ELLISON