

FOR THE BIRDS

Coming Your Way Soon

By T. Andersen

In the month of April, you can expect Wood Warblers to start passing through Kinnickinnic Township. Some will stay and nest here and some will continue their migration to nesting grounds in Northern Wisconsin and Canada.

While spending time in Costa Rica one winter, the **Tennessee Warbler** was one of the most common species I saw. They winter mostly in Central America and breed almost entirely in Canada. Besides eating insects, they will drink nectar from flowers or from my hummingbird feeder. **Their status is secure** and they are pretty common when they pass through our township.



Mid-May Tennessee in Bold Breeding Colors



Tennessee Warbler at the Hummingbird Feeder

The **Canada Warbler** is one of the later migrants through our township. The pictures here are from late May. Wintering in South America, they breed in Canada and by some accounts in Northern Wisconsin.

They like thick brushy areas in damp woods. I have numerous brush piles in our woods and they seem to gravitate to them for food as they pass through here.



Canada Warbler

Their bold white eye ring and the black markings around their chest makes an ID fairly easy. They are sometimes called the “Necklaced Warbler”. One interesting thing you might notice is their “crown”. When they are startled or spot you looking at them, they often raise the feathers on top of their head. **Unfortunately, their population is declining.**



Canada Warbler Displaying His Crown

The **Black and White Warbler** is a nifty little bird that is plentiful when it comes to our Township usually in early May. They are easy to spot zipping up and down trees looking for insects in the tree bark. They often climb down the tree head first. They have exceptionally large feet and a large hind claw which makes climbing easier.



Black & White Warbler Climbing Down
(Note large rear claw)

A number of sources suggest the Black and White Warbler could nest in our Township. They are ground nesters. ***Their populations are secure.***

The **Nashville Warbler** is a small insect eating Warbler that is a common migrant through our township. They winter in Central America and can be seen here in the month of May. While unlikely, some sources suggest this ground nester could breed here. ***Their populations are secure.***



Nashville Warbler in the Township on May 6th

One particularly colorful spring bird is the **Cape May Warbler**. They winter in Central America and possibly breed in N. Wisconsin but more likely in Canada. I don't often see them, but this one visited my Hummingbird feeder several times. ***Their status is secure.***



Cape May Warbler in the township in late May

The **Pine Warbler** pretty much stays in the United States year around. Traveling to the Southern US in winter and north to nest in the spring. They likely nest in Northern Wisconsin. As their name suggests, they favor pine trees. That said, keep an eye on your suet feeders and you might spot one. ***Their populations are secure.***



Pine Warbler Sampling Suet in Late April

The **Bay-breasted Warbler** winters in Central America and breeds mostly in Canada. I do not see them very often. ***Their populations are considered vulnerable.***

In an effort to capture a picture of this little rascal, I placed a pan of water in the ground to resemble a miniature pond. I then positioned a stick to encourage it to land. This one, festooned in breeding colors, cooperated nicely.



Bay-breasted Warbler in Late May

Look for the **Palm Warbler** to be hopping around your yard once the snow clears in late April and early May. These Warblers are one of the most abundant. I've seen as many as 8 at one time feeding in the yard. They pump their tails constantly making an ID easier. ***Their populations are secure.***



Palm Warbler in Our Yard the End of April

One of the prettiest migrants through here is the **Blackburnian Warbler**. They winter in South and Central America and breed in N. Wisconsin into Canada.

If you watch this little fella very long, you are likely to get a "crick" in your neck as they are almost always high in the tree tops feeding on insects. ***The populations of these birds are considered vulnerable.***



Blackburnian Warbler in Mid-May



Note the Blackburnian's Beautiful Orange Throat

The **Chestnut-sided Warbler** is a common visitor to Kinnickinnic Township. They winter in Central and South America and could likely breed from central WI into Canada. One fun thing to remember about them is their song which sounds like *pleased pleased pleased to MEET'cha*. The one pictured, souped up in breeding colors, could be heard singing that song. ***The status of this warbler is secure.***



Chestnut-sided Warbler in May

The **Common Yellowthroat** is just that. Quite common. Wintering in Central America, they can be found breeding virtually all across the country and Canada. They are common in our township. ***Their populations are secure.***



Common Yellowthroat in May

Living in a rural township like ours offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy our feathered friends. If your location doesn't favor migrating warblers, then it is easy to look in wooded areas along the Kinnickinnic River to spot them. There is a great deal of public land along and near the river that flows through our township.

The value of these birds goes far beyond just the sheer enjoyment of observing them. They are voracious feeders on many, many insects. A quick and easy place to learn about these and other warblers is through the Cornell University website.

<https://www.birds.cornell.edu>

T. Andersen is a resident of Kinnickinnic Township. The pictures of these birds were taken by Tom Andersen in Kinnickinnic Township.