

RARE WARBLERS IN THE CAROLINAS

ANNIE RIVERS FAVER

SWAINSON'S WARBLER (*Lymnolthlypis swainsonii*).—This species and the Bachman's Warbler were both discovered by Dr. John Bachman in the early 1830's in the low country of South Carolina. They were named by Audubon. Both were "lost species" for a number of years before they were rediscovered by Arthur T. Wayne, who found the Swainson's Warbler on April 22, 1884. It is now listed as a rare summer resident in all but the northwestern part of South Carolina. Since it is a bird of the "deep, dark, gloomy swamps" (Wayne), it is not easily found, although records have been made of the nests and young in the low country and as far up as Aiken County. It may breed in the center of the State, for four birds were seen in Lexington County on June 3, 1932.

In North Carolina, this warbler was noted by Ellison Williams six times during the sixteen years that he kept spring records at Tryon (*Chat* 15: 41-44, 1951). Burleigh collected three specimens near Asheville, one each in 1930, 1931, and 1932. Between 1906 and 1909 several adults and at least two nests were recorded in the lower coastal plain. J. J. Murray found and studied a nest on March 7, 1935 in Robeson County. On April 24, 1948, two of these warblers were seen at Airlie Gardens, near Wilmington, during a field trip of the Carolina Bird Club; they were identified by E. B. Chamberlain and others. Mrs. F. H. Craft reported one from Blowing Rock on June 11, 1949. Phillips Russell saw one on August 10 of that same year at Ridgecrest.

The Swainson's Warbler has an outstanding song, being compared with the Louisiana Water-Thrush in that respect. This is an aid in locating the bird, whether it may be sought in the cane thickets and swamps of the low country or in the laurel and rhododendron of the mountains. During migration, the Swainson's Warbler is not so shy as when nesting and may be found in more open situations.

GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora chrysoptera*).—Although it nests in the mountains, the Golden-winged Warbler is a rare transient in the rest of our region, since its migration route is inland by way of the Gulf Coast. In North Carolina, it has been seen six times in sixteen years at Tryon by Ellison Williams. One was seen at Henderson in the spring of 1948 by observers on their spring count. Mrs. T. W. Simpson saw one at Montreat in the late summer of 1949. In South Carolina, there are few records from the upper counties and only two from below the Fall Line. One was identified in our back yard, near Eastover, on Sept. 11, 1950, and one was seen again feeding in a large Pecan tree on Sept. 6, 1951. They are strikingly marked and easy to identify.

BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (*Vermivora pinus*).—The Blue-winged Warbler is considered to be a rare transient in the Carolinas, although it is said to have once nested near Asheville, North Carolina. It has been seen, off and on, since 1887 in the eastern half of South Carolina. One was seen on April 23, 1948, at Pawley's Island by Chandler S. Robbins. The only record since then is my own from Eastover, where on August 30, 1951, I was surprised to see a Blue-winged Warbler playing about in the dew-dampened

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D. RAVER

leaves of our Supperlong vine. In North Carolina, there have been more records from Raleigh than anywhere else. The spring count for 1950 listed one from there and another from Henderson. One was seen at Winston-Salem by Mrs. T. W. Simpson and others on Sept. 14, 1952.

BREWSTER'S WARBLER (*Vermivora leucobronchialis*) and **LAWRENCE'S WARBLER** (*Vermivora lawrencei*).—Of these hybrids between Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers, I can find no record from South Carolina. In North Carolina, three Brewster's Warblers have been noted: H. H. Brimley collected one near Raleigh on Sept. 6, 1888; one was reported at Chapel Hill by E. P. Odum on August 25, 1932; the third was reported from Montreat on August 28, 1936. Lawrence's Warbler was reported from Rocky Mount on June 26, 1935, by F. H. Craighill and Hugh Battle, who saw another on the following day. Earl M. Hodel saw two of the hybrids at Ronda in Wilkes County, May 8, 1938. One was seen at Raleigh on May 1, 1948.

BACHMAN'S WARBLER (*Vermivora bachmani*).—The elusive Bachman's Warbler is similar to the Swainson's Warbler in behavior and nesting environment, as well as in its historical background. It is the rarer of the two birds, having been recorded only twice in North Carolina—C. S. Brimley took two specimens at Raleigh in 1891. Arthur T. Wayne secured the second South Carolina specimen on May 15, 1901, sixty-eight years after its original discovery in that State. On May 13, 1905, Wayne found the first young birds, at Fairlawn Plantation where the species was first discovered by Bachman. A few birds were seen there on occasion until 1919, when Wayne collected one near his home. Then they disappeared again, though Wayne continued to search until his death in 1930. In 1938, a full-plumaged male was seen by Chandler Ross at McClellanville. Henry Kennon saw one there in 1946 and again in 1947. In 1948, Bachman's Warbler was again located at Fairlawn and was also reported from McClellanville. The bird was found at Fairlawn during the next two years and was shown to a group of Carolina Bird Club members during the spring meeting on May 7, 1950. The Bachman's Warbler is a bird of dense undergrowth in uncut swamp—cane, scrub palmetto, thick bushes, or briar thickets. It is very hard to locate the song which, unlike that of the Swainson's Warbler, sounds more like the trill of an insect than a bird's song.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER (*Dendroica kirtlandi*).—"The Kirtland's Warbler . . . was first discovered on May 13, 1851, when a migrant was taken at Cleveland, Ohio. The first nest was located on July 8, 1903, near Red Oak, Oscoda County, Michigan. Every nest found subsequently has been within 60 miles of the first. In winter, the bird is known only in the Bahama Islands." This succinct statement by Harold Mayfield (*Auk* 70:17, 1953) indicates the limited distribution of this rare warbler. He and his associates made a survey of the singing males in the jack-pine country of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. During June, 1951, this species was found in only eight counties. Four hundred and thirty-two singing males were counted and an equal number of females was estimated. Thus, allowing for possible sources of error, the total population of Kirtland's Warbler is believed to be less than a thousand. Until this survey, the bird had never been found during the nesting season in other than Jack-Pine. Then some were found in stands of Red Pine, suggesting that the main requirement was not

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The excellent per rare warblers is th the N. C. Wildlife *Wildlife in North C* by Mr. Raver. We a and are proud to in

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the species of pine, but the general configuration of pine thickets and small clearings. During migration, we can expect to see this bird in similar habitats. It has been seen in North Carolina by F. H. Craighill, who reported them from Rocky Mount on Sept. 2, 1936, Sept. 22, 1938, and Sept. 23, 1941. It was first added to the South Carolina state list from the low country in 1886. One was collected two years later at Chester. Arthur T. Wayne collected one near Charleston on Oct. 29, 1903, and saw another on Oct. 4, 1910. P. M. Jenness saw one in Gaffney on May 5, 1925. The next two records from the State are from my own back yard, where one was seen on Oct. 14, 1949, and another on Sept. 1, 1951.

The status of the so-called SUTTON'S WARBLER (*Dendroica potomac*) is so uncertain that it is better left for a future date. All sight records thought to be of this species should be sent to B. R. Chamberlain with full descriptions and exact dates for his files. (See CHAT 17:24, 1953).

There are several other species—the Worm-eating, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Cerulean, Connecticut, Mourning, and Wilson's Warblers—that could be discussed if space would permit. Although not actually rare, they are all rather uncommon or of local distribution in the Carolinas.

An attempt will be made to keep this paper up to date, so we would appreciate having records of these rare warblers sent to the editors regularly during the next several years. The material and references for the present paper were taken from *South Carolina Bird Life*, by Sprunt and Chamberlain (1949); *Birds of North Carolina*, by Pearson, Brimley, and Brimley (1942); and numerous reports and field notes in recent issues of THE CHAT.—*Eastover, S. C., June 1, 1952.*

[The above paper was originally presented at the fifteenth annual meeting of the Carolina Bird Club, Raleigh, N. C., March 15, 1952. The editors immediately sought the paper for a future issue of THE CHAT, and Mrs. Tom Simpson joined Mrs. Faver in revising and editing the manuscript for publication. This fine contribution by our two "warbler experts" might well serve as a model for similar treatment of other of our poorly-known groups of birds.—T. L. QUAY.]

The excellent pen and ink drawings included in Mrs. Faver's paper on rare warblers is the work of Mr. Duane Raver, Fisheries Investigator of the N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Readers of recent issues of *Wildlife in North Carolina* have seen a number of articles and illustrations by Mr. Raver. We are deeply appreciative of Mr. Raver's first contribution, and are proud to introduce him to *The Chat* and CBC.

"EDITOR, *The Chat*: You may wish to make mention in *The Chat* that the Park has a complete set of *The Auk*—gift of the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association (Knoxville). Bird students can refer to it here, preferably by appointment. We cannot send out any part of it on loan.—ARTHUR STUPKA, *Naturalist, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Gatlinburg, Tennessee.*"