



MIGRATORY BIRDS (Pass through Knox County in the spring and again in fall)

- Gray-cheeked Thrush** Of all the American spotted thrushes, the Gray-cheeked has the most northern breeding range. Consequently this shy skulker of the underbrush is not well known and is rather infrequently seen. Song: Complex song of burry flute-like notes, usually ending on a downslur. Nocturnal flight note a one-or two-note "whe-er" dropping in pitch. Does not nest in Tennessee.
- Swainson's Thrush** The Swainson's Thrush is distinguished from the other spotted thrushes by its obvious eye ring and buffy face. Song: flute-like, spiraling upward. Call a sharp "whit;" also a hollow "peep." Nocturnal flight call a "peep" similar to a single note from a spring peeper frog. Does not nest in Tennessee.
- Tennessee Warbler** Drably colored with few field markings. A dainty warbler of the Canadian boreal forest, the Tennessee Warbler specializes in eating the spruce budworm. Consequently its population goes up and down with fluctuations in the populations of the budworm. Song: A loud, spitting three- or two-part series of trills, with the middle series composed of two-note syllables and the third part faster, higher, and louder. Nests far to the north.
- Nashville Warbler** A small, sprightly songbird of second-growth forests, the Nashville Warbler breeds in both north-central North America and an isolated portion of the mountainous Pacific Northwest. It nests on the ground and feeds almost exclusively on insects. Song: Loud and musical with a distinctive two-part pattern, with several two-note phrases followed by a trill. Call note is a dry chip. Does not nest in Tennessee.
- Cape May Warbler** The Cape May Warbler breeds across the boreal forest of Canada and the northern United States, where the fortunes of its populations are largely tied to the availability of spruce budworms, its preferred food. Striking in appearance but poorly understood, the species spends its winters in the West Indies, collecting nectar with its unique curled, semitubular tongue. Song: A thin, high-pitched note repeated four to eight times. Call note is a high chip. Does not nest in Tennessee.
- Palm Warbler** The rusty-capped Palm Warbler can be most easily recognized by the tail-wagging habit that shows off its yellow undertail. It breeds in bogs and winters primarily in the southern United States and Caribbean. Song: A weak trill. Call a thin "tsip" or a sharp "chip." Does not nest in Tennessee.
- Bay-breasted Warbler** Large warbler of the northern spruce forests, the Bay-breasted Warbler benefits from spruce budworm outbreaks when the caterpillars provide abundant food. Spraying to control the destructive outbreaks may have reduced populations of this warbler. Song: Very high-pitched "seetzy, seetzy, seetzy." Does not nest in Tennessee.

Blackpoll Warbler One of the most common birds of the northern boreal forest, the Blackpoll Warbler flies all the way to South America to spend the winter. Song: A very high-pitched "tsit, tsit, tsit, tsit, tsit, tsit." Does not nest in Tennessee.

Northern Waterthrush A bird of northern forests, the Northern Waterthrush sings its loud, ringing song from wooded swamps and bogs. It can be seen on migration bobbing its tail near wet spots in parks or back yards. Song: Loud and ringing, starts with several phrases on one pitch, followed by an accelerating jumble of short, rapid phrases dropping slightly in pitch. Call a sharp, metallic "chink."

Wilson's Warbler A common warbler of willow thickets in the West and across Canada, the Wilson's Warbler is easily identified by its yellow underparts and black cap. Song: A series of loud, rapid, chatter-like notes, dropping downward in pitch toward the end; not especially musical in quality. Call a soft, nasal "chip." Does not nest in Tennessee.

MIGRATORY IN KNOX COUNTY BUT NEST ELSEWHERE IN TENNESSEE

Black Vulture With sooty black plumage, a bare black head, and neat white stars under the wingtips, Black Vultures are almost dapper. Whereas Turkey Vultures are lanky birds with teetering flight, Black Vultures are compact birds with broad wings, short tails, and powerful wingbeats. The two species often associate: the Black Vulture makes up for its poor sense of smell by following Turkey Vultures to carcasses. Highly social birds with fierce family loyalty, Black Vultures share food with relatives, feeding young for months after they've fledged. Widespread nesting across state. Isolated locations. Migratory in Knox County.

Whip-poor-will Made famous in folk songs, poems, and literature for their endless chanting on summer nights, Eastern Whip-poor-wills are easy to hear but hard to see. Their brindled plumage blends perfectly with the gray-brown leaf litter of the open forests where they breed and roost. At dawn and dusk, and on moonlit nights, they sally out from perches to sweep up insects in their cavernous mouths. These common birds are on the decline in parts of their range as open forests are converted to suburbs or agriculture. Widespread nesting across state. Song: The male's emphatic, chanted whip-poor-will, sometimes repeated for hours on end, is a classic sound of warm summer nights in the countryside of the East. On the decline. Migratory in Knox County.

Acadian Flycatcher A denizen of mature deciduous forests and streamsides, the Acadian Flycatcher is usually first noticed by its explosive "peet-sah" call. It is the largest and greenest of the North American Empidonax. Song: Song an explosive "peet-sah" or "flee-sick." Nests highest elevations of the Smokies, Cumberlands and West Tennessee: Highland Rim.

Veery A tawny thrush of damp deciduous forests, the Veery is the least spotted of all the American spotted thrushes and one of the easiest to identify. Song: Song a resonating, ethereal "da-vee-ur, vee-ur, veer, veer," descending slightly in pitch. Nests in very highest elevations of the Smokies.

Blue-headed Vireo The Blue-headed Vireo is a common and vocal bird of northeastern forests. Formerly lumped as a "Solitary Vireo" with the more western Plumbeous and Cassin's vireos, it is now considered a separate species. Song: A broken series of slurred notes, with each phrase ending in either a downslur or an upswing, as if the bird asks a question, then answers it, over and over. Includes a few burry notes. Nest in high elevations of mountains in East Tennessee.

Prairie Warbler..... A tail-wagging yellow warbler with black streaks down its sides, the Prairie Warbler is found in scrubby fields and forests throughout the eastern and south-central United States, not on the prairies. Song: A rapid series of ascending buzzes. Calls: most common is a "chek" note. Nests in Middle and West Tennessee.

Blue-winged Warbler Yellow front, blue gray wings. Brightly colored but easily overlooked. A bird of shrubland and old fields, the Blue-winged Warbler expanded its breeding grounds northward throughout the 20th century. Nests West Tennessee. Song: Raspy "bee-buzz," like an inhale and then an exhale.

Golden-winged Warbler Small, strikingly marked warbler of eastern early successional habitats. Love blackberry thickets. Its population increased for over 100 years as forests were cut down. Now, however, it is losing ground, both because of reforestation and displacement by the spreading Blue-winged Warbler. Song: A high buzzy "zee bee bee bee." Nests in Cumberland Mountains.

Northern Parula A small warbler of the upper canopy, the Northern Parula can be found in two rather distinct populations. The southern population nests primarily in hanging Spanish moss, while the northern population uses the similar-looking old man's beard lichen. Song: Song a rising buzzy trill with a final sharp note, or a series of buzzy notes. *Ziiiiiiip!* Nests in West Tennessee, Cumberland and Smoky Mountains.

Yellow Warbler In summer, the buttery yellow males sing their sweet whistled song from willows, wet thickets, and roadsides across almost all of North America. The females and immatures aren't as bright, and lack the male's rich chestnut streaking, but their overall warm yellow tones, unmarked faces, and prominent black eyes help pick them out. Song: Males sing a sweet series of 6-10 whistled notes that accelerate over the course of the roughly 1-second song and often end on a rising note. The tone is so sweet that people often remember it with the mnemonic *sweet sweet sweet I'm so sweet.*

Chestnut-sided Warbler A common bird of second growth and scrubby forests, the Chestnut-sided Warbler is distinctive in appearance. No other warbler combines a greenish-yellow cap, a white breast, and reddish streaks down the sides. Song: A series of musical notes, usually accented at the end: "*pleased, pleased, pleased to MEETCHA.*" Nests highest elevations of the Smokies.

Magnolia Warbler The Magnolia Warbler is a handsome and familiar warbler of the northern forests. Though it often forages conspicuously and close to the ground, we have relatively scant information on its nesting behavior. Song: Short and weak whistled, "*weta, weta, WETA.*" Call a nasal "*zic.*" Starting to expand nesting territory into northeast Tennessee.

Black-throated Blue Warbler A bird of the deep forest, the Black-throated Blue Warbler breeds in the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada. On migration to its Caribbean wintering grounds it can be seen in a variety of habitats, including parks and gardens. Song: A series of three to seven buzzy notes, with the last slurred upward, "zoo, zoo, zoo, zoo, zee." Nests in highest elevation of the Smokies.

Black-throated Green Warbler An abundant breeder of the northeastern coniferous forests, the Black-throated Green Warbler is easy to recognize by sight and sound. Its dark black bib and bright yellow face are unique amongst Eastern birds. Song: Its persistent song of "zoo-zee, zoo-zoo-zee" is easy to remember. Nests in highest elevations of the Smokies and the Cumberlands.

Blackburnian Warbler A bird of the coniferous forests of the Northeast, the Blackburnian Warbler is breathtaking in its brilliant orange-and-black breeding plumage. Song: Song thin and very high pitched, "zip, zip, zip, zip, titititi, tseeee," and "teetsa, teetsa, teetsa, teetsa." Nests highest elevations of the Smokies.

Yellow-throated Warbler One of the "southeastern" warblers, the Yellow-throated Warbler is a bird of tall trees. It nests and forages high in the canopy of swamp and pine forests. Song: Song a series of clear, slurred notes dropping slightly in pitch. Call a loud, sharp "chip." Nests in Smokies, Cumberlands and West Tennessee.

Pine Warbler A bird true to its name, the Pine Warbler is common in many eastern pine forests and is rarely seen away from pines. These yellowish warblers are hard to spot as they move along high branches to prod clumps of needles with their sturdy bills. If you don't see them, listen for their steady, musical trill, which sounds very like a Chipping Sparrow or Dark-eyed Junco, which are also common piney-woods sounds through much of the year. Song: Male Pine Warblers sing a fast trill of 10-30 notes usually on one pitch, lasting a couple of seconds. The Pine Warbler is one of few North American songbirds that may sing at any time of year, including while migrating. The male usually sings while foraging or, during breeding season, from high branch tips of pines. The song is very similar to both Chipping Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco songs, but tends to be a bit slower and more musical. Nests in Smokies, Cumberlands and West Tennessee.

Cerulean Warbler A small bird of the deciduous forest treetops, the sky-blue Cerulean Warbler is hard to see. It nests and forages higher in the canopy than most other warblers. Song: Buzzy notes ending in a higher pitched trill, "zee zee zee zizizizi eeeet." Nests in Cumberlands.

Black-and-White Warbler Distinctive in both plumage and behavior, the Black-and-white Warbler forages for insects while creeping along the trunks and branches of trees. Common in summer throughout the eastern United States and Canada, it has an unusually extensive winter range that extends from Florida to Venezuela and Colombia. Song: Song a series of very high, two-syllable phrases, resembling the sound of a squeaky wheel; "wee-see-wee-see-wee-see." Nests in highest elevations of the Smokies and Cumberlands.

American Redstart A boldly patterned warbler of second growth woods, the American Redstart frequently flashes its orange and black wings and tail to flush insect prey from foliage. Song: Song variable; series of high notes, some with accented ending note. "Wee-see, wee-see, wee-see." Most characteristic is "tsee, tsee, tsee, tsee, tsway." Nests in Cumberlands.

Worm-eating Warbler A small, drab, but elegantly marked bird of the eastern deciduous forests, the Worm-eating Warbler is often found on steep slopes with dense understory. True to its name, it feeds largely on caterpillars ("worms"). Song: Song a rapid, dry trill, often insect-like. Nests in Smokies and Cumberlands.

Ovenbird A small, inconspicuous bird of the forest floor, the Ovenbird is one of the most characteristic birds of the eastern forests. Its loud song, "*teacher, teacher, teacher,*" rings through the summer forest, but the bird itself is hard to see. Song: A loud, ringing "*cher, teacher, teacher, teacher.*" Nests in Smokies and Cumberlands down the Plateau.

Louisiana Waterthrush A bird of forest streams, the Louisiana Waterthrush looks more like a thrush or sparrow than the warbler it is. It can be recognized by its loud ringing call and constant bobbing of its tail. Song: Loud and ringing, starts with two to five slightly descending, clear whistled notes followed by a complex jumble of short, rapid phrases. Call a sharp, metallic "*chip.*" Nests in various isolated locations.

Kentucky Warbler A bird of the deciduous forests of the southeastern United States, the Kentucky Warbler's loud song can be heard far more frequently than the brightly colored bird can be seen. It stays near the ground and the lower levels of the forest, and nests on the ground. Song: A loud series of "*chuuuree*" notes. Call a smacking "*chip.*" Nests in Cumberlands and other isolated locations farther west in Tennessee.

Hooded Warbler A striking small bird of eastern hardwood forests, the Hooded Warbler prefers forests with shrub understory. Song: A loud, clear whistled "*ta-wit ta-wit ta-wit tee-yo.*" Nests in shrubs in Smokies and Cumberlands.

Canada Warbler A colorful, active warbler of northern forests, the Canada Warbler spends little time on its breeding grounds. It is one of the last warblers to arrive north in the spring, and one of the first to leave in the fall, heading early to its South American wintering grounds. Song: Clear and loud, starting with a chip, followed by a series of short warbling notes. Nests in very highest elevations of the Smokies.

Summer Tanager The only entirely red bird in North America, the Summer Tanager is a bird of southern forests. It specializes in eating bees and wasps, both in the summer and on its wintering grounds in Central and South America. Song: Song a series of slurred, whistled notes interspersed with short pauses. Usually contains one set that can be interpreted as "*peanut-butter.*" Nests Middle to West Tennessee.

Scarlet Tanager Male Scarlet Tanagers are among the most blindingly gorgeous birds in an eastern forest in summer, with blood-red bodies set off by jet-black wings and tail. They're also one of the most frustratingly hard to find as they stay high in the forest canopy singing rich, burry songs. The yellowish-green, dark-winged females can be even harder to spot until you key in on this bird's chick-burr call note. In fall, males trade red feathers for yellow-green and the birds take off for northern South America. Song: The male Scarlet Tanager sings a burry series of 4-5 chirruping phrases with a hurried quality. Many people liken it to the sound of a robin with a sore throat. He sings from an exposed perch to defend his territory, getting into singing wars with his neighbors. Nests in Smokies and Cumberlands.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak Bursting with black, white, and rose-red, male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks are like an exclamation mark at your bird feeder or in your binoculars. Females and immatures are streaked brown and white with a bold face pattern and enormous bill. Look for these birds in forest edges and woodlands. Listen, too, for their distinctive voices. They sound like American Robins, but listen for an extra sweetness, as if the bird had operatic training; they also make a sharp chink like the squeak of a sneaker. Song: Both males and females sing a rich, sweetly whistled song. The pattern is similar to an American Robin's song, composed of many notes that alternately rise and fall. Most people describe the grosbeak's song as sweeter and more melodious than a robin's. Nests in highest elevations of East Tennessee.

Baltimore Oriole The rich, whistling song of the Baltimore Oriole, echoing from treetops near homes and parks, is a sweet herald of spring in eastern North America. Look way up to find these singers: the male's brilliant orange plumage blazes from high branches like a torch. Nearby, you might spot the female weaving her remarkable hanging nest from slender fibers. Fond of fruit and nectar as well as insects, Baltimore Orioles are easily lured to backyard feeders. Song: The pure, liquid, whistling tones of the male Baltimore Oriole are a herald of springtime in eastern North America. His song consists of a short series of paired notes, repeated 2-7 times, lasting 1-2 seconds. The flutelike sound has a full, rich tone. Nests in Nashville area and in West Tennessee.