

at sapsucker wells in an American beech tree (*Fagus grandifolia*) for the sap and possibly insects attracted to it.

This commensalism or symbiotic relationship where the warbler benefited without harming the sapsucker was noted by Bob Andrini (2012) and other observers of the warbler and sapsucker. Other times the warbler was



Black-throated Blue Warbler sipping sap from sapsucker tree-holes in Millenium Park, Chicago, Cook County. 9 January 2012. The tree was a hybrid 'Homestead' elm.

observed feeding on insects or other food items under leaf litter, sunflower and millet seeds put out for the sparrows and the warbler, mealworms, and suet plugged into some of the sap-sucker drill rows and knots of the deciduous trees in front of the McDonald's Cycle Center. The warbler also associated with several Black-capped Chickadees (*Poecile atricapillus*) in the park and seemed also loosely associated and fed with White-throated and House sparrows. The warbler was often seen hover-gleaning like a kinglet over the drill holes looking for fresh sap ooze. I had seen warblers at these sapsucker drill holes earlier in the fall at Bicentennial Plaza and Millennium Park in North Grant Park – particularly Yellow-rumped (*Dendroica coronata*), Cape May (*Dendroica trigrina*), and Orange-crowned Warblers (*Vermivora celata*), and Ruby-crowned Kinglets (*Regulus calendula*), watching them getting sap nutrients from these holes and not just insects though they could be at these holes, too, when insects were still prevalent.

Winter Range

For purposes of this paper winter is defined as meteorological from 1 Dec – 29 February. The normal winter range of the Black-throated Blue Warbler is in the Greater Antilles, from Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, Cuba to Jamaica; also in the Bahamas. It occurs occasionally in the Lesser Antilles as far south as Trinidad and along the Caribbean coast of the Yucatan, Belize, Honduras, becoming rarer or casual on the Caribbean coasts of Costa Rica, Panama, Columbia and Venezuela. Small numbers do winter

in extreme southern Florida with very few wintering farther north. Eastern seaboard wintering records north of Florida are extremely rare (Holmes et al. 2005). During early winter the last 30 years of Christmas Bird Counts, numbers of Black-throated Blue Warblers reported have ranged from 3 to 29 individuals every year in Florida. In California, where they are casual in winter, reports have ranged from one to three birds in 10 years of the last 30 years of CBCs (Audubon website: www.audubon.org/cbcobservation/Historical/SpeciesData). Winter vagrants seem to be more regular in far western states with 3 records in Oregon, two in western Washington, one from British Columbia, 4 in Arizona and a January specimen from Idaho (Dunn and Garrett 1997). Within the United States or Canada an observation of a Black-throated Blue Warbler, except for Florida, is an extreme rarity in winter with most birds departing by mid-November – if not earlier. Early winter stragglers are extremely rare though they have occurred in northern inhospitable climes.

Other Midwest and Mid-Canada winter records

There are twelve Midwest winter records for Black-throated Blue Warbler plus a remarkable 10 in southernmost Ontario, Canada – near-



Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at the same tree where the Black-throated Blue Warbler was seen in Millenium Park, Chicago, Cook County. 9 January 2012. Photos by Jackie Bowman.

ly all in early winter (Alan Wormington pers. comm.). All Midwest records have occurred mostly in early December through January with no sightings in February. However, there is one Ontario, Canadian record for February. There are four records for Ohio, all in Cuyahoga Co., except for one, as follows: 4-5 Dec. 1993: one at Garfield Heights; 3 and 10 Dec. 2000: one at Lakewood; 10 Dec 2003: one in Elmwood Park, Rocky River, and 10-13 Dec 2008: one near Salem, Mahoning Co. (photographed). Indiana, too, has four records: 8 Dec 1949: one at Goshen College in Elkhart Co. (a bird flew into a classroom; was caught and released); 30 Dec 1988 – 5 Jan 1989: one in Delaware Co.; 8 Dec 1986 – 9 Jan 1987: one in Vigo Co.; and 16 Dec 1979 – 30 Jan 1980: one in Boone Co. Michigan has but one record: 15-24 Dec 1974: one at feeder in Berrien Co., photo in University