
First Two Nests of Black-throated Green Warbler in Illinois

Researchers discovered two Black-throated Green Warbler (*Dendroica virens*) nests while conducting breeding bird studies the summer of 1994 at Lowden-Miller State Forest in Ogle County, Illinois. Their work was part of research being done on the breeding status of neotropical migrants by Dr. Scott K. Robinson of the Illinois Natural History Survey.

The Black-throated Green Warbler has never before been recorded as a nesting species in the state (Bohlen 1989, *The Birds of Illinois*).

Brian Condon discovered 1 June 1994 a female black-throated green building a nest approximately 50 feet (15-20m) high in a white pine planta-

tion. On 3 June, the nest appeared to be complete. Between 6 and 17 June, the nest site was rather quiet. Condon heard only a few suspicious chips and a male singing once. He discovered a female 20 June on the pine. On 24 and 26 June no birds were observed. However, on 29 June a probable fledgling was seen several feet below the nest. On 1 July, 5 July, and 11 July no activity was observed at or near the nest site.

Robinson discovered a second Black-throated Green Warbler nest 10 June of 1994. The nest was situated in a white pine about 40 to 50 feet high. Robinson observed a female sitting in a bowl-shaped depres-

sion, presumably the nest, after she had been foraging briefly. The nest was too high to check and Robinson guesses the female was incubating at the time of his observation.

These nesting warblers were among a group which had established approximately 15 territories in the old stands of white pines that were part of an old Sinnissippi tree farm plantation. Some of the singing males observed were probably unmated.

Nest logs and records are on file at the Illinois Natural History Survey, 607 E. Peabody Dr., Champaign, IL 61820.

In June and July of 1994, my field crew (Steve Bailey, Rhett Jack, Brian Aust, Dawn Montgomery, and Todd McQuiston) and I recorded more than 100 species breeding or defending territories. Included in this list were 20 species of warblers, more than breed in the entire 260,000-acre Shawnee National Forest in southern Illinois. As a place for summer birding, Lowden-Miller State Forest is unequalled.

Walking through the pine plantations reminded me of working in New England. By far the most abundant birds were the Ovenbird and the Chipping Sparrow; the latter foraged mostly in the treetops rather than on the ground. The substantial number (ca. 50 territories) of Yellow-throated Warblers coupled with the curious lack of Pine Warblers, however, sets the bird communities of these pines apart from more northern pine forests. Censuses of the extensive pine plantations revealed a host of Illinois rarities, including Black-throated Green Warbler, Least Flycatcher, Solitary Vireo, Brown Creeper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Pine Siskin. A Solitary Vireo that Randy

Nyboer and I tracked down mostly sang Red-eyed Vireo-like notes, but would occasionally give a clear, slurred solitary phrase to keep us chasing it. A male Golden-crowned Kinglet that defended a territory in

The Lowden-Miller State Forest contains a bird community atypical for Illinois. The pines and clearcuts appear to lure northern species south and southern species north.

the Norway spruce plantation sounded just like a chickadee except for occasional use of its characteristic 3-note song.

Surprisingly, the pine plantations also contained reasonable numbers of birds I usually consider to be hardwoods species such as Veery, Wood

Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, and even Acadian Flycatcher. The two nests and estimated 15 territories of Black-throated Green Warblers in the tallest, oldest stands of white pines represented Illinois' first breeding records (see accompanying story). I suspect that Black-throated Greens and Solitary Vireos are more widespread in the state than we currently recognize and may even be colonizing some habitats.

Bird communities of the clearcuts are also unlike any mix of species I have encountered elsewhere. Recent (less than 3-year-old) clearcuts contained large numbers of Chestnut-sided and Blue-winged Warblers and smaller numbers of Canada, Mourning, and Golden-winged Warblers. We were unable to find the nests of any of these species, which may indicate a high proportion of unmated males. We did document pairs of Canada and Mourning Warblers and found old nests of Chestnut-sided Warblers. Older denser clearcuts were occupied by southern species such as White-eyed Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat as well as more northern species such as Canada and