

documented. An interesting older record suggests possible breeding: singing male in St. Charles during the summers of 1977-79 (Mlodinow 1984). The only previously confirmed nest attempt in northeastern Illinois occurred in Channahon (Will County) when a female was seen building a nest in a sycamore tree 2 May 1994 (Milosevich 1995). Unfortunately, this nest along the I&M Canal was noted as abandoned by 7 May. Another nest near Seneca (LaSalle Co) in 1990 was on the fringe of northeastern Illinois (Milosevich 1995).

Nesting by Yellow-throated Warblers at the Morton Arboretum might have occurred in prior years. Secker noted a male Yellow-throated at this same west side location well into August of 2000 and another one through June of 2001. If this species successfully bred in past years and the young returned, it could offer an explanation for the observation made by Walters on 15 June 2002 on the east side of Meadow Lake on the east side of the Arboretum – On that date, Walters followed a singing male for two hours. Over the next couple days, the warbler was observed defending territory, chasing away larger birds such as Northern Cardinal and American Goldfinch. Significantly, a female Yellow-throated Warbler was also seen, constituting the second pair during the 2002 breeding season – one on the east side of the Arboretum, the other on the west.

Unfortunately, neither pair was confirmed with breeding success. Secker saw the west side pair on 1 June 2002 calling and looking for insects in the sycamores and later the female was observed leaving the nest site, the last day either one was seen at the nest. On 13 June, following a ferocious storm with pelting rain and strong gusting winds, Secker observed the nest damaged with material hanging down from its branch. While predation can't be entirely ruled out, it seems most likely that the storm destroyed the nest. No evidence of egg shells was noted, so it's unclear if a full clutch was present. Although the pair stayed in the vicinity through 22 July, no further nest attempts were noted. Even the east side pair, its territory .95 mile away, seemed to abandon its area after mid-June. Both territories focused on groupings of larch and sycamore trees near water.

As the summer progressed, the male sang less, making the west side pair increasingly hard to locate.



*Yellow-throated Warbler at Morton Arboretum, Du Page County. 15 June 2002. Photo by Eric Walters.*

As well, the male was observed singing as far away as .3 mile from the nest site. An interesting discovery by Secker 13 July was the observation that the pair would return to parking lot #23 every evening and drink from the adjacent stream. This end-of-day routine was noted many times after that with the birds even allowing as close an approach as 10 feet. The last sighting of the year was the best; the female coming to drink from the stream, then stretching her neck out in a unique, alert posture. Her long, slender curved neck made her look so graceful compared to the usual plump form shared by other warblers (see similar picture in Harrison 1984).

With the discovery of the two pairs on territory at the Morton Arboretum during the summer of 2002, it perhaps is suggestive of a population or range expansion into northeast Illinois. If so, another local area that could hold a population would be the river valley in the Palos Forest Preserve region. Time will tell if this species establishes a stronghold at the Arboretum, where its favored nesting trees, sycamores grow.

### Literature Cited

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