

TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WYOMING

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Biology No. 224

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Subject: WARBLING VIREO*

General

The warbling vireo (Vireo gilvus) is a common summer resident of Colorado and has been recorded from the plains to elevations in excess of 10,000 ft (3,048 m). This species frequents the edges of clearings and riparian broad-leaved woodlands throughout North America.

Food Requirements

Warbling vireos are primarily insectivorous and secure nearly all of their food from the leaves of deciduous trees. Insects, chiefly beetles, moths and their larvae, composed 97 percent of the diet in a California study. Vegetable matter, including wild berries and seeds, were eaten in August and September. In an Ontario study, it was found that warbling vireos spent much of their time foraging near the ends of live branches in trees and nearly all foraging activity occurred within the upper two-thirds of the tree. The mean foraging height was 25.2 ft (7.7 m) in trees with a mean height of 32.8 ft (10.0 m).

Water Requirements

Riparian areas are frequently chosen for nesting sites.

Cover Requirements

Warbling vireos generally forage in any tree within their territory. Suitable cover includes deciduous trees and shrubs along streams where undergrowth and crown foliage provide adequate food and protection. One study reported that preferred habitat in Nevada was in trees 25 to 30 ft (7.6 to 9.1 m) in height having undergrowth and leaf litter.



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*Information taken from Ecoregion M3113 Handbook and Habitat Suitability Index Models, Wildlife Species Narratives (literature searches), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, various dates between 1978-1984.

Reproductive Requirements

The warbling vireo in Ontario nested in open habitats with isolated trees and small groves within 328.0 ft (100 m) of other foraging sites. Nest heights varied from 19.6 to 49.2 ft (6 to 15 m) with a mean nest height of 26.9 ft (8.2 m). Occasionally a nest will be placed in the lower branches of tall trees.

Special Habitat Requirements

No information regarding special habitat requirements was found in the literature.

Interspersion Requirements

One researcher observed a nest near a small clearing surrounded by a profusion of green shrubbery. The parent birds were rarely more than 120 ft (36.6 m) from the nest site from the time of nest completion until the young left the nest. No other information on interspersion needs was found in the literature.

Special Considerations

The warbling vireo is a migratory species that winters in Mexico and Central America.