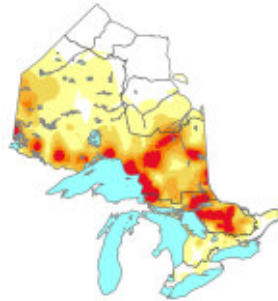


Canada Warbler Factsheet

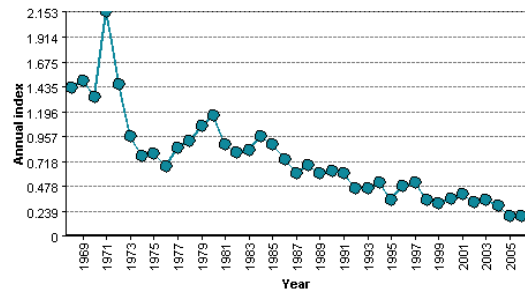
Boreal Bird Toolkit



Canada Warbler



Relative Abundance



Breeding Bird Survey Index Trend 1968-2006 (Canada)

Description and biology: The Canada Warbler is a medium-sized warbler (12-15 cm) with bluish-grey upperparts, bright yellow underparts, white eye rings, and a black “necklace” made up of a series of vertical black markings. This warbler feeds on a variety of insects and spiders using different hunting techniques such as foliage gleaning, ground foraging, and flycatching.

Habitat requirements: The Canada Warbler prefers cool, moist, mixed forests with a dense understorey. Suitable habitat typically includes a sphagnum moss component, and it is often found nesting near water. This wood-warbler is frequently associated with older-growth woodlands.

Natural history: This species is one of the last warblers to arrive in spring and one of the first to depart in early fall, spending relatively little time on the northern breeding grounds. It is sometimes referred to as the “Necklaced Warbler” based on appearance, Canadian Flycatcher, or Canadian Flycatching Warbler based on its foraging habits.

Conservation status: Of the North American and world population, 64% breed in Canada’s boreal forest. Breeding Bird Surveys reveal that the Canada Warbler declined significantly by 4.5% per year between 1968 and 2006 across Canada, and during the same time period declined by a near-significant 2.4% per year in Ontario. Results from the second Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas (2001-2005) show the species has declined by 17% (non-significant statistically) over twenty years in the Northern Shield region and by a statistically significant 10% in the adjacent Southern Shield. Partners in Flight designate the Canada Warbler as a watch list species of continental concern which would benefit from both continental and regional stewardship. The species was listed as “threatened” by COSEWIC in April 2008.

Environmental threats: Reasons for the decline in the Canada Warbler are not fully understood. One possibility is that forestry practices reduce the amount of suitable habitat by harvesting older-growth forests and removing dense understorey this warbler requires. During migration, collisions with stationary objects, such as communications towers, chimneys, tall buildings, and lighthouses are well documented causes of mortality. Habitat loss on wintering grounds in the northern Andes region is a potential factor.

Conservation opportunities: This species’ preference for mixed or coniferous forests with dense understorey makes it sensitive to any factors which reduce these characteristics, including certain forestry practices or extensive browse by ungulates. The Canada Warbler has been identified as “area-sensitive,” making it potentially vulnerable to habitat fragmentation. Maintenance of large contiguous blocks of older-growth and lowland forest would be expected to benefit this species, as would maintenance of habitats with closed-canopy and a well-developed shrub and herbaceous layer.

Boreal Bird Toolkit:

Toolkit and factsheet: © Wildlife Conservation Society Canada and G.G. Beck Ecological Consulting 2008

Breeding Bird Survey: courtesy Canadian Wildlife Service, volunteers & coordinators; www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/mgbc/trends

Abundance map and point count data: courtesy *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, 2001-2005*; www.birdsontario.org

Photo: © Jeff Nadler. See toolkit for literature cited.