

GENUS II.—SYLVICOLA, *Swains.* WOOD-WARBLER.

Bill short, straight, rather strong, tapering, scarcely broader than high at the base, compressed toward the end; upper mandible with its dorsal outline declinate and nearly straight, the tip slightly declinate, the edges overlapping, with a slight notch; lower mandible with the angle short and rounded, the dorsal line straight, the sides convex, the edges a little inclinate, the tip narrow. Nostrils basal, oval or oblong, partially concealed by the feathers. Head of ordinary size; neck short; body rather slender. Feet of ordinary length, rather slender; tarsus longer than the middle toe, much compressed, covered anteriorly with seven scutella, very sharp behind; toes of moderate length, slender, free, the outer united as far as the second joint, the hind toe proportionally large; claws moderate, well arched, much compressed, laterally grooved, very acute. Plumage soft and blended. Bristles at the base of the upper mandible feeble. Wings rather long, little curved, pointed; the second quill longest, the first and third slightly shorter. Tail rather long, emarginate.

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 THE YELLOW-CROWNED WOOD-WARBLER.

+SYLVICOLA CORONATA, *Lath.*

## PLATE LXXVI.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This very abundant species I observed in East Florida, on the 1st of March 1831, in full summer plumage. In South Carolina, no improvement on its winter dress could be seen on the 18th of the same month. On the 10th of April, many were procured by my friend BACHMAN and myself, in the neighbourhood of Charleston. They were in moult, especially about the head and neck, where the new feathers were still inclosed in their sheath; but so rapidly did the change take place, that, before a few days had elapsed, they were in full plumage.

During a winter spent in the Floridas, I saw these birds daily, and so had abundant opportunity of studying their manners. They were very social among themselves, skipped by day along the piazzas, balanced themselves in the air, opposite the sides of the houses, in search of spiders and insects,



rambled among the low bushes of the gardens, and often dived among the large cabbage-leaves, where they searched for worms and larvæ. At night they roosted on the branches of the orange trees, in the luxuriant groves so abundant in that country. Frequently, in the early part of warm mornings, I saw flocks of them fly off to sea until they were out of sight, and again observed their return to land about an hour after. This circumstance I considered as indicative of their desire to migrate, and as shewing that their journeys are performed by day.

In the beginning of May, I found them so abundant in Maine, that the skirts of the woods seemed alive with them. They appeared to be merely waiting for warmer weather, that they might resume their journey northwards. As we advanced towards Labrador, I observed them at every place where we happened to land. They were plentiful in the Magdaleine Islands; and when we landed on the Labrador coast, they were among the first birds observed by our party.

As Professor MACCULLOCH of Halifax, Nova Scotia, informed me, few breed in the province of Nova Scotia, nor had his sons, who are active collectors, ever found one of their nests in the vicinity of that town. I am indebted to his liberality for a nest with four eggs, which formed part of his fine collection. Although they are abundant in Labrador, we did not find any of their nests; but we had the good fortune to procure several young birds scarcely able to fly. The nest above mentioned was placed near the extremity of the branch of a low fir-tree, about five feet from the ground. It resembles that of the *Sylvia æstiva* of Latham, being firm, compact, the outer parts formed of silky fibres from different plants attached to the twigs near it by means of glutinous matter, mixed with stripes of the inner bark of some tree unknown to me. Within this is a deep and warm bed of thistle-down, and the inner layer consists of feathers and the fine hair of small quadrupeds. The eggs are rather large, of a light rosy tint, the shell thin and transparent; they are sparingly dotted with reddish-brown near the larger end, but in a circular manner, so that the extremity is unspotted.

This species feeds on insects, is an expert fly catcher, and a great devourer of caterpillars. During winter, however, its principal food consists of berries of various kinds, especially those of the Myrtle and Pokeweed. They also feed on the seeds of various grasses. When, at this season, a warm day occurs, and the insects are excited to activity, the Warblers are sure to be seen in pursuit of them. The rows of trees about the plantations are full of them, and, from the topmost to the lowest branches, they are seen gliding upwards, downwards, and in every direction, in full career after their prey, and seldom missing their aim. At this time of the year, they emit, at every movement, a single *tweet*, so very different from that of any other Warbler,



that one can instantly recognise the species by it among a dozen. They rarely enter the woodlands, but prefer the neighbourhood of cultivated or old fields, the nurseries, gardens, and trees about towns, villages, or farm-houses, or by the sides of roads. They are careless of man, allowing him to approach within a few yards, or even feet, without manifesting much alarm. As they breed so far north, it is probable that they raise only one brood in the season. They return south early in September, already clad in their winter dress.

YELLOW-RUMP WARBLER, *Sylvia coronata*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. ii. p. 138.

SYLVIA CORONATA, Bonap. Syn., p. 78.

YELLOW-CROWNED WARBLER, or MYRTLE BIRD, *Sylvia coronata*, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 361.

YELLOW-RUMP WARBLER, *Sylvia coronata*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. ii. p. 303.

Second quill longest, third scarcely shorter, first longer than fourth; tail slightly emarginate. Male with the upper parts deep ash-grey, streaked with black; crown, rump, and a patch on the sides of the body, rich yellow: secondary coverts, and first row of small coverts tipped with white, which forms two bars on the wing; quills dark brown, margined with light greyish-brown; tail feathers brownish-black, margined with ash-grey, the outer three on each side with a white patch on the inner web near the end; a slender white line over the eye; feathers of the eyelids white; lore and cheek black; throat white; lower neck, fore part of breast and sides variegated with black, the tips of the feathers being white; the rest of the lower parts white. Female without the yellow spot on the crown, although the feathers there are tinged with that colour at the base; the upper parts tinged with light brown, the yellow spots on the sides and rump paler.

Male,  $5\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ .

From Texas northward, and throughout the interior. Extremely common. Migratory.

#### IRIS VERSICOLOR.

IRIS VERSICOLOR, Willd. Sp. Pl., vol. i. p. 233. Pursch, Fl. Amer. Sept., vol. i. p. 29.—

TRIANDRIA MONOGYNIA, Linn.—IRIDES, Juss.

Beardless; the stem round, flexuous, equal in height to the leaves, which are ensiform; the stigmas equalling the inner petals; capsules ovate, with their angles obtuse. This Iris is extremely common in all the swampy parts of the Southern States, and extends far up along the Mississippi. In many places I have seen beds of a quarter of an acre. It is cultivated here and there in gardens.





*Yellow-crowned Wood-Warbler.*

*Iris versicolor.*

1. Male 2 Young.



Audubon, John James. 1841. "The Yellow-Crowned Wood-Warbler, *Sylvicola coronata*, Lath. [Pl. 76]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 2, 23–25. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319189>.

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