

THE HEMLOCK WARBLER.

†SYLVICOLA PARUS, *Wils.*

PLATE LXXXIII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

It is to the persevering industry of WILSON that we are indebted for the discovery of this bird. He has briefly described the male, of which he had obtained but a single specimen. Never having met with it until I visited the Great Pine Forest, where that ardent ornithologist found it, I followed his track in my rambles there, and had not spent a week among the gigantic hemlocks which ornament that interesting part of our country, before I procured upwards of twenty specimens. I had therefore a fair opportunity of observing its habits, which I shall now attempt to describe.

The tallest of the hemlock pines are the favourite haunts of this species. It appears first among the highest branches early in May, breeds there, and departs in the beginning of September. Like the Blue Yellow-back Warbler, its station is ever amidst the thickest foliage of the trees, and with as much agility as its diminutive relative, it seeks its food by ascending from one branch to another, examining most carefully the under parts of each leaf as it proceeds. Every insect that escapes is followed on wing, and quickly secured. It now and then, as if for variety or sport, makes a downward flight, alights on a smaller tree, surveys it for awhile, and again ascends to a higher station. During the early part of autumn it frequents, with its young, the margins of rivulets, where insects are then more abundant.

Its notes are sweet and mellow, and although not numerous, are easily distinguished from those of any other Warbler. Like a true *Sylvia*, it is often seen hanging at the end of a branch, searching for insects. It never alights on the trunk of a tree, and in this particular differs from every other species of its genus. Its food is altogether of insects.

To the inimitable skill of the worthy JEDIAH IRISH in the use of the rifle, I am indebted for the possession of a nest of this bird. On discovering one of the birds, we together watched it for hours, and at last had the good fortune to see itself and its mate repeatedly enter a thick cluster of leaves, where we concluded their nest must be placed. The huntsman's gun was silently raised to his shoulder, the explosion followed in course, and as I saw the twig whirling downwards, I experienced all the enthusiastic anxiety ever present with me on such occasions. Picking up the branch, I found in it a nest,



R. F.

Hemlock Warbler
Dwarf Maple. Acer Spicatum.

1. Male 2 Female.

Dendroica blackburniae
♂ & ♀ in autumn!

containing three naked young, with as yet sealed eyelids. The nest was small, compact, somewhat resembling that of the American Goldfinch. It was firmly attached to the leaves of the hemlock twig, which appeared as if intentionally closed together over and around it, so as to conceal it from all enemies. Lichens, dry leaves of hemlock, and slender twigs formed its exterior. It was delicately lined with the fur of the hare and racoon; and the young lay imbedded in the softest feathers of the Ruffed Grouse. The parents soon became aware of the mischief which we had done; they descended, glided over our heads, manifested the most tender affection and the deepest sorrow, and excited our sympathy so far, that I carefully placed their tender offspring on a fallen log, leaving them to the care of their kind protectors, and contenting myself with their cradle.

I have since met with this species in the State of Maine, and have seen several individuals in Newfoundland; but never again have I found a nest, nor can I say any thing regarding its eggs. Confined as it is to the interior of the forests, I cannot even tell you more respecting its mode of flying than what I have already related, never having observed it performing a longer flight than from one tree to another.

The bird described under the name of *Sylvia autumnalis* by WILSON, BONAPARTE, NUTTALL, myself, and all the compilers, is only the young of this species, *Sylvia parus*. Of this I gave intimation to the Prince of Musignano when in London.

HEMLOCK WARBLER, *Sylvia parus*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. v. p. 114. Male.

AUTUMNAL WARBLER, *Sylvia autumnalis*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. iii. p. 65. Young.

SYLVIA PARUS, Bonap. Syn., p. 82.

SYLVIA AUTUMNALIS, Bonap. Syn., p. 74.

HEMLOCK WARBLER, *Sylvia parus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. ii. p. 205. Adult.

AUTUMNAL WARBLER, *Sylvia autumnalis*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. i. p. 447.

Wings of moderate length, with the outer two quills almost equal, the first longest, the third little shorter; tail very slightly emarginate. Male with the upper parts yellowish-green, spotted with dusky, the head greenish-yellow; secondary coverts and first row of small coverts largely tipped with white; quills and tail-feathers blackish-brown; primaries narrowly edged with greenish-white, secondaries broadly with white; outer two tail-feathers with the greater part white; a bright yellow streak over the eye; a dusky band on the lore and behind the eye; fore neck and breast bright yellow, the rest of the lower parts white, the sides streaked with black. Female similar to the male, but rather paler. Young with the upper parts light olive-brown; a pale line over the eye, which is encircled by a narrow line of whitish; wings and tail dark brown, the former with two brownish-white bands, the

quills edged with brownish-white, the two outer tail-feathers with a white patch on the inner web; the lower parts dull white, tinged on the neck with yellow, on the sides with greyish-brown.

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

Middle districts. Rather common. Migratory.

THE DWARF MAPLE.

ACER SPICATUM.

This is a low shrubby tree, which does not attain a greater height at most than fifteen or twenty feet. It abounds along the rocky margins of creeks or rivers, especially those meandering at the bases of the Alleghany mountains.

BLACK-THROATED GREEN WOOD-WARBLER.

† SYLVICOLA VIRENS, *Lath.*

PLATE LXXXIV.—MALE AND FEMALE.

I have traced this species from the Texas to Newfoundland, although at considerable intervals, along our Atlantic coasts, it being of rare occurrence or wanting in some parts, while in others it is abundant; but in no portion of the United States have I met with it so plentiful as around Eastport in Maine, where I saw it in the month of May. Many remain all summer in that State, as well as in Massachusetts, and the northern parts of New York; and some are found at that season even in the higher portions of Pennsylvania. On the coast of Labrador it was not observed by me or any of my party, and it is not mentioned by Dr. RICHARDSON as having been seen in the Fur Countries. Its habits are intermediate between those of many of our Warblers and the Vireos, the notes of which latter it in a great measure assumes. It usually makes its appearance in Maryland and New Jersey about the first week of May, when it is observed to be actively engaged in searching for food, regardless as it were of the presence of man. Its movements when proceeding northward are rapid, and it advances through the woods solitarily or nearly so, it being seldom that more than two or three are found together at this time, or indeed during the breeding season, at which period each pair appropriates to itself a certain extent of ground. Its retrograde



R. F.

Hemlock Warbler
Dwarf Maple. Acer Spicatum.

1. Male 2 Female.

Dendroica blackburniae
♂ & ♀ in autumn!



Audubon, John James. 1841. "The Hemlock Warbler, *Sylvicola parus*, Wils. [Pl. 83]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 2, 40–42. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319196>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/124834>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319196>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/319196>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Biodiversity Heritage Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.