THE YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, OR GREENLET.

+VIREO FLAVIFRONS, Vieill.

PLATE CCXXXVIII.—MALE.

While the small White-eyed Vireo rambles among the low bushes and brambles of the fields of all parts of the United States, the Yellow-throated species takes possession of the forest, and gleans with equal ease among the branches of the tallest trees, to which it seems to give a marked preference during the spring and summer. It is fond of the quietest solitudes, and in its habits is nearly allied to the Red-eyed Vireo. Like it also, it is a slow, careful, and industrious bird, never imitating the petulant, infantile, and original (if I may so speak) freaks of its gay relative, the White-eyed. It is more silent than either of the species above mentioned, although its notes have a strong resemblance to those of the Red-eyed. These notes are more measured and plaintive than those of any of its tribe, sometimes consisting of sounds resembling the syllables *prêe-â*, *preê-â*, rising and falling in sweet modulation. One might imagine them the notes of a bird lost in the woods, and they make a strong impression on the mind of the listener. Now and then the sight of his mate seems to animate the male, when he repeats the same syllables eight or ten times in succession. When sitting pensively on a twig, as if waiting for an invitation to sing, it utters a kind of whining sound, and in autumn, as well as during its retrograde march towards the south, it becomes quite silent.

When searching for food, it ascends the branches of trees by regular short hops, examining with care every leaf and bud in its way, never leaving a branch for another until it is quite assured that nothing remains on it. When flying to some distance, its motions, although quick, are irregular, and it passes among the boughs at a moderate height.

This species is at all times extremely rare in Louisiana, where I have seen it only during early spring or late in the autumn. My friend BACHMAN has never observed it in South Carolina. Indeed, it is only from Pennsylvania eastward that it is met with in any quantity. During summer it feeds entirely on insects, devouring with equal pleasure caterpillars, small moths, wasps, and wild bees. The summer over, it ranges among the low bushes in search of berries, accompanied by its young, and at that time enters the orchards and gardens even of our villages and cities. It arrives in

Pennsylvania and New Jersey about the end of April, and in Massachusetts and Maine about a month later.

The nest of the Yellow-throated Vireo is truly a beautiful fabric. It sometimes extends to five or six inches in depth, and as it is always placed at the extremity of small twigs, it is very conspicuous. It is attached to these twigs with much care by slender threads of vines, or those of other trees at its upper edges, mixed with the silk of different caterpillars, and enclosed with lichens, so neatly attached by means of saliva, that the whole outer surface seems formed of them, while the inner bed, which is about two and a half inches in diameter, by an inch and a half in depth, is lined with delicate grasses, between which and the bottom coarser materials are employed to fill the space, such as bits of hornets' nests, dry leaves, and wool. The eggs, which are four or five in number, are of an elongated form, white, spotted with reddish-brown or black. The young are out about the beginning of July. In Maine it raises one brood only, but farther south not unfrequently two.

YELLOW-THROATED FLYCATCHER, *Muscicapa sylvicola*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. ii. p. 117.

VIREO FLAVIFRONS, Bonap. Syn., p. 70.

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 302.

YELLOW-THROATED FLYCATCHER OR VIREO, *Vireo flavifrons*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. ii. p. 119; vol. v. p. 428.

Male.

Upper parts light green, the rump, scapulars, and smaller wing-coverts bluish-grey; quills and coverts brownish-black; two bands of white on the wing, formed by the tips of the secondary coverts and first row of small coverts; primaries narrower, edged with yellowish-green, secondaries broadly with white; tail-feathers brownish-black, the outer edged with white; sides of the neck yellowish-green; a line over the eye, throat, and breast yellow, the rest of the lower parts white.

Male, $5\frac{3}{4}$, $9\frac{1}{2}$.

From Texas to Nova Scotia. Rare in the interior, more abundant in the middle Atlantic districts. Migratory.

The egg of this bird measures thirteen-sixteenths of an inch in length, by five-eighths, is of a slightly elongated form, oval, from the smaller end being rather rounded, and is marked with a few scattered spots of a deep brownish-crimson, on a beautiful flesh-coloured ground.

In a male preserved in spirits, the roof of the mouth is slightly concave, with two palatal ridges, and an anterior median ridge; the posterior aperture of the nares is linear-oblong, $5\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in length, its margins papillate. The tongue is rather short, $4\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths long, narrow, triangular, very thin,

emarginate and papillate at the base, flat above, tapering to a horny, deeply slit, lacerated point. The width of the mouth is $4\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. The œsophagus is 1 inch 9 twelfths long, funnel-shaped at the commencement, at the distance of half an inch its width is $1\frac{3}{4}$ twelfths, and thus continues until it enters the thorax, soon after which it enlarges to form the proventriculus, of which the breadth is 3 twelfths. The stomach is of moderate size, of a broadly elliptical form, considerably compressed; its length 6 twelfths, its breadth 5 twelfths, its muscles pretty large and distinct, its tendons of moderate size; the epithelium thin, reddish-brown, with eight longitudinal rugæ on one side, and five on the other. The belt of proventricular glandules is $2\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths broad. The intestine is $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches long, from $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths to 1 twelfth in width, the rectum 2 twelfths at first, the cloaca globular, about 4 twelfths; the cœca $1\frac{1}{4}$ twelfths long, about $\frac{1}{4}$ twelfth wide, and placed at the distance of 9 twelfths from the extremity.

The trachea is 1 inch 2 twelfths long, from 1 twelfth to $\frac{3}{4}$ twelfth in width, moderately flattened, its rings rather firm, about 50, with 2 dimidiate; the muscles disposed as in the Thrushes and Warblers, there being four pairs of inferior laryngeal on each side, besides the sterno-tracheal. The bronchi short, slender, of about 10 half rings.

THE SWAMP SNOWBALL.

HYDRANGEA QUERCIFOLIA, Willd., Sp. Pl., vol. ii. p. 634. Pursh, Flor. Amer. Sept., vol. i. p. 309.—DECANDRIA DIGYNIA, Linn.—SAXIFRAGÆ, Juss.

This plant is found on the broken sandy banks bordering small water-courses, and is abundant in such situations in the uplands of Louisiana. It seldom grows beyond the size of a bush. The blossoms are lasting, and although without odour, are pleasing to the eye, on account of their pure white colour when first expanded; they dry on the stalks, retaining their form, and remaining until winter. The species is characterized by its oblong, deeply sinuate leaves, which are downy beneath, and its radiated loosely thyriform cymes.

H. F.
 Yellow-throated Vireo, or Greenlet.
 Male.
 Swamp Snowball. *Hydrangea quercifolia*.

Audubon, John James. 1842. "The Yellow-Throated Vireo, or Greenlet, Vireo flavifrons, Vieill. [Pl. 238]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 4, 141–143. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319351>.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/125069>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319351>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/319351>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries

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>.