

# ONTARIO BIRDS

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Reports of rare birds (those for which the OBRC requires documentation—see supplement to *Ontario Birds* 5[3]) should be sent to:

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c/o Ontario Field Ornithologists  
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## Ontario Birds

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## Editorial Policy

*Ontario Birds* is the journal of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Its aim is to provide a vehicle for the documentation of the birds of Ontario. We encourage the submission of full length articles or short notes on the status of bird species in Ontario, significant provincial or county distributional records, tips on bird identification, behavioural observations of birds in Ontario, location guides to significant birdwatching areas in Ontario, book reviews and similar

material of interest on Ontario birds. We do not accept submissions dealing with "listing" and we discourage Seasonal Reports of bird sightings as these are covered by *Bird Finding in Canada* and *American Birds*, respectively. Distributional records of species for which the Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC) requires documentation must be accepted by them before they can be published in *Ontario Birds*.

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## Letters to the Editor

### Editorial policy of *Ontario Birds* breached

Some comments are warranted on the accuracy of the note by Geoffrey Carpentier (*Ontario Birds* 7:33-34) entitled "Western Kingbird nesting in Rainy River District". Some of the points worth detailing include:

- The pair "discovered" by the author *et al.* was actually at a known site and merely returned for a subsequent nesting.
- The nest in 1988 (as in 1987 and 1989) was not in a Manitoba maple (*Acer negundo*) as stated, but rather in a species of willow (*Salix* sp.)
- No source is stated for the record of three Western Kingbirds on 6-14 July 1983, which is listed as an additional summer record; since the dates conflict with those already published (3-8 July 1983) by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (*Ontario Birds* 3:10) confusion has now been created as to what dates are indeed actually correct.
- Mention of another bird observed (26 May 1981) 20km south of the above record clearly puts this well into adjacent Minnesota, even though it is an Ontario record.
- The author correctly points out that a prior 1943 Ontario

nesting cannot be considered certain as a description of the adults does not exist, but does not hesitate to state that his observation "constitutes the second confirmed nesting of the Western Kingbird in Ontario" even though no description of the adults or photograph of the nest has been presented!

In addition to the above, this record has been published prior to being reviewed by the Ontario Bird Records Committee (Robert Curry, pers. comm., 1989), which is against the stated editorial policy of the Ontario Field Ornithologists (see recent back covers of *Ontario Birds*). In summary, all of these errors could have been avoided if the editor had compared some of the data to those previously published; if stated policies of the OFO had been followed; and if the paper had been sent to outside reviewers before publication. At present, however, I believe the value of this type of article is nil if the majority of information presented is inaccurate.

Alan Wormington  
Leamington, Ontario

### Alternate song of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler

On a recent field trip, I was surprised to learn how few birders recognize, or even have heard, the alternate song of the Blue-winged

and Golden-winged Warbler.

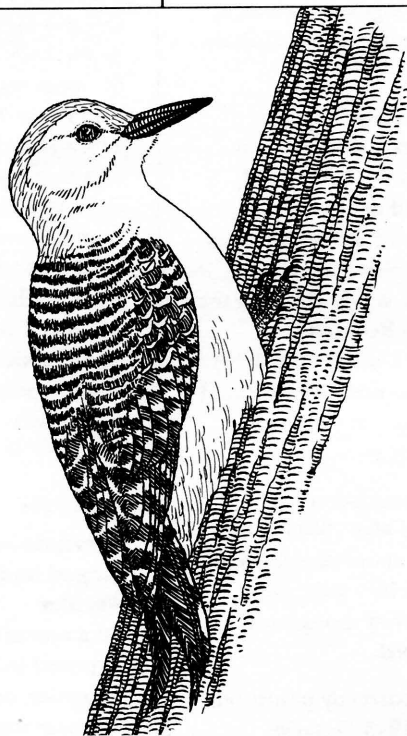
This song type, given by both species, is primarily a dusk-only variant and is, as far as I can tell, undescribed in the major literature.

The song type bears a structural and tonal resemblance to the song of the Cerulean Warbler and, as such, poses a pitfall to the neophyte birder. The song is a four-note arrangement, best described as "ti ti ti zeee". It is delivered rapidly, the final note having a flat, buzzy tone. To the trained ear, the song of the Cerulean Warbler is somewhat less rapid, with the introductory notes slightly lower and longer (giving the song its chanting quality).

This alternate song type of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warbler is sung quite frequently by territorial birds, primarily at dusk but at other times as well (pers. obs.).

It is surprising that most (all?) bird books ignore this song type and that even experienced field observers are often confused by it. Although call note and habitat will usually distinguish Ceruleans from Blue-wingeds and Golden-wingeds, a better understanding of song types would reduce confusion that can, and does, occur.

J. M. Holdsworth  
Woodstock, Ontario



J.S.

Red-bellied Woodpecker/Drawing by John Schmelefske