

regionally, producing "dialects." The song's various descriptions include *very, very, pleased to meetcha*, or *see, see, see Miss Beecher*. There is also a rambling song and various *tchip* and *zeet* calls. Displays include a "fluff" display with feathers puffed out, and a "wings out" display with closed wings held away from the body. In aggressive displays, a male may fly in circles toward another male, but they lack the exaggerated moth-like flight of some warblers.

The species is monogamous, and the nest is a cup of fine plant materials lined by even finer ones. Spiderwebs are often used to help bind plant fibers together. The nest is generally in a low bush, one to three feet from the ground, and the four eggs are generally whitish, variously marked with brown. The female incubates during the nearly two weeks until hatching, but both parents feed the young and give distraction displays, with fluttering wings and fanned tail, should an intruder approach the nest. Fledging occurs in ten to twelve days.

These little warblers eat mostly insects and spiders, but occasionally take fruit and seeds. They are fairly stereotyped or inflexible in their foraging behavior, specializing in gleaning caterpillars from the underside of leaves in low to midlevel shrubs and lower branches of trees, although they occasionally hawk insects. The lack of flexibility in their foraging behavior is attributed to the fact that they forage in similar habitat on both the wintering and breeding grounds. They are solitary and territorial on their wintering grounds, but will join mixed-species foraging flocks, as the flocks pass through their territories.

Chestnut-sided Warblers are still common in their preferred habitat, but they have nonetheless experienced a steady decline since the 1940s. They are frequently parasitized by cowbirds, which often occupy edge habitat. They also may be the victim of deforestation on their wintering grounds, which in recent decades has replaced regenerating shrubby forest where they thrive with grasslands for cattle, or with sugar cane production, or other agricultural practices. We can only hope that the influences of man, which were so advantageous during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, do not bring them full circle back to the rarity of Audubon's day. W. E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE OUR COVER ARTIST

Julie Zickefoose and her husband, Bill Thompson III, recently expanded their nature preserve in Appalachian Ohio to eighty acres, which is contiguous with a neighbor's eighty protected acres of woods and meadow. Thirteen warbler species breed there, as does a thriving population of box turtles, which Julie is studying. As a contributing editor, Julie continues to write and draw for *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and she recently received an Apex Award for Excellence in Writing for "A South African Tapestry" in the *BWD* March/April 1995 issue. Julie can be reached at Indigo Hill, Route 1, Box 270, Whipple, Ohio 45788.

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