

and weed stems, often with caterpillar silk, lined with down or plant down. The clutch of four reddish or lavender-spotted grayish eggs is incubated by the female alone. Hatching probably occurs after 12-13 days, and fledging about 10 days later. Both parents feed the young.

The foraging of Yellow-throated Warblers is "creeper-like," gleaning foliage and probing crevices, bark, pine-cones, and needle clusters with their long bills. They occasionally hawk insects, flying out and taking prey on the wing. On their wintering grounds they are notoriously tame, foraging on buildings and occasionally entering houses in search of flies and other insects. I well remember a Yellow-throated Warbler spending a January morning climbing about the railings and walls of the Pelican Beach hotel in Dangriga, Belize, Central America — a delightful little sprite that showed no fear of humans whatsoever. Yellow-throated Warblers apparently eat mostly insects and spiders, but their dietary habits are poorly known.

The population structure of Yellow-throated Warblers is somewhat enigmatic, with a history of retraction and expansion of their breeding range for no apparent reason. The population is currently stable or increasing in most areas, and their range appears to be expanding northwards. They are rarely parasitized by cowbirds, but as nocturnal migrants, some are inevitably killed in collisions with T.V. towers and other structures. They have been reported killed by entanglement in spiderwebs! As with most species, future habitat alteration is a potential threat, but on their wintering grounds they are foraging generalists and seem to do well in disturbed, second-growth woodlands.

With the expansion of the range of the Yellow-throated Warbler northward along the Atlantic Coast, it may be that we in New England will have our spring-time birding brightened more frequently by the appearance of these magnificent little birds.

—William E. Davis, Jr.

### ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

**Julie Zickefoose** finds her niche on an 80-acre sanctuary near Whipple, Ohio, in the foothills of the Appalachians. Here she draws her inspiration from the woods and meadows where a dozen species of warblers, woodcock, Whip-poor-wills, and Yellow-breasted Chats make their home. Yellow-throated Warblers sing their descending songs from sycamores along nearby creeks.

Julie writes and paints regularly for *Bird Watcher's Digest* and *Country Journal*, specializing in mood pieces with a dash of natural history. She and her husband, Bill Thompson, III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, love to take three-year-old daughter Phoebe birding wherever they go.