

RECORD OF A BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER WINTERING IN FLORIDA

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At approximately 0930 hr on 26 February 2000, Dave Goodwin, Erik Haney, and I were birding in Matheson Hammock County Park, Miami-Dade County, Florida, when we came upon a flock of wood-warblers in an oak (*Quercus* spp.) grove. Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) were most numerous, but the flock contained seven other species, including a Black-throated Green Warbler (*D. virens*). Aware that no published or archival material verified the occurrence of this species in Florida during the winter months (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992, Stevenson and Anderson 1994, reiterated in Pranty 1994, 1995, 1996), I photographed the bird (Fig. 1) from 6 to 8 m away with a Yashica 230-AF camera, Sigma 75-300 mm lens, and Kodak Gold Max film.

I noted the following field marks: bright yellow sides of the head, olive eye-stripes and ear patches, greenish-olive crown, nape, and back, black chin, throat, and flank streaking, bold white wing bars on black wings, and white underparts with pale yellow patches on the upper breast and vent. These field marks identify the bird as a male Black-throated Green Warbler in spring plumage (Dunn and Garrett 1997, Dickinson 1999). There are two subspecies of *D. virens* (AOU 1957, Dunn and Garrett 1997), but subspecific identification is difficult in the field, and many authors consider the Black-throated Green Warbler to be monotypic (Dunn and Garrett 1997). The wood-warbler occasionally uttered a sharp and somewhat high *chip* note as it moved about. It foraged in the lowest branches of an oak, and captured lepidopteran larvae at least four times while under observation. I learned later that P. William Smith (*in litt.*) and others saw two Black-throated Green Warblers in the same oak grove on 27 January 2000, which probably indicates that the individual I photographed indeed was wintering.

Robertson and Woolfenden (1992) called *D. virens*, "a winter visitor virtually throughout [the state] . . . regular, rare to locally fairly common in the Keys, and the southern and central peninsula, becoming very rare to rare, occasional to irregular northward (but possibly not verifiable Dec-Feb!)." P. William Smith (*in* Pranty 1994) claimed that the Black-throated Green Warbler, "probably is the most frequent of the 'rare' [South] Florida [wintering wood-warblers], apparently more numerous and widespread than American Redstart" (*Setophaga ruticilla*). Dozens of winter reports exist for *D. virens* in Florida (e.g., 58 or more individuals listed in the Field Observations section of *Florida Field Naturalist* between winter 1989-1990 and winter 1998-1999, inclusive), but there is no published evidence to indicate that any reports are verifiable (*sensu* Robertson and Woolfenden 1992).

The largest numbers of Black-throated Green Warblers listed in Stevenson and Anderson (1994) during winter are 11 individuals on the Fort Lauderdale Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in 1992, eight on the Lower Keys CBC in 1967 and seven on the 1991 CBC, and seven on the Fort Lauderdale CBC in 1979. A comparable count published in *Florida Field Naturalist* is seven individuals at Delray Beach, Palm Beach County, on 26 February 1995 (B. Hope *in* Pranty 1995).

Extreme dates of occurrence for Black-throated Green Warblers in Florida based upon specimens are 3 March to 13 May, and 3 October to 12 November (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). This note (Fig. 1) therefore provides the first published record of a Black-throated Green Warbler occurring in Florida during the winter months. Copies of some of my photographs have been archived at Tall Timbers Research Station (TTRS P 717).



Figure 1. Male Black-throated Green Warbler at Matheson Hammock County Park, Miami-Dade County, Florida, 26 February 2000. This provides the first published, verifiable winter record for the state. Photograph by Bill Pranty.

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