

WARBLING VIREOS POSSIBLY BREEDING IN ISSAQUENA COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Curtis O. Nelms¹, Daniel J. Twedt¹, and Jackie Henne-Kerr²

¹National Biological Service
2524 South Frontage Road, Suite B
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39180

and

²James River Timber Corp.
Rt. 2, Box 350
Rolling Fork, Mississippi 39159

Warbling Vireos (*Vireo gilvus*) apparently maintained territories throughout the 1994 breeding season in cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) plantations near Fidler in Issaquena County, Mississippi. During the first year of a three-year study on the productivity and survival of Neotropical migrant songbirds in mixed bottomland hardwood forests and cottonwood plantations in the Mississippi alluvial valley, we regularly observed Warbling Vireos while conducting point counts and searching for nests in the cottonwood plantations. Our four 10 ha cottonwood plantation study plots are situated in 4-year-old stands in the Fidler Managed Forest, which is owned by James River Timber Corporation. Although Warbling Vireo males seemed to be actively engaged in territorial defense through mid-July, we were unable to verify active Warbling Vireo nests on any of the four plots.

Tomlinson (1977) also reported Warbling Vireos throughout the breeding season in 3-6-year-old cottonwood plantations in Bolivar County, Mississippi, in 1975 and 1976. He estimated from 0 to 3 Warbling Vireo territories per 10 ha on his study sites. Tomlinson's study sites were approximately 100 km north of our study sites.

Lowery (1974) noted that Warbling Vireos favor large trees, particularly cottonwoods, along river banks. In a summary of available information on

Warbling Vireos, Hamel (1992:253) describes the birds as being found "strictly in open mature hardwoods; restricted in the South to open hardwoods along rivers and large streams; do not occur in forests, but only where hardwoods line streams and rivers in open country." DeGraff et al. (1991:382) described special habitat requirements of the Warbling Vireo as being "scattered deciduous trees or wooded streambanks." Both DeGraff et al. (1991) and Hamel (1992) indicated that Warbling Vireos would not be found in mixed bottomland hardwood forests, as was the case in our study and that of Tomlinson (1977). Young cottonwood plantations, however, also seem to meet the Warbling Vireo's habitat requirement for open deciduous forests.

LITERATURE CITED

- DeGraff, R.M., V.E. Scott, R.H. Hamre, L. Ernst, and S.H. Anderson. 1991. Forest and rangeland birds of the United States: natural history and habitat use. USDA Forest Service, Agricultural Handbook 688. 625 pp.
- Hamel, P.B. 1992. The land manager's guide to the birds of the South. The Nature Conservancy, Southeastern Region, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. 437 pp.
- Lowery, G.H. 1974. Louisiana birds. Louisiana State Univ. Press, Baton Rouge.
- Tomlinson, W.H. 1977. The effects of even-aged cottonwood monocultures on nongame birds and Bobwhite Quail. M.S. thesis, Mississippi State Univ., Mississippi State.