

VERMIVORA CHRYSOPTERA MATED WITH
VERMIVORA PINUS.

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The occurrence of the Blue-winged Warbler in Massachusetts is sufficiently rare to cause comment. Horace W. Wright¹ mentioned six recorded observations of the bird in Massachusetts, and reported the nesting of a pair in Sudbury, Mass. Four of these six were quoted from Howe and Allen's 'Birds of Massachusetts,' one from Wells W. Cooke's 'Distribution and Migration of North American Warblers'; and one is reported by Guy Emerson.² Since 1909 there are several published records: Tyler³ in 1913; Faxon⁴ in 1913; Allen⁵ in 1919. Mr. Wright and I caught a glimpse of a Blue-winged Warbler in 1919, near the old nesting site of 1909. I have the impression that this bird is becoming more abundant in Massachusetts; but it may be that the increased number of observers accounts for this impression.

With regard to the nesting in Massachusetts of the Blue-winged Warbler, Wright's published record is the only one I can find, with the exception of the interbreeding reported by Faxon, and mentioned below.

The interbreeding of the Blue-winged and Golden-winged Warblers has been reported several times. Once by Jno. H. Sage⁶ in 1889 from Portland, Conn.; once by Jesse C. A. Meeker⁷ in 1906 from Danbury, Conn.; and once, by Walter Faxon⁴ in 1913, from Lexington, Mass. Interbreeding between Brewster's, or rarely Lawrence's and either the Blue-winged, or Golden-winged, is more commonly reported: Granger,⁸ Boston, Mass., 1907, Sherman,⁹ Roslindale, Mass., 1910; Carter and Howland,¹⁰ Wyanokie,

¹ Auk, 1909, p. 337.

² Auk, 1902, p. 291.

³ Auk, 1913, p. 435.

⁴ Mem. Mus. Comp. Zool., Aug. 1913.

⁵ Auk, 1919, p. 292.

⁶ Auk, 1889, p. 279.

⁷ Auk, 1906, p. 104.

⁸ Auk, 1907, p. 343.

⁹ Auk, 1910, p. 443.

¹⁰ Auk, 1923, p. 423.

New Jersey, 1922; Chapman,¹ Englewood, N. J., 1887, and 1892; Beebe,² New York City, 1903; Sage,³ Portland, Conn., 1894; Faxon,⁴ Lexington, Mass. Faxon has published numerous reports regarding the annual interbreeding of these birds in Lexington, Mass.

The purpose of this communication is to report the breeding of a male Golden-winged Warbler with a female Blue-winged Warbler in Newton Center, Mass. I can add nothing to the controversy over the origin of Brewster's Warbler; but the fact of the interbreeding itself seemed worth of record.

Every morning during the spring migration, I take a short census of the birds on my two, and the adjoining two acres of the rather overgrown bushy, cedar and hickory besprinkled country on Dudley Road in Newton Center, Mass. On May 19, 1926, I caught a glimpse of a Blue-winged Warbler. A male Golden-winged Warbler, which had been constantly present for about ten days, immediately gave chase, whether in a spirit of warring or wooing I could not tell, and both birds disappeared in the shrubbery.

The Blue-winged Warbler was again seen the next day. The plumage was typical of *Vermivora pinus*. Because of the slight dullness of coloring and the lack of song, I assumed the bird to be a female.

On May 22, the bird was again seen, this time in company with the male Golden-winged. The latter appeared to be an absolutely typical male *Vermivora chrysoptera*. Although he frequently sang both the songs of this species he more usually chose the common, slow, insect-like variation. The Blue-winged soon appeared with nesting material in her beak. Finally, I watched her drop to the ground for a moment, and the nest was found.

The nest on this day was nearly completed. It formed a deep cup, with its base on the ground, in a rather dense border along a stone wall, and was composed of leaves, and bits of cedar bark, and lined with grass. It differed in no way from the usual descriptions.

¹ Auk, 1887, p. 348; 1892, p. 302.

² Auk, 1904, p. 387.

³ Auk, 1895, p. 307.

⁴ Mem. Mus. Comp. Zool. Aug., 1913.

On May 25 the nest was probably completed. May 27 the first egg was laid. It was colored a very pale blue, lightly spotted, and very pointed on one end. An egg was laid every day after this, always before nine o'clock, until a total of six was reached. On May 28, what appeared to be the act of coitus between the two birds was observed. The last egg was laid June 1, and setting began the next day. The young appeared on June 14, an incubation period of 13 days.

During the nestling period, as luck would have it, my work kept me extremely busy, and I had little time for observation. I watched both parents feed the young, bringing the apparently inevitable small green caterpillar. I could distinguish nothing remarkable about the young birds. They all looked alike although the light was always poor.

On the morning of the ninth day, the nest was empty. No sign either of parents or young has since been found, in spite of protracted search.

I was therefore keenly disappointed not to have been able to follow the young birds through to their first full plumage, in order to determine the type of hybrid produced. I can only hope that the birds will make this region a regular breeding place, as Mr. Faxon's birds have done in Lexington. On looking back, I feel that we should have banded the young birds, though I feared at the time that we might by so doing, permanently drive away the parents.

I have, therefore, nothing to add to our knowledge of this interesting group of birds, except to record another instance of known interbreeding between the two species, *Vermivora chrysoptera* and *Vermivora pinus*.

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