



BIRD OF THE MONTH - AUGUST



YELLOW WARBLER

Warblers are generally recognized as the tiny, flashing, colorful jewels of the forest. They are typically few in number and often artfully conceal themselves until the male decides to dramatically reveal his presence in vibrant song. Each species of warbler has a unique, memorable song that signals his arrival, his presence, and his intention. The distinctive, repeated, whistled-note song of the Yellow Warbler is often remembered with the mnemonic “sweet, sweet, sweet, I’m so sweet!”



The Yellow Warbler’s bright, sunny coloring along with its sparkling song are a delight to the eye and music to the ear as locally breeding, as well as migrating, Yellow Warblers make their presence known in the Urban Forest.

The male Yellow Warbler is noted for its vibrant yellow plumage with fine chestnut breast streaks. Females and immatures are a much drabber yellow but the beady black eye and stout bill help to identify the species.

Yellow Warblers thrive in a riparian habitat where nearby bubbling streams and waterways are edged with willows, sycamores and other deciduous trees providing abundant insects and nutritious caterpillars to feast upon as they flit nervously through the thicket offering snatched glimpses of dazzling yellow feathers.

The female builds a small round nest in the leafy tree tops for her small clutch of eggs. Unfortunately that nest is often surreptitiously targeted by the female Brown-headed Cowbird, a nest parasite, who will secretly, quickly lay her own egg in that nest to be incubated, hatched and

fed unwittingly by the Yellow Warbler parents alongside their own smaller, more vulnerable chicks. The nest parasitism of the Brown-headed Cowbird, along with a dramatic loss of suitable nesting habitat has led to significant population declines of Yellow Warblers.

We value the role of the Yellow Warbler in keeping crop destroying insect and caterpillar populations in check just as we welcome their striking beauty and vibrant song in our parks and forests. Watch and listen attentively for this beguiling songster as you stroll through the towering trees of the Urban Forest.

A dedicated team of birders survey and tally all the birds and bird species each month, producing a report viewable on the website. To learn more about the fascinating range of distinctive birds appearing in the Urban Forest and along the Shipley to Shore Nature Trail, visit:

hbtrees.org/urban-forest-2/bird-watching-in-the-urban-forest

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