

FIRST DOCUMENTED NESTING FOR THE NASHVILLE WARBLER IN SASKATCHEWAN

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While my wife and I were walking through a small black spruce bog near the Greenbush River, 20 km west of Hudson Bay on 5 July 1990, a warbler flew up at my feet. I looked for some time before I spotted the nest containing five eggs – white, speckled and blotched with chestnut red, and well concealed in a hollow in sphagnum moss on the side of a hummock. Les Baker and I went back a few days later and the bird was so shy that I had to flush it from the nest several times before I could get a good look at it. The head was bluish-grey with a white eye ring and a yellow throat. A colour picture taken by Les Baker of the bird on the nest shows that it has a small reddish cap on the crown. This is none other than the Nashville Warbler and it is the first documented nest for this species in Saskatchewan.²

The area the Nashville Warbler nested is a good place for birds and Les and I had searched out its various habitats during the last week of June. To the west of the black spruce bog is a bluff of white spruce on the river bank. A Solitary Vireo had a nest with four well-feathered young on a low horizontal spruce branch. A Blackburnian Warbler was seen flitting among the spruce, carrying insects for its young; a pair of Yellow-rumped Warblers scolded nearby. From high in the spruce was heard the occasional “zee zee zee zoo zee” of a Black-throated Green Warbler.

A back channel from the river runs along the north edge of the spruce creating a shaded hollow of water which is a handy retreat for the birds to drink and bathe. In the brushy edges of the channel two Winter Wrens were singing. They probably had their nests along the bank.

Further to the north is an aspen woods where the patriotic White-throated Sparrow’s sweet “Can-a-da-Can-a-da” song was heard, and on the edge of the woods a Red-eyed Vireo sat on its nest, woven onto the fork of a branch, on a speckled alder. The Greenbush River looped and curved through thick willows in the bottom of the valley, where Common Yellowthroats, Northern Waterthrushes and Yellow Warblers were singing near the water.

Back from the river are steep banks with scattered aspens and as I ascended on the path a Connecticut Warbler scolded me with great frenzy, as it warned me that I was intruding on its territory. The nest would have to be on the ground nearby, but where?

South of the bog where the Nashville Warbler nested is an opening with scattered shrubbery where Chestnut-sided and Mourning Warblers were scolding. In the aspens further south could be heard the cry of young birds which came from a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker’s nest, as they greedily called out between feedings. Redstarts flitted through the under-

brush and in a thick grove of young spruce in a sunny opening a male Magnolia Warbler sang with its yellow breast flashing in the sunlight.

Off to the east is an extensive stretch of black spruce where a family of Great Horned Owls lived. The young birds were almost as large as the adults but with no ear tufts yet, only with comical looking fluffy heads. They peered at us with large yellow eyes. Among the thick black spruce were some Boreal Chickadees and Golden-crowned Kinglets which prefer cool moist woods.

The birds above are only some of the species seen or heard within 500 m of the Nashville Warbler's nest. The unveiling of the warbler's secret was the highlight of

my summer birding activities.

Other breeding records for the Nashville Warbler in Saskatchewan are of one bird scolding at Big Piwei Lake south of Carragana that was seen by Les Baker and I on 12 July 1989, and a family group was seen in Greenwater Provincial Park by Curtis Pollock on 15 July 1985.² This species is also reported breeding at Kazan Lake, Montreal River and Prince Albert National Park.¹

1. GODFREY, W.E. 1986. The birds of Canada. Natl. Mus. Canada, Ottawa. 595 pp.
2. HOUSTON, C.S., M.I. HOUSTON, and J.B. GOLLOP. 1980. Breeding birds in Saskatchewan without documented nests. *Blue Jay* 38:87-95.

PROCEEDINGS OF SECOND ENDANGERED SPECIES AND PRAIRIE CONSERVATION WORKSHOP PUBLISHED

One-third of the threatened and endangered birds and mammals in Canada occur on the prairies. These proceedings document the three-day workshop on Endangered Species and Prairie Conservation that was held at the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina, in January 1989. They include 99 papers on endangered species and habitats in the three prairie provinces. Articles discuss the state of the Prairie Conservation Action Plan and the interactions between agriculture and wildlife.

Species that are discussed include Trumpeter Swans, Ferruginous Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, Burrowing Owls, Loggerhead Shrikes, Swift Fox, and Plains Bison. Agricultural topics include climate changes, pesticides, disease and wildlife economics. Eight papers discuss prairie shorebird conservation. Other topics include plant conservation, research, education, endangered species legislation, land management, grassland birds, and implementing the Prairie Conservation Action Plan.

The proceedings were published in Occasional Paper No. 15, Provincial Museum of Alberta and may be obtained from Blue Jay Bookshop, Sub P.O. 8, 1210 7th Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK, S7K 2W2. For bulk orders (five or more), contact Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Box 4348, Regina, SK, S4P 3W6.