

This area had other shorebirds. Over the two outings we counted 17 Black-bellied Plovers, 5 Ruddy Turnstones, 176 American Golden-Plovers, 1 Piping Plover, 2 American Avocets, 1 Lesser Yellowlegs, 1 Willet, 3 Spotted Sandpipers, 3 Marbled Godwits, 32 Sanderlings, 16 Semipalmated Sandpipers, 18 Pectoral Sandpipers, 5 Short-billed Dowitchers, 1 Wilson's Phalarope and 17 Red-necked Phalaropes.

- John Pollock, Box 353, Whitewood, SK.
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WINTERING OF A YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER AT LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

We have been very fortunate to have observed the wintering of a Yellow-rumped Warbler in our backyard in Lethbridge, Alberta from 16 December 1995 through to early March 1996. The warbler was first observed in the early morning of 16 December near one of our backyard suet feeders. We identified it as a Yellow-rumped Warbler from the pale yellow epaulet, the distinctive yellow patch on the rump of the bird and the throat near white or buff white. At 2:00 p.m. the bird was observed again in the backyard. The unofficial recorded temperature was -23°C.

Following are excerpts from our journal, the temperatures recorded are unofficial.

18 December 1995 we again noticed the warbler near one of the suet feeders in the backyard. We became concerned as to what it might eat. We mixed up some pastry using lots of lard and cooked it so that we could crumble the pastry with some fine ground suet. We sprinkled the pastry crumbs beneath the suet feeder that

the warbler had been visiting. It was not long before we noticed the warbler feeding in the area where we had scattered the pastry and ground suet. We noticed the warbler was usually seen with a small flock of House Sparrows. Recorded temperature was -23°C.

26 December 1995 the warbler was again observed in the backyard, feeding beneath the suet feeder, and in the area where we scattered pastry crumbs and ground suet. The temperature had moderated and we had not seen the warbler for some time.

5 January 1996 the weather turned very cold, we recorded the temperature to be -31°C. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was observed in the backyard feeding on and beneath the suet feeder.

8 January 1996 the weather had moderated some. We noticed the warbler feeding on small bits of suet dropped on the snow from the other birds. We also noticed that the warbler was feeding quite late in the evening after 5:30 p.m. It is usually shortly after 5:00 p.m. that we notice the Downy Woodpecker enter his sleeping cavity but the warbler fed until nearly dark.

14 January 1996 the weather turned cold again, we recorded a temperature of -25°C. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was observed feeding on the sundeck, where we normally have a small suet ball for the flickers to chase around. Small bits of suet had been scattered on the deck surface by the feeding flickers. The warbler would feed on these small pieces of loose suet. The warbler appeared to be becoming less flighty, it would tolerate us moving around in the house while it fed on



Wintering Yellow-rumped Warbler at Lethbridge

Joe Parsons

the deck surface a few metres away. When we do step out, the warbler will fly to a tree branch only 2-3 m from the deck door and give several calls but does not appear to be much concerned about our movements.

The call we found very interesting, when the temperature is extremely cold, was a simple peep. As the temperature warms during the day, or the weather has moderated, we find the simple peep becomes more of a musical chirp.

The general activity of the warbler also changes with the weather. We have noticed that when the weather moderates we do not see the warbler as often as when the weather turns cold. Also, after a snowfall the war-

bler was seen less. When the weather changed, and the temperature dropped, you could bet the warbler would be in the backyard.

19 January 1996 the warbler was observed in the backyard. We had recorded the temperature as -32°C with light snow. The warbler looks cold, it was not very active. The warbler did feed on pastry crumbs and small bits of suet but spent a lot of time just sitting fluffed up.

23 January 1996 the warbler appeared after we had not seen it for several days and several centimetres of snow had fallen. We were able to get a few pictures of it. The warbler allows us to approach to within 2 m as we go out to sprinkle suet and

pastry crumbs. We recorded the temperature at -23°C .

28 January 1996 we recorded a temperature of -35°C . We noticed the warbler in and around dried clematis vines where we have a climbing trellis. In behind the trellis, our downstairs bathroom vent exits the house. I placed my hand near the vent and noticed a fair bit of warm air was escaping through the vent even though the fan was not running. The warbler would return to this area on the trellis, and in amongst the dried vines, spending a good part of the day just sitting.

29 January 1996 we recorded the temperature to be -37°C . The warbler was observed feeding.

2 February 1996 we recorded a temperature of -40°C . The warbler was feeding on small bits of suet dropped beneath the suet feeder.

We went on a short vacation to try and rid ourselves of some of the cold weather. We had sprinkled an abundance of ground suet and pastry crumbs for the bird if it managed to survive through this cold spell. We returned 27 February 1996. At daylight we checked the backyard to see if we could see the warbler and if it had survived. Sure enough, there it was feeding. It was not feeding near the house suet feeder as before, we have a second suet feeder located on a transplanted stump at the far end of the yard. This area is fairly well protected from the wind by a medium-sized spruce tree. The warbler was spending most of its time in the spruce trees. The warbler's feeding habits had changed also, we observed the bird feeding more like a warbler. A flicker was feeding on the suet feeder, and the warbler was perched a metre or so away. When a

small piece of suet fell from the feeder loosened by the flicker, the warbler darted out and caught the small piece of suet before it hit the ground, the warbler would return to the perch and sit. After the flicker had left, the warbler clung to the stump and fed on loosened pieces of suet. We recorded the temperature at -21°C .

4 March 1996 temperature -15°C . The warbler was observed in the backyard. We began to notice a change in the warbler's colouration. Previously we had noticed the throat was very light near white or buff white. We are noticing now that the throat is starting to take on a yellow hue. We also notice on the side of the bird, the streaks are becoming darker, and the yellow is becoming brighter.

16 March 1996, we have not see the warbler in nearly two weeks. The weather has warmed. American Robins are singing their territorial song.

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AN UNUSUAL LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE NEST LOCATION

On 3 July 1996 I was conducting a Loggerhead Shrike survey in a 16 mi^2 block for the Canadian Wildlife Service east of the town of Cessford. While glassing from high ground for likely Loggerhead Shrike habitat I noticed, approximately 1.5 miles away, what appeared to be a clump of shrub in the predominantly grazed mixed grass prairie landscape. Since a vehicle trail led past it I decided to drive down for a look in the hope of finding it occupied by shrikes.

To my surprise it turned out not to