



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program

Vireo gilvus Warbling Vireo



Photo by Dan Lane

Identification: Medium-sized, plainly colored vireo (length 12-13 cm). Olive-green back; white belly; touch of yellow beneath wings; no wing bars; white stripe above eye (without black borders). Both sexes have the same physical appearance.

Voice: Song is a jumbled sequence of notes that rise in tone at the end, call is a wheezy "twee."

Taxonomic comments: Five subspecies divided into 2 groups by American Ornithologists' Union. Louisiana is home to the Eastern Warbling-Vireo (Gilvus Group), *Vireo gilvus*.

Status: Global rank is **G5** and state rank is **S1B**.

Habitat: Woods composed of deciduous and mixed trees, aspens groves, poplars, shade trees, large trees near rivers or lakes. In Louisiana frequents willow, cottonwood, oak, and pecan trees.

Range: Breeds from Canada to Southern United States and in Northern and Western Mexico. Winters in Mexico and Guatemala.

Food habits: insects, especially caterpillars; occasionally fruit.

Life expectancy: Maximum life expectancy is 13 years.

Reproduction: It is believed that individuals begin to breed during their first spring, at 10 months of age. Female constructs a cup-shaped nest suspended 10-40 feet above the ground. Three to four small, white eggs with black specks concentrated on the larger end are laid per clutch. Both parents incubate eggs for 2 weeks and young fledge 2 weeks later.

Reasons for decline: 1) Deaths caused by spraying of pesticides in shade trees. 2) Habitat change and loss including clearing and removal of trees used for nesting and feeding. 3) Cowbird parasitism. 4) Destruction of wintering habitats in South America.

Interesting facts: The subspecies in the eastern group ejects cowbird eggs from the nests, avoiding parasitism by this bird. However, subspecies in the western group accepts and raises cowbird eggs as their own, resulting in a high degree of parasitism.

Known distribution in Louisiana:



Dates of documented observations are: 1995 and 1998

References

- Gardali, T., and G. Ballard. 2000. Warbling Vireo (*Vireo gilvus*). *In* The Birds of North America, No. 551 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Lowery, G. H. Jr. 1974. Louisiana Birds. 3rd Ed. Kingsport Press, Tennessee.
- Peterson, R.T., and V.M. Peterson. 1980. A field guide to the birds: A completely new guide to all the birds of Eastern and Central North America. 4th Ed. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York.
- Wiedenfeld, D.A., and M.M. Swan. 2000. Louisiana breeding bird atlas. Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, Louisiana.