

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia*



Folk Name: Black-and-Yellow Warbler

Status: Migrant

Abundance: Uncommon to Fairly Common

Habitat: Forest canopy

The Magnolia Warbler migrates through the Carolina Piedmont each spring and fall. Most of these migrants breed in the boreal forest of Canada and the northeastern United States. However, there is a small population that breeds in western North Carolina. These breeding birds started showing up in the mountains of North Carolina in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the Magnolia Warbler “is now present in a number of spruce-fir sites” at high elevations in the western part of the state.

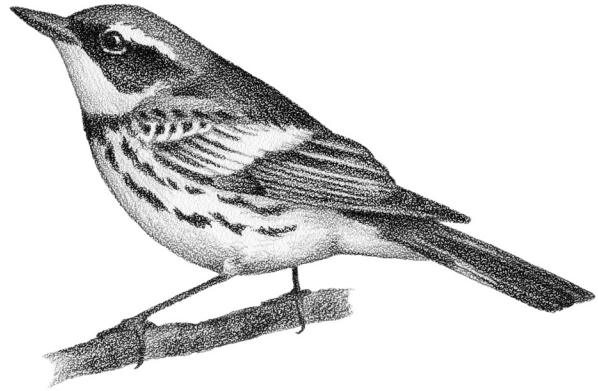
In the Carolinas, the Magnolia Warbler is well known for its unusually protracted migration. In the spring, it has been recorded moving through this part of the Piedmont between 6 April and 3 June. Birds have been banded in this region as late as the first and second of June. Jeff Lemons provided this description of a bird seen on June 3, 2012: “Adult male Magnolia Warbler singing in trees behind Tire Distributor building along powerline. Yellow neck and breast with thick black stripes down breast. Heavy mask on face with white stripe above, white patch on wing.”

Fall migrants have been recorded here as early as 21 July and were photographed as late as 29 October. Our peak count is a total of 10 birds.

In the 1880s, Leverett Loomis reported the Magnolia Warbler to be a common spring and fall migrant in Chester County, usually passing through during the first two weeks of May in spring and between 3 September and the second week of October in the fall.

Elmer Brown reported this warbler during spring migration in Salisbury on May 7, 1921; May 4, 1924; and on May 5, 1929. He reported Magnolia Warblers passing through the Town of Davidson on May 13–14 and May 19, 1928. Magnolia Warblers were noted in Statesville from May 4–20, 1943. John Trott found one in Stanly County on May 6, 1954. Ornithologist E. Burnham Chamberlain reported an immature bird in Matthews, NC, at the home of his brother Rhett on September 2, 1955.

Audubon members discovered two Magnolia Warblers dead after hitting the ceilometer tower at the Charlotte



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airport on the night of September 25, 1955. The Norwoods collected 11 Magnolia Warblers out of a total of almost 400 songbirds killed October 1–2, 1959, after striking a television tower in east Charlotte. They collected two more there a week later.

Stephen Thomas photographed an injured Magnolia Warbler lying on the streets of Charlotte on May 6, 2008. The bird had apparently struck one of the buildings during migration the night before.



Magnolia Warbler. (Jim Guyton)