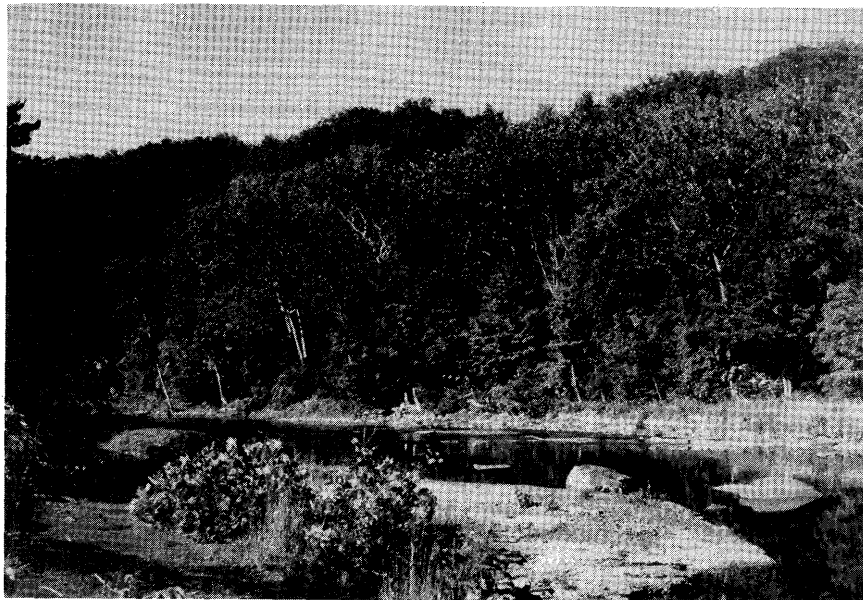


A FIRST RECORD OF NESTING YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS IN NEW YORK STATE

TIMOTHY BAIRD



*Nest site of Yellow-throated Warbler
Greene Co., Town of So. Cairo, along Catskill Creek*

Janet Carroll

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Allegany State Park in Cattaraugus County is rich in ornithological history. Fifty years ago Aretas A. Saunders, a naturalist-instructor at the former Allegany School of Natural History, pioneered modern ecological studies of birds with field work in the Park. The heart of the area where Saunders concentrated his work – the vicinity of Science Lake along the Quaker Run – reaffirmed its worthiness for special attention in July of 1984. A pair of Yellow-throated Warblers (*Dendroica dominica*) pushed northward to nest here, representing the first breeding pair recorded for New York State.

Science Lake lies at 567 meters (1860 feet) elevation in a region of unglaciated, forested upland on the Allegheny Plateau. The Pennsylvania border is only 1.3 kilometers ($\frac{3}{4}$ mile) to the south. Eastern con-

iferous-deciduous forest covers the rugged terrain. Sugar Maple, Black Cherry, American Beech, Yellow Birch, and Eastern Hemlock are the prevailing tree species.

The earthen portion of the dam creating the 1.7-hectare (4.2-acre) Science Lake supports a small, planted association of White, Red, and Scotch Pines. The Yellow-throated Warbler nest was built in a thick tuft of needles near the end of a branch and close to the top of a Red Pine at a height of about 19 meters (62 feet). The nest tree was next to a well-traveled road and in an area frequented by Park visitors.

The presence of a Yellow-throated Warbler was called to my attention by the song of the male on 9 July. That bird was heard singing and observed regularly in the aforementioned pines over the next week by myself and Dr. Richard Clark of York College in Pennsylvania. After 15 July observations were not made again until 20 July, when a bird was seen in the same area and heard giving an emphatic chip note. I heard no song on that date. On 21 July Willie D'Anna, a birder from Niagara Falls, made the first confirmation of the presence of two adult birds. Close observation by Willie and a friend revealed these adults approaching the well-concealed nest with food. D'Anna showed the nest to me and several members of the Cattaraugus County Bird Club on the same day.

In retrospect, the sequence of observations suggest that the female remained inconspicuous while incubating and that the eggs hatched sometime close to 21 July. On 26 July I observed both adults, and the male sang regularly. At this time feeding was frequent at the nest. My final observation of the adults was on 29 July, when both were seen in the vicinity of the nest, but an hour's observation revealed no approach by them to the nest. The male sang occasionally and with little volume. These latter observations lead me to suspect the young were near fledging, or had recently fledged, on the 29th.

During the nesting period nestlings were not actually seen, and the tree was not climbed to check the nest's contents. The evidence for nestlings was provided by the activity of the adults, including the removal of a fecal sac from the nest. I collected the nest on 9 August with the permission and kind assistance of Allegany State Park personnel. The nest is now in the collection at the Buffalo Museum of Science.

With reference to the possible subspecies of Yellow-throated Warbler this pair represented, I can only suggest that the area is most likely an extension of the range of the western subspecies, *D. dominica albilora* (A.O.U. Check-list, 1957, p. 498). I saw no yellow in the area of the lores. This, however, is apparently not a reliable nor necessarily a distinguishing field mark (Bull, 1974, p. 494). Beardslee and Mitchell (1965, p. 381) summarize previous occurrences of this warbler in western New York. Two more recent occurrences in Allegany State Park are reported in *The Kingbird* (Pitzrick, 1983, p. 264).

Literature Cited

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Editors' Note: At the time Mr. Baird wrote this article, he did not know that another nesting pair had been discovered in Greene Co., approximately 250 miles due east, by David Gagne. Below is a photo of that site. The nest is now in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History. The question of which record is first is not really of great importance, but the Greene Co. pair was observed building their nest on 6 June.



*Nest of Yellow-throated Warbler
Allegany State Park, Cattaraugus Co.*

Tim Baird

August 1984