

Outlook on Halton Hills

Investigate the sounds of feathered friends

The best way to discover our resident warblers is to listen for their songs. Small and often secretive, they can be hard to find otherwise. Warbler calls are varied and difficult to describe. Some like that of the Mourning Warbler are quite full and melodious; others like that of the Golden or Blue Winged Warblers are thin and insect-like. When in search of these birds and others, investigate all the sounds you hear - you may be surprised at their source.

Backyard Naturalist

By DON SCALLEN
Herald Special



A warbler that you may hear calling from the tops of conifers is the Black-Throated Green. More common in the mixed and coniferous forests of the north, the Black-Throated Green does find isolated sections of our southern Ontario environment to its liking. The attachment of these warblers to their micro-habitat is pronounced. The few times I have encountered them in this area, they seldom strayed from the cover of their resident hemlock or cedar. The song of the Black-Throated Green warbler was among the bird calls included in the sound track of the Anne of Green Gables mini-series. A rather incongruous mix, considering the setting was lush deciduous tree countryside, with nary a conifer to be seen. Obviously the producer was not an avid birder.

Another warbler with firm ties to a particular type of habitat is the Black and White. This warbler is coloured exactly as its name implies.

striped lengthwise in black and white. Its behavior suggests that of a nuthatch or Brown Creeper. It creeps along the branches and trunks of trees searching the bark for insects and their larva. By feeding in this most un-warbler like fashion, the Black and White has cornered its own personal larder and effectively removed itself from competition with other warbler species. Look for the Black and White now, for it is much more vocal early in the season than later.

A favorite warbler of mine is the Yellowthroat. Quite vocal throughout the spring, its "witchity, witchity, witch" contributes a cheerful note to the sympathy of our marshes. Adorned with a black mask and bright yellow throat patch, it is a beautiful bird. As long as marsh grasses and reeds are present for perches, the Yellowthroat can inhabit open marshes devoid of trees and in wooded swamps, the Yellowthroat constructs an intricately woven nest of grasses.

The Northern Waterthrush is another common resident warbler of North Halton. It frequents the sides of wooded streams where it can be viewed as it scours the water's edge for insects. Like the very similar Ovenbird, the Waterthrush spends most of its time on the ground. If it senses danger it is more prone to duck into a tangle of undergrowth than fly off.

Often bordering the habitat of the Waterthrush is that of the Mourning Warbler, a pretty little sprite with a gray head, black bib and yellow breast. I have found it most often in wet scrubby growth near water, but it can be found in drier upland sites. The parent birds will let you know if you have approached the nest site too closely. Both birds will take to the nearby shrubs and trees and scold your presence. Under such circumstances you will be afforded a rare clear view of these skulking birds, but treat warily - the nest is located on the ground.

One of the best places to view in Halton is the Hilton Falls conservation area and the Halton Regional Forest next door. Fourteen species of breeding warblers have been recorded at this location. Another good area, this one in north Peel county, is the new provincial park just north of the Forks of the Credit.



The following Brownies from the 6th and 4th Georgetown Brownie Packs flew up to Guides last week in a ceremony at St. John's United Church. Their names are: Alana Innes, Michelle Bahr, Kayle Finns, Arlene Cairns, Elizabeth Crawford, Naomi Assenheim, Kerith

Geh, Caroline Page, Christian Quall, Angela Given, Katherine Potosky, Megan Vincent, Hayley Brown, Danielle Dembie, Terri Fedora, Karen Hannan, Jennifer Hunter, Linda Lacroix, Dawn Ladds, Tara Nord, Jennifer Sheppard, Lisa White. (Herald photo)



Winners of the Excelsior Award at the annual explorers hike, awarded to the troop with most points are:

(back row, left to right) Jeff Nipper, Jason Bastedo, Gilles Oulmet, Josh Stokes, Charles Gils and Troop Scouters Woody Stewart (front row) Jason Soper and Adam Soward. (Photo by Jean Layman)

Police beat

Nobody was injured when a 1979 Plymouth rear-ended a 1986 Toyota Monday afternoon, at Maple Avenue and Guelph Street in Georgetown.

There were four males in the Toyota, 23, 17, and two 16-year-olds. The Acton driver had stopped at Guelph Street for a right turn.

The driver of the Plymouth is a Georgetown man. Damage was \$800 to each car, Halton Regional Police said.

A Downsview man taking the Guelph Street at Main Street curve in Georgetown too fast lost control Monday afternoon and struck a 1987 Jeep coming in the opposite direction.

Nobody was injured in the collision, but damage to the two vehicles was about \$6,000, Halton Regional Police said.

The driver of a 1985 Mazda has been charged with careless driving.

A two-year-old boy and his parents weren't hurt when their 1984 Ford was struck by another vehicle at Winston Churchill Boulevard and Sideroad 5 Monday afternoon.

Halton Regional Police said there was over \$2,300 in damage to the two cars. Nobody was hurt.

A Milton man, 38, stopped for the stop sign on Sideroad 5 then went into the intersection, crashing into the Ford driven by the Delrex Boulevard, Georgetown, man.

R.C. McCall

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