

## THE BLACKBURNIAN WOOD-WARBLER.

†SYLVICOLA BLACKBURNIÆ, *Lath.*

PLATE LXXXVII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This charming and delicate Warbler passes through the United States in April and May. I have met with it at different times, although sparingly, in every part of the Union, more frequently in the southern districts in spring, and in the eastern in early autumn. In the State of Maine, on the north-eastern confines of the United States, it is not uncommon, and I have reason to think that it breeds in the vicinity of Mars Hill, and other places, along the banks of St. John's River, where my sons and myself shot several individuals, in the month of September. While at Frederickton, New Brunswick, Sir ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL kindly presented me with specimens. On the Magdeleine Islands, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which I visited in June 1833, I found the Blackburnian Warbler in all the brilliancy of its spring plumage, and had the pleasure of hearing its sweet song, while it was engaged in pursuing its insect prey among the branches of a fir tree, moving along somewhat in the manner of the American Redstart. Its song, which consisted of five or six notes, was so much louder than could have been expected from the size of the bird, that it was not until I had fairly caught it in the act, that I felt satisfied as to its proceeding from my old acquaintance. My endeavours to discover its nest proved fruitless. In Labrador we saw several individuals of both sexes, and on the coast of Newfoundland, on our return westward, we again found it.

To President MACCULLOCH of Dalhousie College, Halifax, N. S., I am indebted for a nest and three eggs of this bird. While looking at his valuable collection of the Birds of Nova Scotia, my attention was attracted by a case containing nests with eggs, among which was that of the Blackburnian Warbler. It was composed externally of different textures, and lined with silky fibres and thin delicate stripes of fine bark, over which lay a thick bed of feathers and horse-hair. The eggs were small, very conical towards the smaller end, pure white, with a few spots of light red towards the larger end. It was found in a small fork of a tree, five or six feet from the ground, near a brook. The Doctor informed me that it was the only nest he had seen, and that he considered this species of Warbler as rare in the district.

My friend JOHN BACHMAN has since informed me, that, in June 1833, he





*Blackburnian Wood-Warbler*

1. Male. 2. Female.

*Phlox maculata*.







saw a pair of these birds engaged in constructing a nest near Lansingburgh, in the State of New York. He never saw the species in the maritime parts of South Carolina.

The specimen from which I made the drawing copied in the plate before you, I procured near Reading in Pennsylvania, on the banks of the Schuylkill River, about thirty years ago. Some specimens shot in New Brunswick in September, were mottled somewhat in the manner of a two years old Tanager or Summer Redbird, being probably very young birds.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, *Sylvia Blackburniæ*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. iii. p. 67.

SYLVIA BLACKBURNIÆ, Bonap. Syn., p. 80.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, *Sylvia Blackburniæ*, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 379.

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER, *Sylvia Blackburniæ*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. ii. p. 208; vol. v. p. 73.

Outer three quills nearly equal, first generally longest; tail slightly emarginate. Male black above, streaked with white; a small patch on the top of the head, a band from the base of the upper mandible over the eye, passing down the neck and curving forwards, and a small band under the eye, orange-yellow; lore and a patch behind the eye black; quills black, the outer margined with grey, the inner with white, of which there is a large patch on the wing, including the inner secondary coverts, and the tips of the outer, with those of the first row of small coverts; three outer tail-feathers on each side white, excepting an oblong portion toward the end, the next also partially white; throat and fore part of breast rich reddish-orange; breast dull yellow, the rest white; the sides of the neck and body streaked with black. Female with the upper parts light olivaceous, each feather dusky in the centre, the other parts as in the male, but the tints much paler, the spot on the top of the head greenish-yellow, the feathers tipped with dusky, the band over the eye pale yellow, that on the lore and ear-coverts brown, the fore part of the neck yellow, and the sides less strongly streaked with black.

Male,  $4\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $7\frac{3}{4}$ . Female,  $4\frac{8}{12}$ , wing  $2\frac{7}{12}$ .

From Texas northward. Rather rare. Migratory.

PHLOX MACULATA, Willd. Sp. Pl., vol. i. p. 840. *Pursch*, Flor. Amer. Sept., vol. i. p. 149.—PENTANDRIA MONOGYNIA, *Linn.*—POLEMONIA, *Juss.*

Erect; the stem rough, with purplish dots; the leaves oblongo-lanceolate, smooth, with the margin rough; the flowers in an oblong crowded panicle, of a purplish-red tint, the segments of the corolla rounded; the calycine teeth acute and recurved. It grows abundantly in wet meadows, from New England to Carolina. The flowers, although pleasing to the eye, have no scent.





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Audubon, John James. 1841. "The Blackburnian Wood-Warbler, *Sylvicola blackburniae*, Lath. [Pl. 87]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 2, 48–49. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319200>.

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