

Golden-winged Warbler

Vermivora chrysoptera



Status: **Special Concern**

Threats:

- ◆ Habitat loss - decrease in early successional scrub habitat
- ◆ Displacement and hybridization with Blue-winged Warblers
- ◆ Brood parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds



Photo: Eleanor Kee Wellman

Description:

- ◆ Small songbird about 11-12 cm long
- ◆ Body is grey with white undersides and distinctive yellow wing patches and crown
- ◆ Females have light grey feathers surrounding the eye and throat
- ◆ Males have a black throat and cheek
- ◆ May live up to 9 years
- ◆ Song sounds like “bee-buz-buz-buz”

Biology:

- ◆ Nests on or near the ground usually in a grass, fern or weed clump or at the base of a shrub
- ◆ Builds nest out of grass and leaves; nests in loose colonies of 2-6 pairs
- ◆ Lays 2-6 eggs
- ◆ Feeds on insects such as caterpillars and spiders, usually in tree tops with some feeding in lower shrubs
- ◆ Able to mate with Blue-winged Warblers

Habitat:

- ◆ Edge habitats and early successional areas dominated by thick shrubs and sparse trees i.e. shrubby fields and woodland edges, wooded swamps, alder thickets, recently abandoned farm fields
- ◆ Also found in hydro corridors and recently logged areas
- ◆ Migrates to Central or South America in August and returns in early May

Species at Risk
STEWARDS' GUIDE SERIES

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Golden-winged Warbler on Your Property? Here's What You Can Do:

- ◆ **Don't disturb nests, young or adults.** Be respectful and observe from a distance.
- ◆ **Please keep your cats and dogs indoors.** Cats are particularly hard on ground nesting birds like the Golden-winged Warbler.
- ◆ **Appreciate flying insects.** Flying insects like moths and beetles are an important component of the ecosystem, becoming food for a wide variety of birds and other animals.
- ◆ **Support sustainable forestry practices when you purchase wood products.** Look for the FSC logo.
- ◆ **Coffee drinkers** - buy shade grown, organic coffee to help protect over wintering habitat for many of our songbirds.
- ◆ **See or hear a Golden-winged Warbler close by?** Submit your sighting to the Natural Heritage Information Centre at nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/species/species_report.cfm. Photographs with specific locations or mapping coordinates are always helpful.
- ◆ **Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources.** If you find a Golden-winged Warbler or a nest on your property, you may be eligible for stewardship programs that support the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats. Contact the MNR for more information.
- ◆ **Learn More.** Check out the Species at Risk section on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.



STEWARDS' GUIDE SERIES

Ontario's Endangered Species Act

Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007* came into force on June 30, 2008, making Ontario a North American leader in the protection of species at risk and their habitats.

Compared to Ontario's previous Act, written in 1971, the new ESA 2007 provides:

- ◆ Science-based assessment of species' status
- ◆ Automatic protection of a species and its habitat once it's listed as endangered or threatened
- ◆ Broader protection for species at risk and their habitats
- ◆ Greater support for volunteer stewardship efforts of private landowners, resource users, and conservation organizations
- ◆ A commitment to recovery of species through recovery planning
- ◆ Greater accountability, including government reporting requirements

Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species, most of which have stable populations.

However, more than 180 species in Ontario, 34 of which are found in Parry Sound-Muskoka, are currently considered "at risk" because of threats like:

- ◆ Habitat loss
- ◆ Global changes in insect populations
- ◆ Pollution
- ◆ Invasive species
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Over-harvesting
- ◆ Road mortality



Learn more about Species at Risk on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.