

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens*



Folk Name: (none)

Status: Migrant

Abundance: Uncommon to Fairly Common

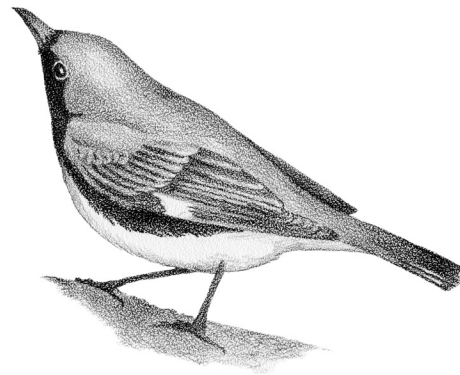
Habitat: Lower to mid-level branches of forest trees

The male Black-throated Blue Warbler is one of our easiest warblers to identify. No other warbler has blue upperparts with a black throat. It also has a distinctive white “handkerchief” marking that shows up at the base of its primaries. The drab olive-brown female has the same white wing mark, which makes it easy to identify her as well.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler breeds in the mountains of North Carolina and at a few high elevation sites in South Carolina. It may possibly breed along the western edge of our region—in the Brushy Mountains and the South Mountains—but its current breeding status there is unknown.

Leverett Loomis described it as a “very common migrant” in Chester County in the late 1800s. Elmer Brown reported one moving through Salisbury on April 29, 1923, and another that fall on 14 October. William McIlwaine reported a Black-throated Blue Warbler in Charlotte on May 8, 1928. Clara Knox reported one in Salisbury on the late date of 24 October in 1943. Sarah Nooe collected a specimen dead on the street in Charlotte on October 26, 1955, and she and her students weighed it in at 9.8 grams, which is precisely the mean mass of this warbler as published in *Birds of North America*. Joe and Becky Norwood collected eight Black-throated Blue Warblers, one male and seven females or immature birds, out of a total of almost 400 songbirds killed after striking a television tower in east Charlotte in October 1959.

The Black-throated Blue Warbler has been reported on almost every Spring Bird Count conducted in this region.



Black-throated Blue Warbler. (Will Stuart)

Our earliest spring arrival date is 6 April, and our latest is 8 June. Our earliest fall arrival date is 30 August, and our last departure date is 11 November. Our peak one-day count for this species is 40 birds.