

# GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER

(*Vermivora chrysoptera*)

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## Guidance for Conservation

*The Golden-winged Warbler is an uncommon and declining breeder in shrubby fields in the Hudson River Valley.*

### Conservation Status

The Golden-winged Warbler is regarded as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in New York and is state-listed as a Species of Special Concern. Its decline throughout its range has led to its "Red" designation on the Audubon WatchList. Breeding Bird Survey data indicate a steady decline in the state in the past four decades. NYS Breeding Bird Atlas data also show a decline in occupied blocks between the two atlas periods. Partners in Flight regard it as a Species of Continental Concern and of Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Regions 13, 28, and 30.



### Identification

This wood-warbler is slightly smaller than a chickadee. The male is slate-gray above and white below, with a bright yellow crown, forehead, and wing patch, and a black throat and cheek. The female is similar to the male, but is not as colorful. The song is a single buzzy note followed by several similar notes on a lower pitch (“bee-buzz-buzz-buzz...”).

### Habitat

This species is found in a wide variety of early successional habitats that include shrubby fields, overgrown pastures, recently logged forest, conifer plantings, clear cuts, and utility rights-of-way. The common features of these habitats are patches of dense herbaceous growth and shrubs, scattered trees, and wooded edges. Patches of 25-30 acres can support several pairs and are preferred over both smaller and larger areas.

### Nesting

The nest is built by the female and is most often located on the ground concealed in vegetation at the base of shrubs, trees, grass tussocks, ferns, or weed clumps. It is a coarse cup constructed of bark, straw, and leaves, with a lining of finer material.

### Food

This bird feeds on insects, caterpillars, and spiders by foraging among foliage and twigs from treetops to lower shrubs.

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### Threats

- Loss of breeding habitat from suburban development.
- Reforestation of scrubland habitat.
- Parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird.
- Competition and hybridization with Blue-winged Warblers.

### Management Recommendations

- "The optimal management practice may be a rotation of burning or intermittent farming. A cycle of about 40 years with about 25% of the managed area burned once each decade could produce the following successional sequence. Golden-winged Warbler habitat would begin to appear perhaps within ten years and last about 10-20 years, although these times are approximations and would be influenced by factors such as soil quality, the size and intensity of the burn, and proximity to seed sources. Allowing succession to continue for approximately 40 years would provide the forest edge that is used in almost all territories" (Confer 1992).
- Create habitat by logging, burning, and intermittent farming.
- Allow shrubs to grow in power line rights-of-way by limiting mowing and herbicide treatments.

**This management summary is adapted from Confer 1992 and NatureServe 2009.**

### For additional information, see the following references:

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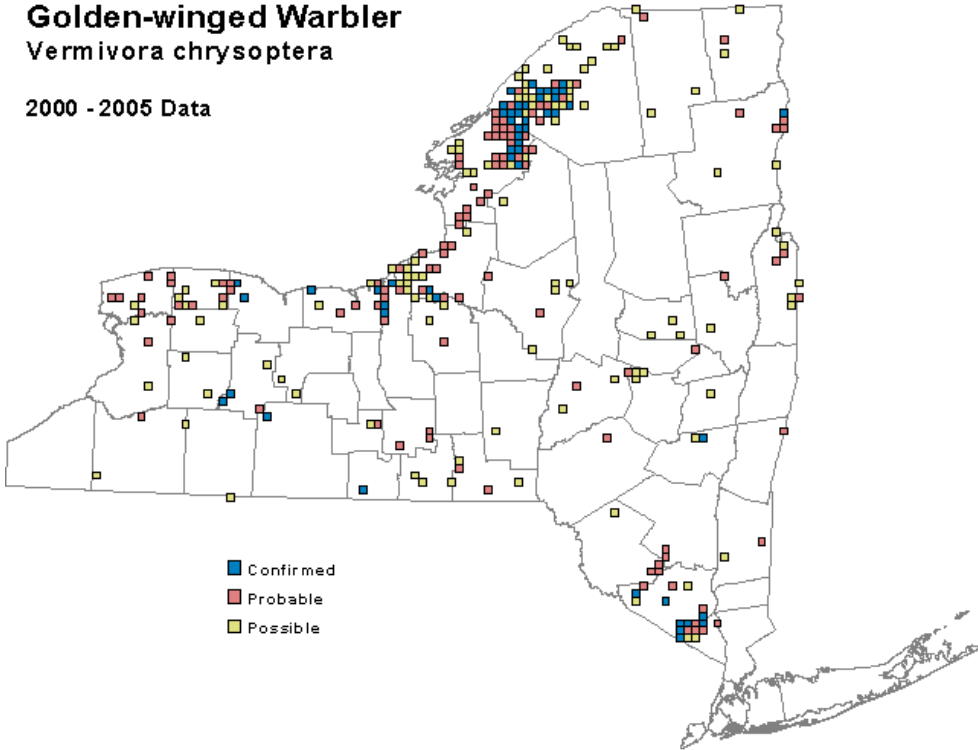
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**NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA**

**Golden-winged Warbler**  
*Vermivora chrysoptera*

2000 - 2005 Data



**Golden-winged Warbler**  
*Vermivora chrysoptera*

1980 - 1985 Data

