

PASSERIFORMES

(Songbirds)

Warblers



Family PARULIDAE (Warblers)

Orange-Crowned Warbler (*Leiothlypis celata*)



Clark Co. Wetlands Pk; NV



HBVP; Henderson, NV



Overton Wildlife Management Area; Overton, NV



Red Rock Canyon NCA; NV



Corn Creek; Desert NWR; NV

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 7" Average Weight: .33 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; plain gray to olive above, yellowish below with faint streaking, **yellow undertail coverts**; orange patch on crown (rarely seen); **no wingbars**; pointed grayish bill; short tail; dark eyes surrounded by broken, pale eyering bisected by dark eyeline; **faint yellowish eyebrow**; little sexual dimorphism (females somewhat duller in color)

Notes:

common; solitary when not nesting; inhabits open, brushy woodlands throughout most of CAN and w US, wintering south through MEX and east to FL; formerly in the genus *Vermivora*; 4 subspecies; forages on ground and in trees for insects, berries, and sometimes nectar

Mojave presence: summer range

Comments:

While rather common in the Mojave region during summer, orange crowns are nevertheless difficult to photograph as they are very active. Like bushtits, verdins, and gnatcatchers, these attractive little birds flit constantly through brush, shrubs, and trees on a constant search for a meal. Thus they are rarely still or exposed from foliage long enough to allow a good shot! But, of course, patience and perseverance are usually rewarded.

Family PARULIDAE (Warblers)

Lucy's Warbler (*Leiothlypis luciae*)



Corn Creek; Desert NWR; NV



Overton WMA; NV



Valley of Fire State Park; Clark County; NV



Valley of Fire SP; NV



Valley of Fire SP; NV

Measurements:

Length: 4" Wing Span: 7" Average Weight: .25 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; gray above, paler below; short, forked tail; **rufous rump patch**; sharp, black bill; dark eyes with pale eyering; (m) darker overall; **rufous crown patch**; (f) paler gray above, white below; lacks distinct crown patch

Notes:

uncommon; solitary/small family groups; inhabits mesquite thickets, washes, bosques of the desert southwest (e CA, s NV, s UT, w-s AZ, sw NM, extreme w TX) wintering south into MEX along Pacific coast; like the **Prothonotary Warbler**, nests in tree cavities, unlike all other warblers; formerly in the genus **Oreothlypis**; strictly insectivorous

Mojave presence: summer range

Comments:

These warblers, among the smallest of the family, are rather uncommon summer visitors to the Mojave region. I spotted this family at the **Valley of Fire State Park** in southern Nevada in May of 2019. Mom flies in (left) to feed her youngster (right). So charming! Note mom's distinctive rump patch, characteristic of the species.



Family PARULIDAE (Warblers)

Black-Throated Gray Warbler (*Setophaga nigrescens*)



South Rim; GCNP; AZ



South Rim; GCNP; AZ



Corn Creek; Desert National Wildlife Refuge; NV



Corn Creek; DNWR; NV



Corn Creek; DNWR; NV

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 8" Average Weight: .3 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium-small size; dark gray above, white below with black streaks; short, broad wings with two white wingbars; short gray tail with white outer feathers edged in black; short dark bill; dark eyes completely within black cheek band below thick white eyebrow; conspicuous **yellow lores**; (m) black throat; (f) white throat with black necklace

Notes:

uncommon; solitary; found in semi-arid areas of mixed woodlands, usually near water, throughout w NA from sw BC south through sw US, CA east to CO/NM/w TX, wintering in MEX (rare in east); formerly in the genus **Dendroica**; eats primarily insects, often foraging in flocks of mixed species

Mojave presence: migratory; occasionally summer range

Comments:

The female shown above at Corn Creek in the **Desert National Wildlife Refuge** north of Las Vegas in October of 2020 was the first individual of the species I had encountered. I didn't see another until the male at the South Rim of **Grand Canyon National Park** in May, 2024. The distinctive yellow lores and pattern are characteristic, but while the species is common in general, it is quite **uncommon** in the Mojave region, thus often overlooked in the field--especially from a distance. While taking the

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pictures, I thought it was a **Mountain Chickadee**!

Family PARULIDAE (Warblers)

Yellow Warbler (*Setophaga petechia*)



Theo. Roosevelt NP; ND



Theo. Roosevelt NP; ND



Bosque del Apache NWR; Socorro, NM



Dolan Springs, AZ



Corn Creek; Desert NWR; NV

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 8" Average Weight: .33 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; generally **yellow overall** (numerous variations depending on subspecies); **olive-yellow wings** with no wingbars; short tail with yellow spots (difficult to see in field); stout, pointed, dark bill; dark eyes with pale eyering; **(m)** bright yellow; reddish streaks on breast; **(f)** olive above, duller yellow below; little to no streaking on breast

Notes:

common; social in small groups; prefers shrubbery, thickets, woodlands, etc., in riparian areas throughout most of NA and Caribbean in summer, wintering south to n SA; formerly in the genus **Dendroica**; aka **Summer Yellowbird**; 35 or more subspecies; primarily insectivorous, though also other small invertebrates, berries, and fruit

Mojave presence: migratory

Comments:

Though generally social birds, individuals foraging alone are all I have seen. Like other small songbirds, yellows are constantly on the move, foraging through vegetation for insects and other delectables. This can make getting good photos a challenge, but their bright yellow color helps in keeping track of them, so that when they do make an unobstructed appearance, you'll get your shot.

Family PARULIDAE (Warblers)

Yellow-Rumped Warbler (*Setophaga coronata*)



Bosque del Apache NWR; NM



Overton Wildlife Management Area; Overton, NV



Overton WMA; NV



HBVP; Henderson, NV



Dolan Springs, AZ

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 9" Average Weight: .5 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; brownish to charcoal gray above, whitish below with dark splotches/streaks; two white wingbars; **yellow patches on crown, sides, rump**; yellow to white throat (depending on subspecies); long dark tail with **white bars**; stout, dark bill; dark eyes with **broken white eyering**; **(m)** bold coloration; **(f)** duller brownish gray overall

Notes:

common; social; found in diverse ecosystems from mixed woodlands to wetlands throughout NA, depending on subspecies; aka **Butterump** (colloquial); 3-4 subspecies; formerly in the genus **Dendroica**; frequent hybridization; known for sallying acrobatically from perches in pursuit of flying insects, though also eats berries in winter

Mojave presence: winter range

Comments:

The **Audubon** subspecies shown above is one of the most common warblers in the Mojave region. Being a mainly western subspecies, compared to its more eastern **Murtle** relative, it can be readily distinguished where their ranges overlap by its yellow throat (versus white) and lack of a pale eyebrow. Its most conspicuous feature is the namesake yellow patch on its rump. Its habit of sallying from a perch to catch a passing insect is reminiscent of flycatchers.

Family **PARULIDAE** (Warblers)

Palm Warbler (*Setophaga palmarum*)



Ocala, FL



Okeechobee, FL



Pompano Beach, Florida



Pompano Beach, FL



Pompano Beach, FL

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 8" Average Weight: .4 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; gray-brown to olive above with rusty cap (breeding), buffy to yellow below with dark streaks, **yellow undertail coverts**; short, dark bill; dark eyes, dark eyeline, **yellow eyebrow**; no sexual dimorphism

Notes:

uncommon; social in small groups; inhabits boreal forests in breeding season in NA generally in most of CAN in summer, wintering in open areas (marshes, fields, lawns, parking lots, etc.) along the Pacific coast, se Atlantic and Gulf seaboards, and Caribbean; formerly in the genus **Dendroica**; 2 subspecies; bobs tail constantly while foraging on the ground or in low vegetation mainly for insects, but also will take spiders, berries, fruit, etc.

Mojave presence: accidental; very rare

Comments:

These sociable, friendly little birds are quite at home in urban settings, seemingly comfortable with people nearby. I often see them when I visit family in Florida in the wintertime. However, I have never encountered this species in the Mojave, although rare sightings have been made throughout the west on occasion, especially during migration to the west coast. All photos above are of the "western" subspecies in non-breeding plumage.

Family **PARULIDAE** (Warblers)

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)



Santos Recreation Area; FL



Santos Recreation Area; FL

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 8" Average Weight: .25 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; dark, pointed bill; dark eyes; (m) black overall, with white belly; orange wingbar, sides, and base of tail; (f) olive-gray back, wings; gray head, underparts; orange on male replaced by yellow; white eyering with dark eyeline

Notes:

common; mostly solitary, monogamous; found in open woodlands (particularly deciduous) throughout most of NA (except west coast US states), wintering as far south as n SA; primarily insectivorous

Mojave presence: rare; migratory

Comments:

Redstarts are quite rare in the Mojave. When they do appear, it is during migration, and only in the eastern part of the region (s NV, nw AZ). The female above in the Santos Recreation Area in central Florida is the only specimen I have personally encountered. She was difficult to photograph as, typical of redstarts, she flitted constantly through the upper foliage of the tree, fanning her tail to flush insects for her next meal.

Family **PARULIDAE** (Warblers)

Hooded Warbler (*Setophaga citrina*)



HBVP; Henderson, NV



HBVP; Henderson, NV



Bird Viewing Preserve; Henderson, NV



Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 7" Average Weight: .33 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; olive-green above, **yellow face**, underparts; short tail with white outer feathers; straight, dark, pointed bill; black eyes; (m) **black cap** that wraps around face down neck to black bib; (f) olive cap that rarely wraps around face

Notes:

common; solitary; favors undergrowth of deciduous woodlands of e US (except FL), wintering south to Caribbean, Gulf coast, west to CA; formerly in the genus **Wilsonia**; forges on ground for insects, typically with tail raised

Mojave presence: accidental; rare

Comments:

Hoodies are quite a rare sight in the Mojave, and even then they are elusive ground foragers, which makes seeing one here so extraordinary. The male above visited the **Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve** for just a couple weeks in January of 2022. Other photographers saw and got pics of him when he first arrived, but I kept missing him--sometimes by moments! After about a week of frustration--and just before he moved on--he finally made an appearance for me! It's times like that, which makes wildlife photography so exciting and rewarding.

Family PARULIDAE (Warblers)

MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*)



Overton WMA; NV



Overton WMA; NV



Corn Creek; Desert NWR; NV



Corn Creek; Desert NWR; NV



Lee Canyon; Sprg Mtn NRA

Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 7" Average Weight: .4 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; olive above with **gray hood** from crown to breast; **yellow below**; olive wings with no wingbars; longish olive tail; long pink legs; thin, pointed, gray bill; black eyes with broken white eyering; (m) charcoal-gray hood; black lores and patches on chest; (f) light gray hood; no black

Notes:

uncommon; solitary or small groups; found in dense vegetation (shrubbery, thickets, woods, etc.) throughout breeding range in w NA from BC (CAN) to nw US, migrating south to winter from MEX to Panama; formerly in genus *Oporornis*; 2 subspecies; forages on the ground or low within dense vegetation for insects

Mojave presence: migratory

Comments:

While uncommon migrants to the Mojave region, these warblers are easy to identify when they do stop by for a layover. The gray hood is similar to that of the **Dark-Eyed Junco**, but unlike the junco's white belly, the warbler presents an unmistakable bright yellow undercarriage. All the birds above visited in September of various years. I've never seen any during their springtime migration to their northern breeding grounds.

Family **PARULIDAE** (Warblers)

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*)



CCWP; Las Vegas, NV



CCWP; Las Vegas, NV



Clark County Wetlands Park; Las Vegas, NV



Measurements:

Length: 5" Wing Span: 7" Average Weight: .3 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

small size; olive above, **yellow throat** and breast (variable intensity according to subspecies), whitish belly in most varieties; no wingbars; long tail; black, pointed bill; black eyes; long, pink legs; (m) **black mask** extending from neck to forehead, bordered above by white; (f) olive face, no mask; pale eyering; yellow underparts not as intense

Notes:

common; mostly solitary; favors riparian to wetland areas throughout most of NA, wintering south through Central America and Caribbean; aka **Yellow Bandit**; 13-14 subspecies; mainly insectivorous

Mojave presence: migratory

Comments:

These colorful warblers are uncommon to rare in arid areas like deserts, as they prefer wetter habitats. And like many small marsh birds, they tend to remain hidden in the safety of reeds and other dense vegetation typical of wetlands. Thus, when they do visit the Mojave Desert during migratory stopovers, they can be quite a challenge to photograph. Nevertheless, males occasionally present themselves when they sing in the open to attract the girls, like the ones above at the **Clark County Wetlands Park** in the Las Vegas Valley, a favorite local springtime destination.

Family **PARULIDAE** (Warblers)

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)



Measurements:

Length: 6" Wing Span: 9" Average Weight: .67 oz

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

medium size; olive-green above, whitish below with dark spots/bars; **orange stripe down crown**, bordered with black; white vent; pale malar stripe; yellowish-gray bill; dark eyes with bold, white eyering; pink legs; no sexual dimorphism

Notes:

uncommon; solitary, secretive; found in mature forests (deciduous/mixed) to open woodlands in NA generally east of the Rockies from nw CAN south to CO, east to the Atlantic coast, migrating to wintering grounds in FL, Caribbean, and Mexico to Venezuela (rare in w US, Europe); name derived from covered ground nest resembling a Dutch oven; 3 subspecies; seen walking mainly on the ground, bobbing with tail raised, foraging in undergrowth for insects

Mojave presence: accidental; rare

Comments:

These tiny, secretive birds rarely offer an unobstructed photo op, as is apparent from these shots from **Mills Pond** in Pompano Beach, FL, in May, 2021. They are uncommon overall, and are quite rare visitors to the Mojave; this is the only specimen I have ever seen.



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