

# BOGDIVERSITY THURSDAY



—*from Head Naturalist Clinton*

## Golden-winged Warbler

POST #35—June 30, 2022

Though the breeding season is winding down in the Sax-Zim Bog, there are still plenty of birds to profile on our Bogdiversity Thursday posts, especially considering that there are over 100 species of bird that nest in the Sax-Zim Bog. Today's post features a species that some might petition to be an additional state bird, beside Common Loon.

Golden-winged Warblers are a beautiful, sometimes hard to see, and threatened species of warbler. They prefer habitats of second growth forest, but also rely on shrubby wetlands (like alder swamps). Minnesota hosts around 50% of the global population of this species and there is a lot of research happening with the species in our state.

The buzzy vocalizations of this species can be heard throughout the Bog in appropriate habitat. The sharp song cuts through the thick understory that they prefer for nesting. Often, especially late in the nesting season, they will switch to an equally buzzy alternate vocalization.

Widespread and somewhat common in the Bog, Welcome Center Naturalist Jason surveyed the Sax-Zim Bog for this species a couple of years ago and found over 90 individual territories spread across our area. This season, most have gone quite, tending chicks and getting ready for their long-distance migration. Golden-winged Warblers migrate to southern Central America and northern South America, with most of the Golden-winged Warblers from the Great Lakes region migrating to southern Central America.

Golden-winged Warblers are of particular conservation concern, especially in the eastern US where populations have declined around 43% in recent years. Threats to this species not only include hybridization with Blue-winged Warbler, but also loss of habitat due to invasive plant species like Phragmites. Good news, however, as Minnesota has been active in researching habitat management for this species, which has included working with forest managers to create appropriate habitat. This research has been quite successful and will help inform management for this species in other regions.

If you are interested in learning more about this well-studied species the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas website has a lot of great information on recent and past studies:

<https://mnbirdatlas.org/species/golden-winged-warbler/>.

More information on this warbler in the photos below!  
(Photos by Sparky Stensaas and Jason Heinen)



Golden-winged Warblers should be feeding newly fledged nestlings soon in the Sax-Zim Bog! The abundance of insects at this time of year help fuel their youngsters to get ready for their first migration. This female has a moth that she is hurriedly taking back to some noisy chicks.



Male Golden-winged Warblers will often sing from open perches above alder swamp or younger forest types. The buzz-bee-bee of this species can be heard from a long distance.



This is what the preferred habitat of Golden-winged Warbler looks like! Wet meadows with a lot of alder, new forest stands with young ash and aspen can be good, and patchy roadside swamps can hold a number of these beautiful warblers in fairly close proximity.