

## FIELD NOTES FROM HERE AND THERE \_\_\_\_\_

### YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER INSIDE OUR SHED

In the early part of December 1987, I was at my kitchen window peering out at our bird feeder. There I saw a beautiful bird I had never seen before. It was a small bird with black-and-white stripes along its side and a yellow throat. When I looked it up in our bird book, the description matched the Yellow-throated Warbler. A few days later my husband spotted the little bird on the same feeder and photographed it through the kitchen window. We saw "our" bird several times on the same feeder during December.

On Tuesday, December 29, there was a nor'easter that left a foot of snow on the ground in Falmouth and very cold temperatures. We did not see the little bird that day. The next day, Wednesday, our thermometer in Falmouth read zero degrees Fahrenheit with a wind chill factor of minus 20-40 degrees. Late in the afternoon, my husband and I returned from shopping--for bird food among other things. We drove into the driveway and saw the warbler trying to get a drink of water at the head of our garden where water is continuously circulated by a pump. My husband got out of the car taking the bird feed with him to the shed. The little bird followed him inside and perched on the lawn mower handle in front of him. It was so cold and windy my husband closed the door and left the bird inside for the night. The next day, December 31, we put bread crumbs and water out for him in the shed. He partook of both. My husband photographed



*Yellow-throated Warbler in the shed*

*Photo by Wallace E. Brown*

him several times before opening the window to let him fly to freedom as he wished. That is the end of my story as we did not see our little bird again.

Ruth Brown (Mrs Wallace E. Brown), East Falmouth

**Editor's Note:** In A. C. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers* (Part One) this species' "tameness" is noted; it is further described as "gentle and friendly" and as "fonder of bathing than most other warblers" (New York: Dover, 1963, 355-56). Mrs. Brown called the Environmental Helpline at Massachusetts Audubon Society to confirm the identification of the bird and later sent in photos. When this story was related to James Baird, his comment was that this was typical behavior of Yellow-throated Warblers. They are regularly found close to buildings, i.e., on porches, window ledges, and overhanging trees, and readily enter them through open doors or windows, as though interiors had some attraction for them. Although it is not apparent from the photo as reprinted here, in the color original the eyebrow stripe is yellow anteriorly, indicating this bird is a member of the eastern race, *Dendroica dominica dominica*, which breeds from Maryland southward and east of the mountains. It is noted for its affinity for Spanish Moss, in clumps of which it often nests.

### SCARLET Tanager WITH RED WING BARS

On the rainy morning of May 11, I stopped in at Mount Auburn on the way to work. It proved to be a frustrating day, normal for this spring of 1988. After one hour of searching I came up with a female Black-and-white Warbler and a glimpse of the olive back of an unidentified thrush flying away--most likely a Swainson's. I was about to give up when I spotted a female tanager (my first of the year) working through the trees. As I got closer, I discovered a male with her. When he came around the tree to my side, I did a double take, for the bird appeared to have a wing bar. I followed the two from tree to tree until they finally got into an oak, still leafless. The male did indeed have an almost perfect wing bar. I moved close enough to count seven out of eight feathers, well fringed with red. Everything else was correct for a normal Scarlet Tanager--easy to verify as another male came into the same tree and offered an easy comparison. The wing bar was a symmetrical variation, present on both wings.

I tried to convert the bird into a Scarlet and Western hybrid. However, after looking at all the guides and talking to Trevor Lloyd-Evans, I decided that it was a lack of melanin in the coverts that let the red pigment show through. Trevor said he had seen this phenomenon only once in an individual. Everyone else I asked had never run into such a plumage. I would be interested in hearing of any other reports.

Ted Raymond, Dedham