

FIRST NEST AND EGGS OF THE CANADA WARBLER FOR BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Finding nests with eggs of ground-nesting wood-warblers such as the Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*), Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapilla*), and Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*) is always a challenge and very few have been discovered in British Columbia (Campbell et al. 2001). The breeding range of the Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*) in the province is based on observations of five broods of fledged young often without details of their age. Developing an accurate breeding chronology, therefore, requires dates for a significant number of nests and eggs as well as the known ages of fledglings gathered over a long period of time.

On 6 July 2003 I accidentally discovered a nest of a Canada Warbler while trying to count the number of chicks in a brood of Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) about 4 km northeast of Jackfish Lake in the Chetwynd area. The general habitat consisted of a young mixed-aged stand of black spruce (*Picea mariana*), trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), and white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) on a gentle forested slope leading to a lake. The nest itself was in the centre of a 3.4 m tall, very dense shrub patch composed of willow (*Salix* sp.), Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), prickly rose (*Rosa acicularis*) and fringed with tall grasses and cow-parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*). The nest itself was on the ground among woody debris and fallen leaves at the base of a small prickly rose shrub. It contained four well-incubated eggs ascertained by the “float-in-water” test (see Campbell and Preston 2001). Later it was discovered that the adult female was the bird flushed. The male was never seen.

On 8 July Dale Jensen checked the nest and it contained four naked young. By 17 July the nestlings were ready to leave the nest and two days later all had fledged. The following year the nest site and vicinity was visited on six occasions between 28 May and 29 June. No Canada Warblers were heard or seen.

The Canada Warbler is probably widely distributed throughout the Peace River region of British Columbia but may be restricted to pockets of moist habitats with dense thickets on gentle slopes and some vegetative ground cover.

Acknowledgements

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Literature Cited

Campbell, R.W. and M.I. Preston. 2001. British Columbia Nest Record Scheme: 46th Annual Report – 2000 Nesting Season. WBT Wild Bird Trust of British Columbia Wildlife Report No. 7, Victoria, BC. 26 pp.

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About the Author

Wayne recently co-authored the book *Compact Guide to British Columbia Birds* published by Lone Pine Press.