

# Black and White Warbler

*Mniotilta varia*

## General Information:

-This mostly black-and-white striped bird feeds nuthatch style, moving up and down the trunks of trees and crawling over and under branches, a foraging behavior unlike any other warbler. It is one of the earliest warbler to return to the breeding grounds in early spring, because its bark-gleaning foraging habit does not require it to linger on wintering grounds until the leaves begin to develop.

## Song:

-Repetitive thin high-pitches series of 6-10 notes of *wee-sea, wee-sea* that sounds like the sound of a squeaky wheel turning.

## Behavior:

-Solitary or in pairs, this little bird probes into bark crevices with its long bill, but does not prop its body on the tree with its tail as do woodpecker and creepers. Eats adult insect, caterpillars, and spiders. If flushed from its ground nest, the female performs distraction display, dragging wing with her tail spread.



## Breeding:

-Monogamous and solitary.

## Nesting:

-Incubation of 10-12 days by the female. The 1-2 broods per year are brooded by the female, fed by both sexes, and leave the nest in 8-12 days but are still not able to fly well at that time.

## Population:

-Widespread in mature and second-growth deciduous or mixed deciduous-coniferous woodland with large trees. Declining in the Midwest and the Great Lakes regions because of cowbird parasitism and habitat loss.

## Conservation:

-A neo-tropical migrant that is vulnerable to forest fragmentation and habitat loss due to logging operation in mature forests.

## Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Black and White Warbler on your shoreland property I would suggest planting thick clumps of trees and shrubs in a poke and hope fashion, leaving open spaces in between. Some shrub options are American and Beaked Hazelnut, Snowberry, Buttonbush, Silky Dogwood, and Ninebark. For conifers I suggest Balsam Fir, Northern White Cedar, and Red Pine. Fill in remainder of the area with a combination of ferns, sedges, no-mow grasses, and wildflowers.