

New World Warblers – 2

By Bruce Poulter

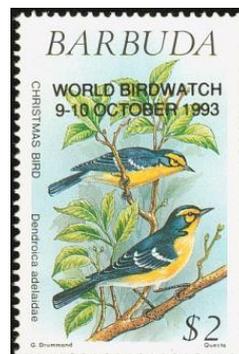
Bahama Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis rostrata*)

As its name suggests, the Bahama Yellowthroat is endemic to the Bahamas, where it is found on just six islands scattered through much of the archipelago. It is listed as a restricted-range species by BirdLife International, but is not considered to be threatened. Compared to the Common Yellowthroat, which is a widespread visitor to the same islands, the Bahama Yellowthroat has a larger and heavier bill and larger overall size. It is found in wooded areas, especially the under storey of pine forests. It was nicely illustrated on stamps by Bahamas (\$2, 1991).



Barbuda Warbler (*Setophaga subita*)

As the only endemic species on the island of Barbuda (State of Antigua and Barbuda) the Barbuda Warbler has an important role to play in the conservation of the island's biodiversity. It is a very active little bird, constantly on the move in the hunt for insects. Its natural habitat, near the island's settlement Codrington Village, is tropical dry scrubland near wet areas. It is threatened by habitat loss. Until relatively recently the Barbuda Warbler was 'listed' as a race of Adelaide's Warbler (*Dendroica adelaidae*). It is under this name that it appears on the four stamps shown below, namely – Barbuda (10 cents, 1990), Barbuda (\$2, 1991), Barbuda (\$2, 1991, World Birdwatch overprint), and Barbuda Mail overprint (75 cents, 1997).



Bay-breasted Warbler (*Setophaga castanea*)



This is a fairly common long-distance migrant. It breeds in northern North America from eastern British Columbia east to southern Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and the northern Great Lakes area. It winters in tropical America from Panama to western Colombia and north western Venezuela. The only example of a Bay-breasted Warbler on stamps is the male bird included on Liberia (3 cents, 1985) – one of a set of six birds issued by that country when commemorating the Birth Bicentenary of John James Audubon. As represented by Audubon, the breeding male bird is quite distinctive with its black face and forehead, chestnut crown, breast and flanks and two white wing bars.

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*)

This warbler has developed the specialised habit of feeding by creeping, nuthatch style, up and down tree trunks and along the main branches. It has relatively stout legs and a long bill to assist with this. It is unmistakable in all its plumages. The head is striped black and white and the upperparts are streaked black and white. In both feeding habits and plumage it is perhaps the most distinctive of all the New World Warblers. It is a short- to long-distance migrant breeding in eastern North America and migrating in a very leisurely manner to winter mainly in Central America and the West Indies. This distinctive warbler features on seven stamps three of which are shown below, namely British Virgin Islands (5 cents, 2005), Caribbean Netherlands (99 cents, 2017) and St. Pierre & Miquelon (0.47€, 2010)



Blackburnian Warbler (*Setophaga fusca*)

This warbler, formerly *Dendroica fusca*, is one of the real gems among the North American warblers. The fiery orange throats of the males as they pass through eastern North America in the spring add a splash of colour to the bare trees. It is a long distance migrant breeding in mature coniferous forest in eastern North America and wintering in southern Central America and in the Andes south to central Bolivia. It is named after Mrs Anna Blackburn (1740-1793) whose brother collected a specimen of the warbler. She never married but preferred to be called Mrs Blackburn as it gave her more standing and authority! This colourful warbler also features on seven stamps two of which are included here, namely Benin (100 francs, 1995) and Grenada (\$1, 2000).



Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*)

This bird, formerly *Dendroica striata*, undertakes the longest migration of any warbler. It breeds in northern boreal forests as far north as Alaska and spends its winter in South America, occasionally straying as far south as Argentina and Chile. In breeding plumage, the male has a glossy black crown and upper nape while the female's crown and nape are olive-grey. It breeds in spruce forests including the stunted forests at the northern limits of tree growth. Its inactive foraging style and tendency to perch in dense foliage near the canopy of trees make it fairly easy to miss – it is more often heard than seen! It features on four stamps including Grenada (\$1, 2002) and Guyana (\$60, 2007)

