



Cape May Warbler

(Setophaga tigrina)

STATUS

SARA NO STATUS
 Alberta SENSITIVE

British Columbia BLUE
 Saskatchewan NO STATUS

PRIMARY HABITAT

Old Coniferous

TERRITORY SIZE

0.25–1 ha

NEST TYPE

Canopy (conifer)

NEST REUSE

Unknown

STAND LEVEL

Large patches containing white spruce >10 m, with some taller than the canopy

LANDSCAPE LEVEL

Reserves of white spruce or mixed forests >100 years; old black spruce may have value

Populations of this spruce budworm specialist fluctuate with the booms and busts of budworm outbreaks. Its high-pitched song is easily confused with the Bay-breasted Warbler, another budworm specialist.

BREEDING WINDOW



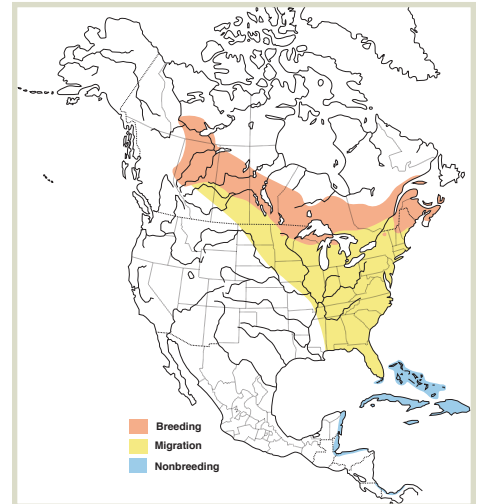
HABITAT ECOLOGY

- Cape May Warblers are found in old coniferous (>76 years) and conifer-leading mixedwood (>125 years) forests containing spruce and/or balsam fir, particularly stands with spruce >10 m tall with some trees extending above the canopy.^{1,2}
 - Important habitat features across their range include an open, mossy understory and richer, wetter sites containing white spruce, balsam poplar, and high alder cover (Saskatchewan).^{1,3}
- Populations of Cape May Warblers increase sharply in areas infested with spruce budworm.¹ During outbreaks, they are also found in early-seral forests.⁴

RESPONSE TO FOREST MANAGEMENT

- Cape May Warblers are very rarely observed in recently disturbed forest stands⁵ or mid-seral forests.²
- Evidence of use of riparian buffers is mixed for this species. In New England, Cape May Warblers had much lower densities in riparian buffers than unharvested forest.⁶ In Saskatchewan, Cape May Warblers and other coniferous-associated species used 10 m buffers plus 30 m partially harvested forest, but their abundance compared with unharvested stands what not tested.⁷
- Cape May Warblers occur at very low densities so there is little information on their responses to different harvest strategies.

RANGE MAP



STAND-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Large retention patches containing >10 m tall white spruce may provide some benefit, however their utility has not been tested for this species.
- Large, old forest stands are likely the most important tool for conserving this species (see Landscape-level Recommendations).⁸