

USACE Natural Resource Management

Migratory Birds



Golden-winged Warbler

FAST FACTS

REASONS FOR CURRENT STATUS:

Over the last 45 years, the Golden-winged Warbler has experienced one of the steepest declines of any North American songbird as measured by the Breeding Bird Survey (USFWS) and has one of the smallest populations of any songbird that is not listed as part of the Endangered Species Act. (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology)

Generally, the species occupies habitats in the Great Lakes and Appalachian Mountains regions. In the Appalachians, the regional population of Golden-winged Warblers has declined by 98%.

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION:

Working Lands for Wildlife is a voluntary approach to enhancing/restoring high-priority habitat for species that are declining, candidates for listing, or listed under the ESA. The effort is focused on providing assistance to private land owners in creating and maintaining the habitat necessary to sustain breeding populations within and adjacent to their current range. Conservation measures can be applicable recommendations for public land managers as well. The Golden-winged Warbler has been a priority conservation species for the program.

HABITAT NEEDS: The USDA recommends the following actions to improve habitat opportunities for the Golden-winged Warbler.

- Remove undesirable and invasive species in the forest understory to promote regeneration and development of desirable plant communities.
- Low shade removal of seedlings, shrubs, and saplings to reduce competition and promote regeneration of oaks.
- Conduct crop tree release and shelterwood harvests to promote mast production and regeneration of desirable trees.
- Create breeding habitat by retaining 10 to 20 high quality trees per acre during overstory removal. This action is implemented only when sufficient oak regeneration has occurred.
- Establish desirable tree seedlings in existing forests by supplemental planting or deer exclusion in regenerating areas.

Size: These warblers are small songbirds, typically measuring 5 inches in length, with slim bodies and short tails.

Color: Adult males are a silvery gray with a black and white face pattern, yellow crown, and large yellow patches on the wings. Females are similar but do not have the black mask.

Migration: The species migrates south mainly through a corridor of states east of the Mississippi River and west of the Appalachian Mountains. Peak movement is noted in September, with a return to breeding habitat beginning in April. (*All About Birds*)

Photos: All About Birds (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) and USDA

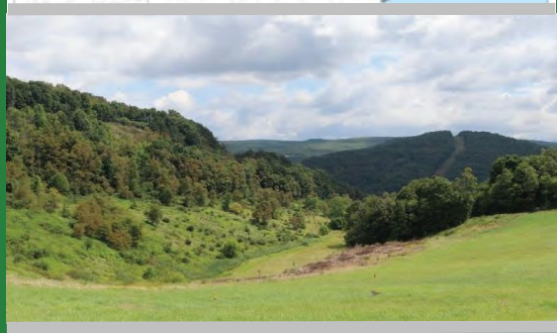
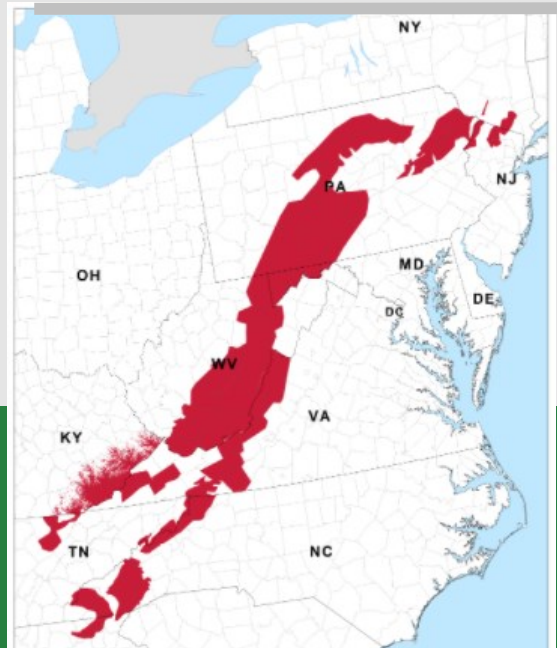
Natural Resource Management (NRM)

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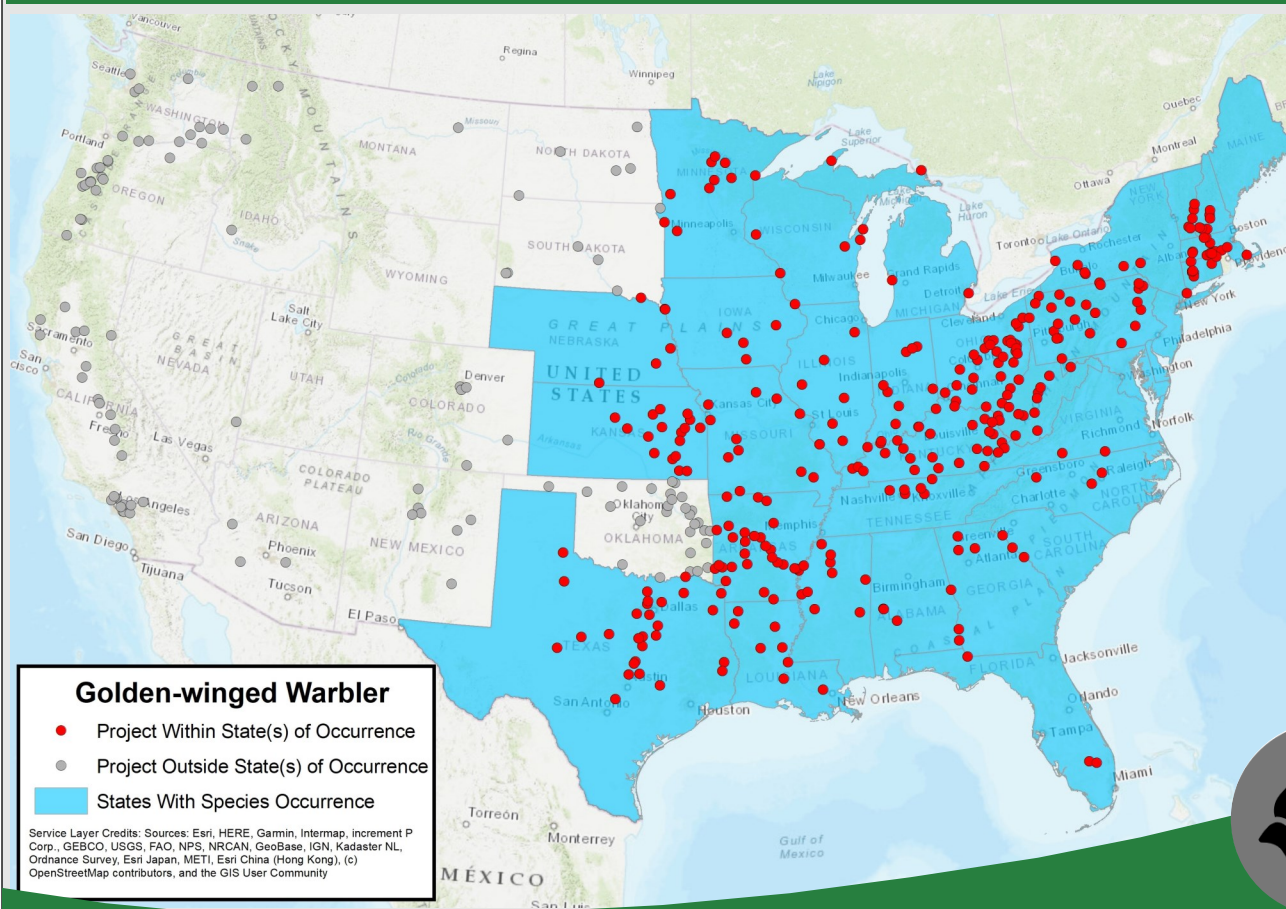
USACE ROLE: A component of the budget process for the Environmental Stewardship Program is to identify budget request packages that include work which aids conservation species targeted by State Wildlife Action Plans and programs such as Working Lands for Wildlife. USACE partners with organizations such as the Ruffed Grouse Society which work to promote the establishment of early successional habitat that benefits not only grouse, but a variety of species including songbirds such as the Golden-winged Warbler.

Map Top: USDA and Working Lands for Wildlife Priority Areas for the Golden-winged Warbler. Photo: Jennings Randolph Lake



WHAT IS USACE NRM DOING:

Jennings Randolph Lake, located on the North Branch Potomac River, spans into Maryland and West Virginia and encompasses approximately 4,500 acres of primarily wooded, rugged land. This USACE project is found within the priority area established for the Golden-winged Warbler by the Working Lands for Wildlife program. Project staff are actively involved in forest management; for example, staff conducted a 50 acre timber harvest to create early successional habitat that would directly benefit species such as the Golden-winged Warbler. Partners, including the Ruffed Grouse Society and Garret Community College, support USACE efforts by conducting breeding bird surveys to monitor the site for use by desired species.



Golden-winged Warbler

- Project Within State(s) of Occurrence
- Project Outside State(s) of Occurrence
- States With Species Occurrence

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Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ORISE Fellowship, Institute for Water Resources

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