



# The Ovenbird

*A Warbler*







While walking at a bird sanctuary in PA, this ovenbird's nest was discovered only one foot off the designated trail. It would have been easy to take a step off the trail and crush the nest, as it was well camouflaged.

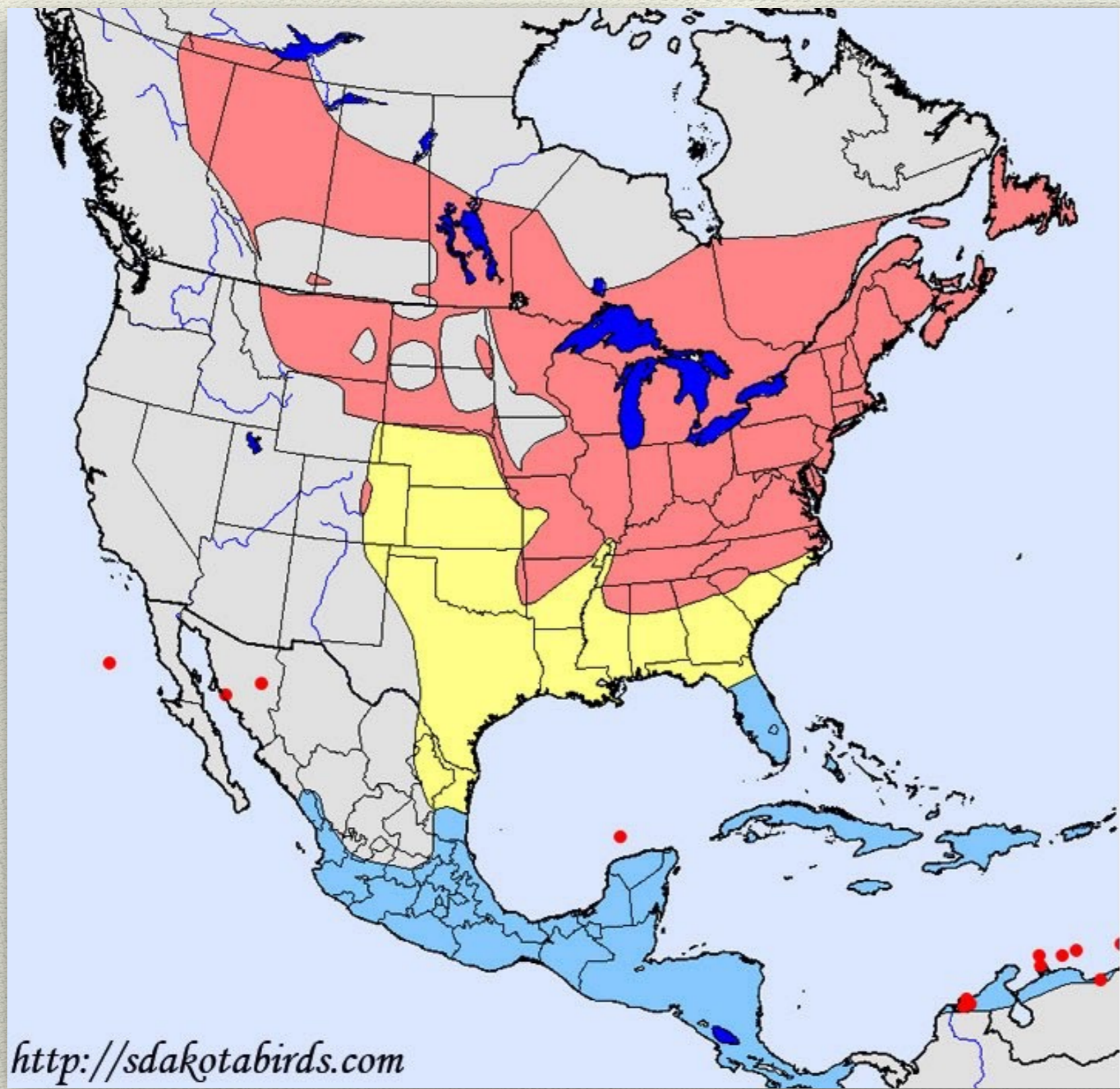
This is one reason why it is important to stay on the marked trails, as several birds nest on the ground. Ovenbirds get their name from their nest. It resembles an old fashioned dome-shaped clay oven or a modern pizza oven.












# Ovenbird

*Seiurus aurocapillus*



-  Permanent Resident
-  Breeding Resident
-  Nonbreeding Resident
-  Passage Migrant
-  Introduced
-  Uncertain Status
-  Vagrant

<http://sdakotabirds.com>

Map created by Terry Sohl,  
Data from NatureServe



Songbirds  
love to sing!





When a bird breathes, it takes in air through its bill, and the air passes down its throat into the trachea. The windpipe forks and carries some air to each of the lungs and is exhaled back along the same route. This system of air movement also allows sound production, as it does with us.



Yellow warbler\_Keith Williams



The melodious call of many birds comes from an organ buried deep within their chests called a syrinx.



Yellow warbler\_Keith Williams



Reptiles, amphibians, and mammals all have a larynx, a voice box at the top of the throat that protects the airways. The vocal cords are in the larynx and can vibrate to enable humans to talk, pigs to grunt, and lions to roar.



Michaela Sagatova



Birds have larynxes, too. But the organ they use to sing, the syrinx, is lower down—where the windpipe splits to go into the two lungs.



Isabel Cutler



In many songbirds, the syrinx is not much bigger than a raindrop. It is extremely efficient, using nearly all the air that passes through it. By contrast, a human creates sound using only 2% of the air exhaled through the larynx.



Wood thrush\_Corey Hayes



The northern cardinal is able to sweep through more notes than are on a piano keyboard in just a tenth of a second. Because each branch of the syrinx is individually controlled, the cardinal can start its sweeping notes with one side of the syrinx and seamlessly switch to the other side without stopping for a breath.



Lindell Dillon



In songbirds, each side of the syrinx is independently controlled, allowing birds to produce two unrelated pitches at once. Some birds even have the ability to sing rising and falling notes simultaneously, like this amazing wood thrush, in its final trill.



Corey Hayes



The syrinx of birds varies considerably among species, being most complex in the songbirds. The song structure can be very complex as the two sides of the syrinx can vibrate independently. In the northern cardinal, for example, the left side of the syrinx produces a low pitch while the right side produces the higher pitch. Also, birds are not restricted to singing while exhaling as we do, but can sing while inhaling. The skylark can sing a song continually for up to 18 minutes.



Tony Brown



Songbirds begin learning their songs while still in the nest while listening to their parents and then practice the songs after they fledge. Some songbirds, such as the catbird, thrashers, and mockingbirds, learn to mimic other species—frogs, cats, and even car alarms. And they love to sing at dawn!



White-throated sparrow\_Keith Cole Schneider





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