

White-eyed Vireo (*Vireo griseus*)

Family: Vireonidae



Photo by Derek Bakken

Physical Characteristics: Head and back grayish olive. White throat. Underparts white with yellow flanks. Wings and tail dark with two white wing bars on each wing. Eyes with white irises surrounded by yellow spectacles. Short, stout bill. Sexes similar. Size: Small, approximately 4.5 to 5.5 inches long. Wingspan of 7.5 to 8.5 inches. Weight: 1.5 ounces.

Interesting Facts: Secretive. More noticeable for song than looks. Similar to Bell's Vireo and Blue-headed Vireo.

Status: Common. Populations appear stable. Banding recoveries have shown they can live more than 6 years in the wild.

Habitat: Prefer shrubs, thickets, hedgerows and edges of forests. Bushes and shrubs in abandoned cultivation or overgrown pastures.

Nesting: Nest is a cup of leaves, bark flakes, and pieces of wasp nest attached to a fork in a tree branch by spider webs. Usually located in a low shrub up to 6 feet above ground. 3-5 dark-spotted, white eggs incubate approximately two weeks and fly 9-11 days later.

Food Habits: Insects, spiders, snails, caterpillars, and small lizards. Fall and winter the vireo supplements its diet with berries of

dogwood, wax myrtle, wild grapes and other fruits.

Song: Distinctive call of "quick, take me to the railroad, quick!" Several other calls unique to itself. Also mimics Gray Catbird, American Robin, House Wren and other species.

Range: Occur only in the western hemisphere. Short distance migrants. Winters in extreme southeastern US (Gulf Coast and further south), Central America, Guatemala and Cuba. Migrates to North America to breed in the eastern US south of a line from eastern Nebraska, across Indiana and New York.

Milam County: Migratory. Summer breeding and nesting. May be resident. Southeastern coastal plain race does not typically migrate out of its breeding range in winter.



Photo by Don Travis



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Sources: Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org>); Chipper Woods Bird Observatory (<http://www.wbu.com>); Cornell Lab of Ornithology (www.allaboutbirds.org); Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America; Int'l Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN.org).