

Songs of the Blackwater Spruce Forest

The often entangled boughs of evergreens and deep shade beneath make seeing birds difficult. A number of characteristic birds of the spruce have distinctive songs. Listen for these songs in searching for birds in that bit of the North Woods along the Alleghenies.

A bubbling and trilling voice will be heard beneath the spruce that almost seems will not end! This is the song of the little Winter Wren that has almost a mousy appearance as it dodges among moss-covered boulders.

From a tangle of rhododendron will come the half-hearted notes of the Black-throated Blue Warbler in sharp contrast to the Winter Wren. It seems to say lay, lay, zeeee or "I am lazy." The Black-throated Green Warbler will offer its rather wistful notes from higher up in the forest overstory. Its song is a dreamy zee, zee, zee, zo-zee. The name of this species and the Black-throated Blue are descriptive with the "blue" and "green" on their backs.

Listen for an almost flute-like song that seems to drift upward among the trees. The notes have an airy quality that is stirring to hear. This is the voice of the Hermit Thrush, which is often considered the most beautiful song of the spruce forest.

From high in a spruce will come the warble of a Purple Finch whose plumage will stand in contrast to the evergreens. Not really purple, he has more the appearance of being dipped in strawberry juice.

To experience the thrill of listening for these species of birds and the peace of a morning concert in the spruce forest of the Blackwater Canyon, join Friends of Blackwater in Tucker County on September 11 and 12, as we stroll along the spruce forest paths in search of a great birding adventure.

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