



BLACK-CAPPED VIREO

BY SHARON BEALS

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Contemporary

United States

Black-capped Vireo

Vireo atricapillus

Comal, Texas, collected in 1888

American Museum of Natural History

The smallest vireo in the United States, Black-capped Vireos construct an open hanging cup of leaves, grasses, plant fibers, spider webs and cocoons, lined with fine grasses. They breed in the disappearing scrublands of the south-central United States and north-central Mexico. Over grazing, habitat disruption, and nest parasitism by cowbirds have caused their disappearance from Kansas, and they are gravely endangered in Oklahoma and much of their range in Texas. A few preserves in Texas, where nests are monitored for cowbird eggs, and scrublands have been protected offer some hope for the survival of these lovely singers. The nests were photographed i...