

■ LMT October Bird of the Month: The Prothonotary Warbler ■

*The prothonotary warbler is one of North America's most dazzling songbirds, glowing golden-yellow with contrasting blue-gray wings and tail.

*Unlike most warblers, it is a cavity nester, choosing abandoned woodpecker holes or nest boxes in wet, wooded habitats such as cypress swamps and bottomland forests, which has earned it the nickname "swamp warbler."

*Males perform a distinctive courtship display by carrying moss into cavities to entice females, a behavior unique among warblers. Each spring, these tiny birds undertake an impressive migration, leaving their breeding grounds in the southeastern and mid-Atlantic United States to winter thousands of miles away in Central and South American mangroves.

*Their reliance on healthy wetlands across continents makes them an important conservation symbol, reminding us of the need to protect fragile ecosystems.

*Beyond their ecological significance, prothonotary warblers have even found a place in history; during the Cold War, testimony about this species played a surprising role in the Alger Hiss espionage case.

*With their brilliant plumage, unusual nesting habits, and long-distance journeys, prothonotary warblers remain not only a delight to birdwatchers but also a striking emblem of the beauty and resilience of wetland life.

*Thanks to the PA Game Commission's gift of three Bird Boxes, Lower Makefield may have nesting Prothonotary Warblers in the Spring, down by the Canal!

■ Fun Fact: The bird's name comes from the bright yellow robes worn by prothonotaries, clerks of the Roman Catholic Church.