

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

1998-98

ACCEPTED (6-1)

Species: Cassin's Vireo

Date(s): Sept. 13, 1998

Time seen: 2:00-2:15 p.m.

Locality: Rocky Mtn Arsenal Wildlife Refuge

Duration: 12

Optical equipment: Binoculars

Number of birds seen: 1

Light conditions: Excellent

Distance from bird: 10 feet and up

Weather at time of observation: Sunny, bright

Prior weather & number of days since change: Thunderstorms day before, otherwise dry and hot.

Describe habitat: Locust grove, trees 10-20 feet high

Describe behavior: Responding to a screech-owl whistle, in came 4 Black-capped Chickadees, an Orange-crowned Warbler, a House Wren, 2 Plumbeous Vireos, and this bird. This one came in with the two Plumbeous Vireos; it moved deliberately and fed on 5-8 caterpillars of various sizes. Once it spied an inch-long caterpillar on a leaf which it had to attack 7-8 times, from above and below, in order to dislodge; it finally flew away with it and apparently ate it instantly, for within 10 seconds it had nothing in its bill.

Field marks observed: size, color, pattern, shape, bill, etc.:

Size: About same size as Plumbeous Vireos with which we saw it; larger than the Orange-crowned Warbler in the vicinity. Chunkier than the chickadees.

Head: prominent white spectacles and a bridge from spectacle across bill; color gray or grayish brown; in some lights appeared yellowish. Possibly buffy on top of head. Creamy throat.

Back: Yellowish, blending into head without notable contrast;

Wings: Yellowish, two prominent white wing bars.

Belly: yellowish vest; yellow belly to tail.

Bird's call or song: Once made a scolding call, kek kek kek kek kek, which at first we thought was a House Wren.

Field marks not seen:

Similar species:

The prominent spectacles and bridge across the bill, with the wing bars, rule out any species except the three ex-Solitary Vireos.

We compared this bird directly with two Plumbeous Vireos. One of them was mostly gray, the other had a touch of yellow on either side of the breast. The Cassin's had a much lower cast all over.

Blue-headed Vireos have a distinct contrast between back and head, between yellow and blue or gray-blue; this bird lacked this contrast, either because the head had yellow in it because the two blended into each other.

Prior experience: We've seen lots of Plumbeous, possibly one Cassin's. We've also observed blue-headed in New York.

Description from: Notes taken in field

*Urling C. Kingery*  
Urling C. Kingery

*Hugh E. Kingery*  
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✓ 9-13-98 rec'd  
~~Not on current revision~~  
~~list - not circulated~~