

rec'd 10-1-97

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

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Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Blue-headed Vireo Vireo Solitarius
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s): 20 September 1997

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Adult

Locality: Poudre River Bike Trail near PEB Elevation: ~ 5000'

Nearest town: Fort Collins County: Larimer

Time(s) observed: ~ 11:00 AM

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 5 minutes

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

None

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Bill Lisowsky 2919 Silverplume Dr. FC 80525 970/225-6827

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Flat, overcast sky (good color saturation). Bird was southwest of me, sun was southeast. Distance was ~ 20 feet. Angle: at eye level or slightly below me.

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Swift Ultralight 8x40 binocs

Distance, and how measured: ~ 20' (guess)

If photographed, type of equipment and film: —

Who else photographed the bird? —

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying): Bird was in with a small flock of 10-15 migrants. When I saw it, it was mostly interacting in a somewhat agonistic fashion with another "solitary" vireo I now believe was a very plain Cassin's Vireo. They were chasing each other, above feathers puffed, wings out - in short, it was conducive to seeing birds well.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field: The bird was a large vireo with a bill thicker than a warbler. The first features I noticed were its wide, bright yellow, flared out flanks which ran the entire length of the sides. Then I noted its dark mouse gray head with just a hint of worn denim blue. The head color extended well behind the eye and down the back of the head to the nape. The eye ring was broad and appeared complete. The white of the eye extended forward to the base of the bill (about 1/2 way).

Description (continued): A sharp transition in color began at the nape and the entire back, rump and upper tail appeared to be a rich greenish-gray with just a hint of yellow. The bird had bold wing bars. The throat was bright white, as were the rest of the underparts (except for the flanks). The breast & belly were not as white as the throat but this could have been due to the light. I did not note the color of the legs but they were not pale. The eye was dark. The edges of the 2nd feathers were greenish.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

The bird (and the other vireos) was apparently giving little scold notes but because of the confusion with the other bird and a nearby western wood-pewee also giving agitation notes, I can't say for sure which ones to assign the blue-headed.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

Riparian area. The birds were in a peachleaf/crack willow which leaned out over a swampy pond area about 50 yards south of the Poudre River.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? The combination of bright yellow flanks, blueish head contrasting with a greenish back, and bright white throat/underparts seems good for separation with both Cassin's & Plumbeous Vireos.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

I have seen dozens of "Blue-headed" Solitary Vireos in the east the last being in June 1997 in Quebec State Park, Vermont. I have seen two other Blue-headed Vireos in CO. I have seen ~ 8-10 Cassin's Vireos in CO, 100 Plumbeous Vireos & ~ 15 Gray's in CO.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: Birding Vol 29 No 6

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation X from memory X

Date and time report was written: 21 Sept '97 8:30 AM

Reporting observer: David Leatherman Signature: David Leatherman

Address: 612 Stover St #7 Ft Collins CO 80524

Return to:
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