

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

PHILADELPHIA VIREO

Vireo philadelphicus

Location: "Valco Ponds"; Pueblo, Pueblo County, Colorado

Date: September 7, 1995

I was birding alone on the morning of the 7th. I was returning to my car when I spotted this vireo. I observed it with my B & L Elite 10x40 binoculars. There was good sun from my right, though the light was filtered and indirect where the bird was. I watched it at about 8:00 a.m. for about 2 minutes. I was quite close, from 15 to 25 feet away. It stayed at eye-height or below in some thick green foliage that was growing in the center of a couple of Russian olive trees along the path. It moved slowly and foraged lazily, gleaning along twigs and branches and probing amongst the foliage. It never did any fly-catching. It was actually quite difficult to see clearly as it seemed always to remain half-concealed in the foliage. For a minute I constructed the bird's identity from bits and pieces -- a side view, an undertail, the side of the head, the back and so on. Finally it broke free for a few seconds and observed the entire front end of the bird at once, from the middle of the wing, forward. This clinched the identification for me. Brandon Percival observed this bird on the following day.

Description:

This was a small, slender warbler- or vireo-sized bird, about 5-6" long. The bill was small, stout, black, with a blunt tip and slight hook. The cap was gray and contrasted with the olive-gray back. The wings were a darker, dusky gray. There were no wingbars. The underside was white with a rather bright yellow wash across the sides of the breast ("shoulders"), breast and chest. It was whitest down the lower belly and undertail and yellowest on the throat and breast. The face was gray, with a dark line entirely through the eye that included the dark lores. The bird had a pale, whitish superciliary.

Similar Species:

The small size, slender build, small bill and general coloration and pattern indicate a warbler or vireo. Warblers have slender, acute bills that lack the blunt tip and tiny hook of this bird. The contrasting gray crown, dark line through the eye and lack of wingbars eliminate Bell's Vireo. Warbling Vireo is most similar, but it has light lores, and lacks the yellow center to the breast and throat.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all of the Colorado vireos and most warblers. I have seen several Philadelphia Vireos in other states.

This report was prepared from notes made after observation.

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