

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

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PHILADELPHIA VIREOVireo philadelphicus

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

Date: September 14, 1996

Background:

I was birding with Brandon Percival about 8:00 a.m. It had been heavily overcast with a light mist but was clearing. The ground was wet with heavy dew and mist. We observed the bird for a period of about 10 minutes in the center of a large Russian Olive. It was about 15 high, deep in the foliage and fairly difficult to observe. It was lethargic, moving very slowly. At times we would think that it must have flown out of the interior of the tree because we couldn't observe any movement for a few seconds. Only to realize that it was still inside moving slowly. We got numerous partial and partially hidden views in the foliage but I finally got an exquisite, clear profile look at the entire bird for about 15 seconds. I observed it with my B & L Elite 10x40 binoculars. The bird was silent.

Description:

This was a small, slender warbler-sized bird, about 4 1/2 - 5" long. It was chunky for such a small bird, short-tailed and bull-headed. The bill was small, dark, short and thick without a pointed tip. The cap was gray, contrasting with the olive-gray back and wings. The edge of the upper wing coverts in the folded wing was pale, forming a single pale, indistinct wingbar. There was an arching, white supercilium that broadened behind the eye. There was a rather distinct, thin blackish eyeline and black loreal spot in front of the eye. The undersides were very yellow, pure and bright, including all of the throat, breast and belly, not just the center. This yellow color was paler on the undertail coverts.

Similar Species:

The small size, slender build, small bill and general coloration and pattern indicate a warbler or vireo. Warblers have slender, sharp bills that lack the blunt tip of this bird's bill. 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 and once before (September 7, 1995 about 100 yards from this spot).

This report was prepared from notes made after observation.

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