

1997-68
ACCEPTED 7-0

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

WHITE-EYED VIREO
Vireo griseus

Location: Lake Henry; Ordway; Crowley County, Colorado

Date: May 9, 1997

Setting:

I was birding with Brandon Percival and Bob Dickson at the "grove" at Lake Henry. This was the second day of the "big fallout" this spring. This bird was strongly singing from the heavier thickets of cottonwoods and tamarisk to the north. During the morning we could frequently locate it by song. We saw the bird on numerous occasions this morning and observed it at close range with binoculars. I observed it four times between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. I watched it from as close as 6-20 feet with my B & L Elite 10x42 binoculars. It foraged at medium heights in smaller trees, moving moderately and gleaning insects from the foliage and smaller branches. It was fairly secretive, staying usually in foliage and not flying out to expose itself in the open. It was curious though, and responded to "pishing" by coming in to observe us. Its song was a repeated short, emphatic phrase, ending in a "popping" note. I am very familiar with the song and I knew that it was a white-eyed before we even saw it.

Description:

The bird was an adult in breeding plumage. It was small (but a little larger and plumper than a typical warbler, about 6" long), plump, with a slim, short tail and relatively big-headed. Its bill was fairly strong, black and hooked. The iris was white. It had conspicuous yellow "spectacles" on a gray head. The back and crown were gray, washed with greenish-yellow. The wings were dark with two distinct pale yellow wingbars. The bird was white below (including the chin and throat) with a strong yellow wash to the breast, flanks and belly.

Similar Species:

The small size, active habits and small stout bill indicate a vireo. Red-eyed, Philadelphia and Warbling vireos do not have wingbars. Solitary, Bell's, Hutton's and Gray vireos do not have the white iris nor the strong yellow spectacles. Yellow-throated Vireo has a yellow throat and lacks the white iris.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all the vireos mentioned in the section above. This is the seventh White-eyed Vireo that I have seen in Colorado since 1992.

This report is prepared from notes made immediately after observation.

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