

Summer 1979

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO

CFO CRC File # 51-80-6

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM OTHER OBSERVERS SOUGHT, BUT NOT RECEIVED.

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At 7:00 a.m. on July 3, 1979, we sighted a yellow-throated Vireo in the western edge of the Crow Valley Recreational Park, Pawnee National Grasslands.

The bird was first seen when it flew into the cottonwoods above our campsite. It was immediately noted to be smaller than nearby Orchard Orioles (*Icterus spurius*), being closer to Wood Warbler size. We "lost" the bird temporarily, after it had landed about twenty feet up in the trees. The vireo was re-found by its distinctively methodical, deliberate leaf-gleaning and flycatching. We followed the bird for approximately four minutes, as it moved between four or five trees, before finally losing track of it. Several later attempts to re-locate the bird that morning were not successful.

The vireo was identified almost immediately by two of us, and during the observation the following field marks were noted:

Approximately $5\frac{1}{2}$ in length.
Heavy bodied, & bill-headed in appearance. Typically, the bird had a heavy, black vireo bill. The iris was dark brown, and the pupil was black. The cap, nape, auriculars, and upper

back were an olive-green. The wide eye-ring, lores, throat, and breast were a bright lemon-yellow. The wings were a dark gray-black, with 2 white wing-bars, and the tertials were immargined with white. The rump and low back were grey. The low belly, flanks, and undertail were whitish. The rectrices were a dark gray-black, finely edged paler, appearing proportionately short and thick (broad). It moved without the nervous flightiness of a wood warbler.

On July 6, 1979 we returned to Crow Valley Park. While birding alone at about 5:30 am. I re-found the vireo in another group of cottonwoods in the center of the Park, above several picnic benches.

The same deliberate foraging pattern aided in finding the bird about twenty-five^{feet} up in the trees. This time, near to the vireo was a male Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) for direct comparison. Since the sun was just coming up, the lighting was quite poor, and the most decided differences noted were the vireo's

contrasting wingbars (light on dark), compared to the lack of such on the warbler. Also readily evident was the difference in bill and body shape, both being much slimmer, and more streamlined in the warbler. Both birds flew to the western area of the park after about six minutes.

The following are two species that, under some circumstances, could be confused with a Yellow-Throated Vireo:

Solitary Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*):

Some races of this vireo can have extensive yellow-green on the back and flanks, yet even these have white "spectacles" and throat, plus a blue-grey head, unlike the Yellow-Throated Vireo.

Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*):

The Pine Warbler is generally similar to a Yellow-Throated Vireo in color and color patterns, yet the absence of prominent yellow "spectacles", the slimmer bill and build, the conspicuous white spots in the rectrices, and its more active, flighty feeding behavior, all eliminated this bird from consideration.

Comparing our description with descriptions taken from specimens (Chapman 1923; T. Gilbert Pearson 1917) we concluded that the bird was in fresh adult plumage.

The latest date of departure of Yellow-Throated Vireo from eastern Colorado known to us is 5/22/68 (Lane 1979). Thus, we were very surprised seeing this bird 42 days after that extreme date, compounded by the rarity of the vireo in its expected migration period, and the lack of any mention of a record on the Fairlee Grassland Checklist.

Signed

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