

1997-24
ACCEPTED 7-0

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

YELLOW-THROATED VIREO

Vireo flavifrons

Location: Two Buttes Reservoir, Springfield; Baca County, Colorado

Date: May 4, 1997

Setting:

I first became aware of this bird when I heard it singing. It was foraging in the trees along the road grading down to the first parking area below the dam. This bird was seen by many observers (including Brandon Percival). We watched it forage in the leaves for about 1/2 hour and it gave spectacular views to all. It sang off and on – its slightly harsh, varied song – a slow series of sweet notes. I had heard another the day before at Lamar Comm. College. It moved slowly and was rather easy to observe and follow. I watched it with B & L Elite 10x42 binoculars about 30'. Conditions and light were excellent.

Description:

This was an adult in breeding plumage (probably a male from the fact that it sang). It was a small passerine, about 6" long, roughly the size of a sparrow or warbler. It was markedly short-tailed, and big-headed. We knew it to be a vireo by its small, stout, hooked bill that was all dark. It had a dark eye. The most striking feature was a bright yellow spectacle against an otherwise grayish-olive head, face and nape. The back was this same color of olive-gray. The wings and tail were blackish and it had two white wingbars. The undersides were all white with a large clear yellow patch of yellow on the chin, throat and upper breast.

Similar Species:

The 6" size and short tail; blunt, hooked bill indicate a vireo. The Pine Warbler is most similar in pattern but lacks the broad yellow lores and has a yellowish, not gray, rump. Warbling, Philadelphia and Red-eyed vireos lack wingbars. Gray and Hutton's vireos lack the strong eyerings and lack the two-toned yellow/white underparts. Solitary Vireo lacks the yellow throat and eyering and has a gray, not greenish, crown. The White-eyed Vireo has a white iris, white throat and yellow-tinged flanks.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all similar warblers and vireos with which this bird might be confused. I have seen Yellow-throated Vireo four other times in Colorado.

This report is prepared from notes made at the time of observation.

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