

SPRING 1979

APPENDIX II

52-80-72

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

Species: Worm-eating Warbler; Helminthophila vermivorus
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): 27 May 1979 Time Bird Seen: 10:30 am to 10:50 am ^{group moved on at this point.}
Locality: Hanna Ranch (Division of Wildlife Property)
Fountain, Colorado - El Paso County
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell Binoculars 8x40

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: Breeding

Light conditions: seen in a variety due to dense cottonwood stand.

Clear, sunny day.
Distance from bird, and how measured: closest look 4 meters (estimate)

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Bird moved about young cottonwoods steadily changing perches + grooming back + catkins. Motions were fairly deliberate for a warbler (yet not as much as a black + white warbler). Allowed fairly close approach - moving 15-25 m ahead of group. Remained in an approx. 4 hectare area.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Cottonwood-willow river bottom. This particular spot on the property is a dense stand of younger cottonwoods, 15-25 yrs. old; broken by a normally dry creekbed (Little Ftn. Cr.) & wash taken over by willows + tangles. Bird mostly in cottonwoods.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Lynn Grace 1238 Apt. 5 Wood Ave. Colo. Spgs. CO. 80903

Eleanor Willis 540 Ashbury Place Colo. Spgs. CO.

Bill Pousby 58 Minnehaha Manitou Spgs. CO.

not seen in CRO convention field trip - at least 10 other observers - saw super yellow throat

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field. Bird 1st seen apx. 10 m. high in notch of a cottonwood. I noticed warbler

size & bill immediately + knew I had not previously seen this species. First noticed striped cap much like a washed-out white-crown sparrow; colors creamy tan-yellow + rusty brown. As bird changed positions (fairly deliberate gleaning of catkins) lighter color of stripes showed up nearly ^{yellow} ~~white~~. No wing bars, no white on tail feathers. Overall body color drab; buffy-tan-olive breast that nearly matched color of head stripes. Stripes passed through eye (dark) + across crown.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.: I did not hear the bird, but other

observers described it as a longer version of a chipping sparrow - faint + high in pitch. Observed by apx. 20 people over 15 to min. period til we left area. 5-6 people heard it, given from perch.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

White-crowned sparrow: . . . had warbler beak, size, shape, behavior
 Warbling Vireo: . . . distinct stripes on crown of head beak
 Tennessee Warbler: . . . buff-yellow breast, rust + buff stripes across crown
 Swainson's Warbler: . . . from book: no rusty cap (rust + buff stripes) No true white
 Field Sparrow: . . . no wing bars in stripe above eye.
 (other sparrows) . . . definite warbler beak, no eye ring, no rusty cap - all of above

Prior experience with this and similar species:

No previous experience with Worm-eating Warbler. No prev. exp. of Swainson's (book)
 Familiar with WC Sparrow, W. Vireo + Tennessee W., Field Sparrow

This report was written from notes made during my own after comparisons of other observers observation; from memory _____.

Name (print) : Margaret Abbott

Mailing address: 1314 N. Arcadia Colo. Spgs. Co. 80903

Signature: Margaret A. Abbott

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
 c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
 Denver Museum of Natural History
 City Park
 Denver, CO 80205