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CFO-ORC FILE # 52-91-72

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD : : UNUSUAL RECORD : X :

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Worm-eating Warbler : Helminthos vermivorus
(Scientific name)

Date(s): 5/15/91

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: unknown Plumage: Adult

Locality: Grove below Lamar Community College Elevation: 3600'

Nearest town: Lamar County: Prowers

Time(s) observed: 6:30-6:45 pm

Duration of observation: 15 minutes

Others who saw the bird with you (names and addresses): None

Others who saw the bird independently: None

Light conditions in relationship to bird: Afternoon sun, but in shady undergrowth.

Optical equipment used: Bushnell 10 x 40 Custom Binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment and film: Could not photograph because of shade.

Who else photographed the bird? No one.

Describe the bird's behavior: First noticed because of audible rustling in leaves in Squaw Current. Slowly and methodically fed in low tangles, presenting first head, then body, then entire body. Instead of moving feet at a time, it slowly moved only inches at a time. Never higher than 7' above ground. At one time, hung upside down as it foraged for insects on the underside of leaves, in a manner reminiscent of a chickadee.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually saw in the field.

Fairly large looking for a warbler. Bill long and stout for a warbler, dark but not black. Very well marked, black line through eye, and broader black lines above tan superciliary. Medial crown line pale tan. All of the lines on the head

extended broadly back to the upper margin of back. Back brownish-olive, unpatterned. No wing bars. Fairly long tail was visibly notched in center. Legs were pale: a fairly bright pinkish color. Entire underparts were a creamy buff color from the throat to the vent, and were noticeably paler than the back was. No streaking was present anywhere on the body.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): No sounds were made.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: In undergrowth in a well-known migrant trap. Taller trees were mostly cottonwood. Close to the Squaw Currents were some Peach-leaved Willows. There was a small stream about ten feet behind the tangle the bird was in.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? With good looks, this bird is unlikely to be mistaken for any other bird. Known as a warbler by the long bill. Vireos have hooked bills and very different head patterns. Sparrows have shorter bills and do not methodically work through undergrowth looking for insects. The closest bird in appearance is Swainson's Warbler, which has a much more subdued head pattern and brownish cap.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species? I have seen other Worm-eating Warblers at High Island in Texas. I have observed Swainson's Warbler in Ft. Collins previously.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc., consulted and how this influenced your identification:
a) at time of observation: None

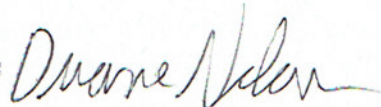
b) after observation: National Geographic

This report was written from reports made during (x), after observation (), from memory ().

Date and time report was written: 5 pm. 1/13/91

Reporting observer: Duane Nelson

Signature:



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All reports will be maintained with the Curator of Zoology, Denver Museum of Natural History, Denver, CO 80205.