

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

1998-134

ACCEPTED (6-1)

WORM-EATING WARBLER

Helmitheros vermivorus

Location: Lake Hasty campground below John Martin Res.; Lamar, Bent County, Colorado

Date: May 8, 1998

Background:

This bird was discovered during the C.F.O. convention and was seen by many, including Percival, Dickson, Olson, Quesenberry and others. We found the bird shortly after we discovered another of this species at Lamar Community College earlier in that morning. The area is a park-like campground with large trees and a lawn, with little ground cover. We found it about 10:15 a.m. and observed it for about 5 minutes. It foraged about 10-30 feet high in the trees but sometimes came down to the ground. I also observed it on the bench seat of a picnic table once and also on a split rail fence, acting much like a sparrow. I observed it with binoculars (B & L Elites, 10x42) at close range (25' - 40').

Description:

This bird was a medium-small warbler, about 5" long. It was a horizontal warbler, walking and foraging much like a waterthrush. It was dull olive-brown above; lighter tan below. Overall it was quite uniform in coloration and lacked wingbars. It was buffy-orangish on the face and throat. There were two dark line through the crown and two dark superciliaries. The bill was barely pinkish, rather stout and sharply pointed. Legs and feet were pink.

Similar Species:

The slender shape and long, slender, pointed bill rule out sparrows. Vireos have heavy, slightly hooked bills. Warbling Vireo is chunkier, and lacks the head stripes. Philadelphia Vireo has yellow tones totally lacking in this bird and lacks the black head stripes. Tennessee Warbler is a smaller bird, has whiter underparts, a gray crown and lacks the head stripes. Orange-crowned Warbler lacks the crown stripes and is yellower below. Virginia's and Nashville warblers have yellow breasts and lack the head stripes. Female Black-throated Blue Warbler shows a whitish spot in the wing and lacks the crown stripes. Swainson's Warbler lacks the strong buff tones to the foreparts, has a vaguely rufous cap and possess a dark brown, not black, eyestripe.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Worm-eating Warblers five times before in Colorado. I have seen others, including many during spring migration on the Texas coast. I have seen all other similar birds discussed above.

This report is prepared from notes made right after observation.



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