

## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

WORM-EATING WARBLER (2)  
Helmitheros vermivorus

Red 1/20/00 upl  
 ACCEPT 70

Location: Ft. Lyon Wildlife Easement; near Las Animas; Bent County, Colorado

Date: April 24, 1999

Background:

These birds were seen by Brandon Percival and myself, though others also saw them on other dates. At times we saw the birds together, proving that there were two. Though small and cryptically colored, they were amazingly easy to find and re-find. They foraged quite openly at the edges of heavy thickets and also at low-medium heights in large trees. We found them and observed them from 11:50 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. We observed them from 20-50 feet distance, using our binoculars for observation. They usually fed near the ground, probing leaves and crevices and sometimes creeping along small fallen branches. They frequently gave a lisping call note "zitt", similar to a bunting.

Description:

This birds were medium-small warblers, about 5" long. They were dull olive-brown above; tan below. One bird was brighter, with buffier and orange tones, especially to the face. Overall they were uniform in coloration and lacked wingbars. They were both buffier, almost orangish on the face and throat. They had two dark lines through the crown and two dark superciliaries. The bill was dull pinkish-gray, stout for a warbler 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 six 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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