

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

ACCEPT 7-0
Rcd 1/20/00 wpl

WORM-EATING WARBLER
Helmitheros vermivorus

Location: Lamar Community College Grove; Lamar; Prowers County, Colorado

Date: April 24, 1999

Background:

I found this bird while birding with Brandon Percival. We had already seen two of this species earlier in the day at Ft. Lyon Wildlife Easement. We observed it from 3:00 - 3:15 p.m. under excellent conditions. I watched it with B&L Elite 10x40 binoculars from approximately 25 feet. It fed usually from ground level up to about 10 feet height. It stayed in smaller shrubs and "edge" habitat, avoiding the larger trees. It gave a thin, lisping "zitt" call note.

Description:

This was an adult bird, medium-sized, about 5" long. It was a very plain warbler: dull brownish-olive above; a soft tan underneath. The face was more golden in tone, and brighter. It had dark lateral crown stripes and a dark superciliary. The bill was sharp and pointed, like a warbler, but proportionately large for that group, and chisel-like. The legs and feet were pinkish. It lacked wingbars.

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 eight 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 brief notes after observation and from memory.

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