

Species: BLUE-WINGED WARBLER

Vermivora pinus

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 10, 1975

Time Bird Seen: 5:30 p.m. to 5:40 p.m.

Locality: Boulder Creek near Ball Brothers, two miles east of Boulder

Nearest Town: Boulder

County: Boulder

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

none

Optical Equipment: 7 x 35 binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: none

Light Conditions: indirect afternoon light

Distance from bird (how measured): 20-25 feet (stepped off)

Number of Birds Seen: one Sex: male Plumage: breeding, summer plumage

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor: For a warbler, the bird was docile and cooperative, allowing close approach while it fed. It moved methodically from branch to branch at about eye level. The bird stayed about six feet off the ground working in the same area where Yellowthroats worked at or near ground level and Yellow-rumped warblers worked the treetops. Methodical seems the best word to describe its demeanor. It was not frantically moving through the brush as a Wilson's warbler does. It was content to work the brush slowly and deliberately.

Describe in great detail the bird's size, overall shape, plumage and color-pattern. Include details on shape of bill, wings and tail. Give particular emphasis to the marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance in field guide descriptions is not enough. Describe what you actually saw in the field: The bird was a warbler from its small (4"-5") size, brilliant yellow color, and the distinctive warbler bill. The body shape was rounder than most warblers, chunky in comparison to the Wilson's warblers seen the same day. The bird was distinguished by a dark green back, black eye line, and white under tail parts. The solid dark green color of the back went as high as the middle of the top of the bird's head where the green was sharply delineated from the brilliant yellow of the forehead and breast. The black eye line was the width of the beak and extended straight from the beak to the black eye. Behind the eye, the line tapered quickly out to a fine point. The white underparts were clearly visible from behind the legs extending indistinctly through the under tail. The wings carried two white wingbars, the lower one longer and more distinct than the upper. The area of the wing above the lower wingbar was gray. The remainder of the wing was dark green or black. The one part of the bird's plumage that was difficult to determine from my vantage was the under tail feathers. From the one or two glimpses I got, the under tail seemed to have the opposite pattern of the juncos. The two outer feathers appeared dark with the white from the underparts extending between them. Since the field guide I used (Birds of North America) did not show this area well, I did not concentrate on it.

(OVER)

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc:

no song or call heard

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird: The bird was observed at the margin of a heavily wooded area with dense underbrush.

This grove of deciduous trees extends to both sides of Boulder Creek, a stream 10-15 feet in width. The grove covers between five and 10 acres and lies in agricultural land about six miles from the mountains. The bird was working thick brush and small trees
How were similarly appearing species eliminated? surrounding an immense, overturned stump about 30 yards from the stream

The most closely associated bird is the Wilson's warbler. It is also bright yellow and has a darker back contrasting, like the Blue-winged. But it lacks wingbars, the eye line the white underparts, and the "quiet" disposition. It is typically slimmer with a smaller bill than the bird observed. The female Hooded was a second choice with the distinct dark cap and eye line, but she lacks the wingbars and white underparts and has a darker shoulder. The Yellowthroat has the whitish underparts and yellow breast but lacks the wingbars and yellow forehead. The observed bird had a black eye line, not a mask, and was out in the open, more exposed than the Yellowthroat usually is. The Pine warbler has the wingbars and general pattern but the yellow is too muted, the white underparts too extensive, and it lacks the yellow forehead. The juvenile Parula was also studied during observation (as were all birds mentioned here), but it lacks the yellow forehead, the eye line, and the green back. There was no eye ring on observed bird. The Orange-crowned (observed same day) has the eye line (indistinct in field) but nothing else. Of the vireos, only the Yellow-throated comes close. The observed bird had a finer bill, bright yellow halfway up the head, and darker eye line. Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species: and eyes.

This was the first Blue-winged warbler observed. I have identified fourteen other warblers including the Wilson's, Yellowthroat, and Orange-crowned warblers noted above and observed often. I have only met up with two vireos that I could safely identify, Hutton's and Solitary, but they provide background in terms of the vireo bill.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

I carry both Birds of North America and Peterson's Guide to Western Birds. As I usually do, I first tentatively identified the observed bird in the former volume. After finding that Peterson did not include the bird, I did all remaining study in B of NA. That remains the only picture I have seen of the bird. No influence noted.

PRINT NAME: Scott L. Roederer SIGNATURE: Scott L. Roederer DATE: August 11 1975
Street Address: 3003 Valmont #133 Town and State: Boulder, Co. ZIP: 80301

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

~~Please Mail to Scott Reddall.~~

Mr. Reddall,

I regret that I did not receive this until after I returned from vacation. My memory of the sighting is still distinct but it is also three months old. I worked from memory as much as possible rather than the field guide because "my" bird did vary on several points as you will note. I assure you, should I be fortunate enough to make another good sighting in the future, you will have a better report.