

1997-78

ACCEPTED 7-0

## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

BLUE-WINGED WARBLERVermivora pinusLocation: Lamar Community College/Willow Creek; Lamar, Prowers County, ColoradoDate: May 2-5, 1997 (though the bird was first found on May 1)Setting:

This individual was found by Brandon Percival and Bob Dickson on May 1. It was seen repeatedly by nearly all observers (about 20+?), including Peter Gent and David Leatherman, over the next 4 days. I saw it on all four days (May 2-5) but I will describe my first sighting on May 2, when I took field notes. We discovered that the bird pretty consistently foraged very high in the trees in the riparian grove behind the college. It could be hard to locate because of the extreme height at which it worked the twigs, branches and leaves. However, when I first found it, I was alone, and it was in the brush, mainly working the heavier current bushes and was (incredibly) below eye level at about 3' off the ground. I watched it from 3:30 - 3:40 p.m. on May 2 and I got incredibly great views. I used B & L Elite 10x42 binoculars and stood as close as 15'. Conditions were sunny and breezy the first time. Variable from then on.

Description:

This was a small, difficult to observe warbler, usually high in the trees. On May 2, it was in low brush and quite secretive. My patience paid off however, and it revealed itself at close range. It was a male in high breeding plumage, very brilliant and beautiful in the sun. It was about 5" long with a very sharp, pointed, shiny black bill. The bird was a deep, bright, yellow (almost golden on the foreparts) that included the undersides, face and forehead. The hind crown, nape and back were a plainer, duller olive-green. There was a small, jet black eyeline extending from the bill, through the lores and behind the eye a short distance. There were tiny, distinct arcs of yellow in front of and behind the eyes, separating the eye from the black eyeline. The wings were bluish-gray with two distinct, clear white wingbars. The undertail coverts were a pale, washed-out yellow compared to the belly. The tail was short and dark above.

Similar Species:

The small size, active habits and small pointed bill indicate a wood warbler. Prothonotary Warbler is larger, bigger-billed; lacks the black eyeline and white wingbars. Orange-crowned, Tennessee and Yellow warblers lack the black eye-line and white wingbars. Most *Dendroica* sp. have streaked flanks. The Pine Warbler is not bright yellow and lacks the black eyeline. *Oporornis* and *Wilsonia* warblers lack wingbars.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Blue-winged Warbler only once before in Colorado and I was glad to have a chance to study another over a series of days. I have seen numerous Blue-wingeds in the east.

This report is prepared directly from notes made during and after observation.

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