

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

2003-85

Species: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker

Date: Dec. 18 2003 **Time seen:** 10-10:30 a.m.

Locality: Foster Grove Campground, Bonny State Park

Latilong: 39102 **Optical equipment:** Binoculars. Tony Leukering took pictures of this bird around 2 pm the same day.

Number of birds seen: One **Sex:** ? **Plumage:** Juvenile

Light conditions: Excellent (off and on)

Distance from bird: 15-30 feet

Weather at time of observation: Clear

Prior weather & number of days since change: Blizzard on Dec. 15 with high winds; clear before and after

Describe habitat: Planted deciduous trees; also native cottonwoods in campground. Undergrowth of various grasses

Describe behavior: Feeding on one particular Black Walnut tree. It left the tree for a nearby one, but returned almost right away. The walnut tree had branches with shiny sap, where the sapsucker concentrated its feeding. It hopped, though, from one trunk to another, probing on branches without noticeable sap seeps. Quite active.

Field marks observed: size, color, pattern, shape, bill, etc.:

Head: Reddish forehead and fore-crown, to mid-crown. Back of head brown-buff.

Chin buff and gray.

Nape: mid-stripe of buff and on sides, blackish mottling. No red.

Back: Upper back mottled buff and black; outlined with black feathers. Lower back mottled black and white. Shoulder buff and black. White wing patches.

Front: Mottled hood. Yellowish belly with mottled brown and buff sides.

Wings: Primaries, secondaries, and tertials with white bars or spots on black.

Tail: black and white horizontal bands.

Bird's call or song: Silent

Field marks not seen: This bird resembled the illustration in National Geographic more than those in other field guides. It had red on the forehead and more black-and-white mottling than the brownish appearance that the field guides show.

Similar species and how eliminated: Red-naped Sapsucker, presumably would have progressed into adult plumage by this time of year. We originally saw this bird next to a Red-bellied Woodpecker, which is at best superficially similar.

Prior experience with this species: We've seen many adults of both sapsuckers, but not many juveniles.

Description from: Notes taken in field.

Bird observed carefully by Bruce Bosley, Urling Kingery, and me. We worked on this description while we watched the bird jumping from trunk to trunk on the black walnut.

Hugh E. Kingery
PO Box 584, Franktown CO 80116

rec'd
11/24/03

CFO-ORC-FILE# 2003-85

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CFO SIGHT RECORD FORM

Species: **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**, *Sphyrapicus varius*

Date: 14 November 2003

Location: Foster Grove Campground, Bonny Reservoir State Wildlife Area

County: Yuma

Time observed: 12:30 pm

Duration of observation: 2-3 minutes

Weather: Clear, mild, temps reached upwards of 60 degrees.

Seen also by Brandon Percival and Mark Peterson. A juvenile sapsucker was found by BP towards the center of the campground. The bird showed a strongly barred back with some buff tones and a large white vertical bar extending down from the bend of the wing. The head showed a pale stripe above and below the eye, with a darker cap and eye stripe. Visible on the forehead was a minimal amount of red feathering. The breast was washed with light buff tones, showing some indistinct barring and a faintly darker bib.

Reporting observer: Peter Gaede



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2003-85

CLW Photo Record Form

RC FILE X:

RESULTS:

Reporting Observer: Christopher L. Wood, zeledonia@cfo-link.org
8050 Niwot Road, #4, Niwot, Colorado

Signature:



Species: Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, *Sphyrapicus varius*

Date (s) of occurrence: 18 December 2003

Number of birds seen: One HY female

Location: Foster Grove Campground, Bonny Res., Colorado, Yuma county

Length of observation: Total of 30 minutes. **Time (s) of observation:** 13:30-14:00

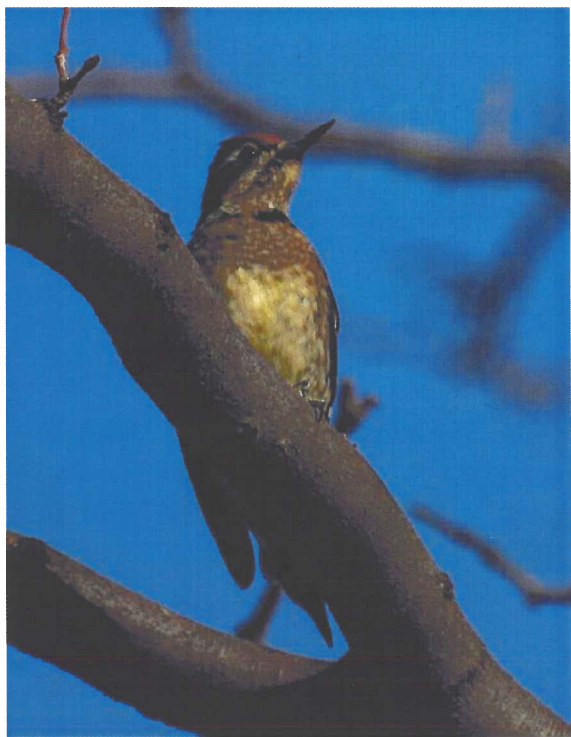
Other observers who saw the bird: Found today by Hugh Kingery & Urling Kingery; what was likely the same bird was found in November by Brandon Percival and Mark Peterson; also seen today by Tony Leukering,

Conditions: Mostly sunny. Wind 10-15mph.

Optical equipment used: Leica 8 x 42 binocular. Canon Rebel camera with 100-400mm IS lens.

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): 5-25 meters

Habitat: Pseudo-riparian-like campground with russian olives, cottonwoods etc.



Details: At our lunch get-together for the Bonny Reservoir Christmas Bird County, Hugh and Urling Kingery mentioned that they had seen a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Tony Leukering and I went to look for it and photograph it. Shortly after arriving Tony and I found sapsucker wells and the bird.

The photographs illustrate the bird adequately, but I will highlight features that aid in sexing the bird and eliminate Red-naped Sapsucker and hybrids. Pyle suggests that observers note iris color as it is probably helpful in distinguishing HY/SYs from AHY/ASYs from AHY/ASYs. While difficult to note from the photographs the irises were grayish brown, as one would expect in HY/SY birds.

- Extensive retained juvenile plumage, particularly on head and neck (Red-naped Sapsuckers typically have replaced body feathers by November).
- The retained crown feathers are golden-brownish, not uniformly dark as you would expect on a juvenile Red-naped Sapsucker.
- No sign of any red feathers coming in on nape, which are shown by most Red-naped Sapsuckers.

(Continued on page 2)

Previous Experience: I have seen and studied 200 or so Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in the Midwest, East and Mexico. I have also seen and studied all of the other sapsuckers.

References: Pyle, P., et. al. 1997. Identification guide to North American birds. Part 1. Bolinas, California: Slate Creek Press.

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- At least three throat feathers (and several chin feathers) had been replaced and were white, indicating a female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

