

Canada Warbler sighting
by Joe TenBrink

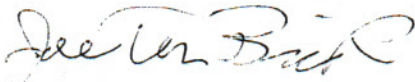
On October 4, 1994 while birding at Cherry Creek State Park a strange warbler joined the flock of Chickadees and the two Yellow-rumpeds I was watching. Never has a bird been so cooperative. It foraged in the tree I was standing close to--once was directly above me -- so close I had to move away to accomodate the 12 feet closest focus of my binocs. This movment did not affect the bird whatsoever. It stayed in the small group of willow trees that the Chickadees and Warblers seemed to prefer.

Although cloudy all morning, the sun broke through as though on cue when this bird appeared. Time is difficult to judge in moments like these, but I had ample time to jot down every detail and double check my notes several times. This was gratifying because while not sure of it's identification, I knew it was a lifer for me. The bird gave me all poses, including several below eye level for good, close views of it's back.

The upperparts were blue-gray and unmarked. Wings and tail, although darker, were not as contrasting as the picture in the National Geographic of the Canada Warbler. which I suspected this bird to be. Prominent white eye-ring with a yellow line or spot between eye and bill(lores). Throat and underparts yellow with wide, diffused stripes forming necklace on breast. Undertail coverts white and unmarked. Legs and feet dull orange.

This happened about 2:00 PM and when I returned home, and reading everything I had, I was sure I had seen a female Canada Warbler--(none of my references gave descriptions of immature Canadas, but the bird I saw was an exact duplicate of the female Canada pictured in the Audubon Master Guide.)

Karleen Schofield met me at the site at 4:00 PM and we searched until 6:30 PM without success. I met J.B Hayes at daybreak with like results. The good news is that I saw a really hard-to-get Canada Warbler, but nobody else saw it which would give the sighting more credence. If my description is inadequate, I can't blame the bird.



Joe TenBrink

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

ACCEPTED

NEW STATE RECORD ☐ UNUSUAL RECORD ☒

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Canada Warbler / Wilsonia canadensis
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): October 4, 1994Number of birds seen: one(1) Sex: Female Plumage: Fall

Latilong: _____ Distribution Code: _____ Habitat Code: _____

Locality: Cherry Creek State Park Elevation: 5300 ft.Nearest town: Aurora County: ArapahoTime(s) observed: 2:00 PMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 20 minutes

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

None

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

None

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

Sunny. At my backOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 8.5x.44 Swift binocularDistance and how measured: As close as 12 feet. Close focus of binocularIf photographed, type of equipment and film: noneWho else photographed the bird: noneDescribe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying): This bird foraged most of the time, but not busily and paused often.Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field: It was the same size as the chickadees and had a warblers short thin bill. Upperparts blue-gray and unmarked. Prominent white eye-ring Yellow line (or mark) between eye and bill(lores). Throat, breast and belly Yellow with

Description (continued): wide, diffused stripes forming necklace on breast. Undertail Coverts white unmarked. Legs and feet dull orange.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

None heard

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

~~Riparian. Near pond in willow trees~~ Near stream. Cottonwood
Russian olive and willow trees.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

I compared my notes with every warbler in the book and found none with ~~which it could be confused.~~

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

~~None. LIFER!~~

This species is unique -- Master Guide gives Kentucky Warbler as similar which seems 'grabbing at straws.

List books, illustration, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) At time of observation: Nat'l Geographic,

Aud. Encyclopedia of N/A Bird and Master

b) After observation: Guide, Peterson Western Birds & Adv.
Birding - Kaulman

This report was written from reports made during X , after observation , from memory

Date and time report was written: 10/4/94 6:00 PM

Reporting observer: Joe TenBrink

Signature: Joe TenBrink

Address: 6801 E Miss Ave A302 -- Denver, CO 80224

Phone (303) 320-4858

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205