

ACCEPTED (6-1)

CFO-ORC-FILE# 1998-142

**COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM**

rec'd 6-20-98 ✓

Results: \_\_\_\_\_

**Species:** Canada Warbler  
(Common Name)

*Wilsonia canadensis*  
(Scientific Name)

**Dates:** 5/21/98

**Number of birds seen:** 1

**Sex:** Female

**Plumage:** Alternate

**Locality:** Crow Valley Campground

**Elevation:**

**Nearest town:** Briggsdale

**County:** Weld

**Time observed:** 0630

**Duration of observation:** approximately five minutes

**Other observers with you:** none

**Other observers who saw the bird independently:** Don Beltz

**Light conditions:** optimal. The sun was behind me and clearly illuminated the bird

**Optical equipment:** 8x42 Orion binoculars

**Distance from bird:** 5-10 meters

**Describe the bird's behavior:** perched on top of a currant bush in clear view

**Describe the bird** (what you actually saw):

My perspective allowed me to see the back, face and left side of the bird. The back was uniformly gray with no wing bars or other marks present. The head was a slightly darker shade of gray than the back. The strongest field mark was the eye ring. It was very bold and wide around the eye and was unbroken. The bird was clearly a warbler judging from the bill, but the strength of the eye ring and the faint appearance of spectacles made me think twice about the possibility of a vireo. The bill was narrow and relatively small. The left flank was a bright yellow with some faint black barring extending into the breast from the shoulder.

**Describe the bird's song and call if heard:** none

**Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:** dense patch of golden currant

**How did you eliminate similarly appearing species:**

I was not able to immediately identify the bird and had to consult my NGS Field Guide. However, it was very apparent once I consulted my field guide that the bird was a Canada Warbler based upon the field marks I had seen. The complete absence of wing bars eliminated the possibility of a Magnolia Warbler. The rich yellow and presence of streaking on the side of the breast eliminated the possibility of a Nashville. The only other possibility was a Kentucky Warbler, but the bird that I saw had completely gray upperparts; they were not olive in any way. I can say this with extra confidence of having just seen the Kentucky Warbler in Gregory Canyon. The bird that I saw on 21 May was definitely not a Kentucky Warbler.

**What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:**

My experience with eastern warblers is not extensive. I lived in Maine for several years, but was only there for one summer. Consequently, I had only seen one Canada Warbler previously. However, I have seen Magnolia Warblers a fair bit—they bred where I spent a summer doing field work. I am familiar

with western Nashville Warblers having seen them extensively in California. The eye ring of the bird that I saw was much more bold than that of a Nashville Warbler, probably due to its width and contrast with the darker head.

**List books if they helped in your identification:** NGS Field Guide

This report was written from notes taken during \_\_, or after observation  
\_x\_ or from memory\_\_.

**Reporting observer:** Joe Fontaine

Signature: Joe Fontaine 6/16/98

**Address:**  
Department of Biology, CSU  
Ft Collins, CO 80523

Mail to: Mark Janos, 10 Sedum Court, Pueblo, CO 81001.

Canada Warbler 5/21/98

Crow Valley Campground, Weld County

The bird was seen twice on the morning of May 21<sup>st</sup> 1998. Both sightings were very short in duration (less than five minutes each). I saw the bird at approximately 0630. It was perched on top of a bush in clear view and good light. My perspective allowed me to see the back, face and left side of the bird. The back was uniformly gray with no wing bars or other marks present. The head seemed to be a slightly darker shade of gray than the back. The strongest field mark was the eye ring. It was very bold and wide around the eye and was unbroken. The bird was clearly a warbler judging from the bill, but the strength of the eye ring and the faint appearance of spectacles made me think twice about the possibility of a vireo. The bill was narrow and relatively small. The left flank was a bright yellow with some faint black barring extending into the breast from the shoulder. This would correspond to the necklace of a Canada Warbler. The faintness of the necklace and the bold eye ring are the strongest evidence to support the bird's identity. I never saw the undertail coverts. A weak piece of evidence is the habitat the bird was seen in. In four hours it was only seen twice in a large thicket of current bushes. Since Canada Warblers prefer undergrowth this seems to jive with the bird I saw.

I was not able to instantly identify the bird since I have limited experience with eastern warblers. However, once I looked through the possibilities in my NGS guide I felt very confident about the bird's identity.

At approximately 0830 the bird was sighted again by Don Beltz who confirmed the bird as being a female Canada Warbler.

Interestingly, this bird was seen the same day as the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Also the day before several other more eastern species had been seen including Veery, Red-headed Woodpecker and Baltimore Oriole. Certainly these are more regular species but they could have all been associated with a similar weather pattern.

Joe Fontaine  
5/22/98