

Species: Cape May Warbler Dendroica tigrina  
 (Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 31 October 1976 Time Bird Seen: 0820 to 1000

Locality: Varsity Pond on the University of Colorado campus

Nearest Town: Boulder County: Boulder

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Tom Gatz	John and Joyce Cooper	
Bill Lybarger	Steve Larson	
Thomson Marsh	Bruce Webb	

Optical Equipment: 7 X 50 binoculars; 15-60X B&L Zoom telescope

If photographed, type of equipment used: \_\_\_\_\_

Light Conditions: Variable; at one time excellent with sun shining on bird from behind me.

Distance from bird (how measured): variable; maximum-60 ft., minimum-20-25 ft.

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: ? Plumage: Female or immature

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

The bird was foraging among the trunk, branches and twigs of several trees, both deciduous and coniferous, in a flock of chickadees and creepers (but no other warblers). At first, the bird seemed rather slow, deliberate and sluggish for a warbler, but later on it became more active, and was very nervous in the typical Dendroica fashion. Generally it foraged high, in the upper half of the trees, but once foraged within 15 feet of the ground.

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:

A rather small (smaller than a Yellow-rumped) warbler, with a conspicuously short tail and a short, thin, sharply-pointed dark bill. The upperparts were a drab gray-green color, lacking in any marks such as streaks except for two indistinct whitish wingbars. The rump was olive-yellow, clearly different in color from the rest of the upperparts. The short tail was grayish above and mostly white below. The face pattern was non-descript, being mostly grayish-green, with an indistinct pale superciliary line and an indistinct eyering. The underparts were dull whitish, with strong brown streaks on the sides and flanks, and shorter and less strong across the breast. Undertail coverts were white and unmarked. Eyes dark.

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

An occasional high-pitched, thin note.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Urban campus, with many planted trees, both deciduous and coniferous.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Yellow-rumped Warbler-The small size, short tail, lack of yellow on sides or flanks, lack of a strong yellow patch on rump, lack of white squares or spots on upper side of tail, unstreaked back, different calls, weak wingbars all easily eliminate any plumage of the highly variable Yellow-rumped.

Orange-crowned Warbler-Lack of much yellowish, stronger streaking on underparts, presence of wingbars, distinct although diffuse rump patch of a different color from rest of upperparts, different call, presence of white (on undertail coverts and most of underparts except where the darker streaks were) easily eliminates that species.

Blackpoll Warbler-Unstreaked back, weaker wingbars, short tail, yellowish rump patch eliminate the Blackpoll Warbler.

Pine Warbler-Small size, weak and indistinct wingbars, and heavier streaking on the underparts eliminate those plumages of the Pine Warbler which lack the strong yellow breast (such as most immatures).

Magnolia Warbler-Heavier streaked underparts with no yellow, lack of a strong eyering, lack of white squares on upperside of tail and different call eliminates this species. Lack of the diffuse yellowish ear patch on this bird (often mentioned in the field guides) was not considered significant, since some individuals (especially immatures) may lack it, or it is not sufficiently well developed to be observable in the field.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Extensive experience with all plumages of Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned. Have seen Magnolias and Blackpolls, in all plumages in Colorado, on a number of occasions. Have never seen Pine in Colorado, but I have seen many, in most plumages, in Texas, Michigan and Wisconsin. Have seen Cape May several times in Michigan in fall (adult males and female-immature type), and have seen both male and female in Colorado in the spring.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?  
Standard field guides all supported the identification.

This report was written from notes made during X after        observation; from memory       

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