

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

ACCEPT 7-0

CAPE MAY WARBLER

Dendroica tigrinaLocation: Valco Ponds; about 1/2 mile below the Pueblo Reservoir dam; Pueblo; Pueblo County, ColoradoDate: December 15 and 16, 1995

Brandon Percival and I found this bird on 12/16/95 while searching the area for a previously reported Prairie Warbler. We saw it about 9:30 a.m. and observed it continuously until about 9:50 a.m. Valco ponds is a riparian area along the Arkansas River just below Pueblo Reservoir. It consists of scattered taller cottonwoods with tangles of willow, tamarisk and Russian Olive. Some of this area is very heavy growth. On the 15th I watched the bird with my binoculars (B & L Elite 10x40) in excellent sun at distances of 20-75 feet. We had every opportunity to observe all field marks. The bird foraged actively about 8-25 feet high, usually in bare cottonwoods. It was very active, somewhat reminiscent of a kinglet as it flitted around smaller branches and twigs. It fed by gleaning through dead leaves and bare twigs and probing the bark. It did not fly-catch. The bird did not flick its wings nor did it wag or nor flare its tail.

On the 16th (the day of the Pueblo Res. Christmas Bird Count) we found the bird about 1:45 p.m. Six of us (Dickson, Hullinger, Janos, Leukering, Pantle and Percival) watched the bird in the same area for about 10 minutes. The day was overcast and the looks were not as lingering as on the 15th. However on both days we had ample opportunity to observe all field marks.

Description:

It was a fall, female. This was a small, slim warbler- or kinglet-sized bird. It was quite small and notably short-tailed, even for a warbler. It was about 4 1/2 - 5" long. It had a small, slim, pointed blackish bill. The eye and legs were dark. The uppersides were a dull greenish-gray. The back looked unstreaked. The wings were darker, a dusky blackish color. There was the faintest suggestion of a pale wingbar. The edges of the dark, folded flight feathers showed pale yellowish. The face was evenly greenish-gray with a blackish eyeline. There was a barely visible yellowish-gray patch at the rear of the face, bordering the nape. The rump was a clear, contrasting yellow, but not as bright as a Yellow-rumped Warbler. This was easiest to see at the sides of the rump under the folded wing, as the bird seldom showed the rump as it foraged, nor displayed the rump when in flew (as a Yellow-rumped Warbler seems to do so often). However we managed to see this contrasting yellow rump several times when the bird flew and landed on a limb. The undersides were dull whitish with a slight yellow tinge to the center of the breast. The sides of the breast and flanks were heavily marked with small, dusky streaks. The lower belly and undertail were white. The uppersides of the tail were without obvious spots but there were round subterminal white spots on the underside of the tail.

Similar Species:

This identification was quite difficult on the 15th as this was a very dull, fall female. However, only a few warblers have contrasting yellowish rumps and streaked underparts. Close contenders: Magnolia would have quite notable wingbars, a plainer gray face that would lack the blackish eyeline, obvious white spots on the uppertail, much yellower underparts and would lack the yellowish-gray spots on the sides of the neck. Yellow-rumped is closest but lacks the dark eyeline, is less heavily streaked underneath, is yellowest on the flanks, not the center of the breast, has a much brighter, contrasting rump, has a streaked back, is bigger and longer-tailed, lacks the yellowish-white spots on the sides of the neck, and has different behavior. Prairie is much yellower below, has less distinct streaking, lacks a yellow contrasting rump, lacks the light neck spots, has a long, wagging, expressive tail, and lacks the neck spots. Palm is yellowest, not whitest, on the undertail coverts, has a long, wagging tail and is less heavily streaked on the flanks. Kinglets lack streaking below.

Experience with Species:

I have seen several Cape Mays and other I.D. contenders. I saw the Cape May Warbler found by Silverman in Colorado City on 12/9/91 and an imm. male in near Valco Ponds on 10/ 31/93.

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

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

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ACCEPT 7-0

CFO-ORC-FILE# 52-95-80

COLORADO RARE BIRD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD __ **RARE RECORD** __ **UNUSUAL RECORD** X

Species: *Cape May Warbler*
(Vernacular Name)

Dendroica tigrina
(Scientific Name)

Dates: December 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22,
23, 26, 27, 28, 1995.

Number of birds seen: one.

Sex: female.

Plumage: immature.

Locality: West of Valco Ponds along
Arkansas River, in Pueblo.

Elevation: 5,000 feet.

Nearest town: Pueblo.

County: Pueblo.

Time observed: Various times.

Duration of observation: 1 1/2 hours total at least.

Other observers with you:

Mark Janos 10 Sedum Court, Pueblo, Colorado 81001 (719)-544-5002 on 12/15.

Bob Dickson, Tony Leukering, David Pantle, Mark Janos, Mark Hullinger on 12/16.

No one on 12/19-21.

Bob Dickson on 12/22.

Van Truan on 12/23.

David Quesenberry, Bob & Johnie Dickson on 12/26.

Drew Smith on 12/27.

Chris Wood, Joey Kellner, Jack Reddall on 12/28.

Other observers who saw the bird independently:

David Smith and Bob Goycoolea saw the bird on 12/16 in the morning hours.

Mark Yaeger on 12/18. Karleen Schofield, Dave Johnson, and Bob Dickson on 12/19 after me.

Bob Spencer and Warren Finch on 12/26.

Light conditions:

excellent all the time.

Optical equipment:

10X40 Baucsh & Lomb Binoculars .

Distance from bird:

12-60 feet.

Describe the bird's behavior:

The bird liked to stay near the trunk of the cottonwood trees looking for insects. The bird did not do any flycatching like Yellow-rumpeds do. Also I observed the bird catching insect at the rivers edge with chickadees.

Describe the bird:

The size of the bird was smaller than Yellow-rumped Warbler and larger than Ruby-crowned Kinglet, both species I saw around the time of the observation. The size was about 5 inches. The overall shape was typical for warblers. The plumage was an immature female because of its dull colors. The color pattern is as follows: The bill was dark. The head was brown. The nape and back were brown. The face was grayish brown with a little darker line going through both eyes. Behind the ear patch there was a little yellow color. Both of the wings were brownish with two very small and not very noticeable wing bars which upper wing bar on both wings was whitish. The rump was yellow though not bright. The tail was brown with white tail spots on both sides of tail. The throat was whitish with a tinge of yellow. The breast was brownish. The belly was white with very faint brown streaks. The under tail coverts were also whitish brown. The flanks on both side had very faint brownish streaks. The legs and feet were dark. The bill shape was short and pointed like other *dendroica*s. The wing shape was typical warbler shaped. The tail shape was short and typical for most warblers. I identified this bird by the warbler shape and size and by the very dull color and the yellow rump and by the dull dark line through both eyes and the grayish brown face and by the short tail, much shorter than Yellow-rumped Warblers tail.

Describe the bird's song and call if heard:

On 12/19 I heard the bird make a seet call in flight.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

The bird was observed in cottonwood trees and along the river west of the Valco Ponds Parking lot along the Arkansas River in Pueblo, Colorado.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species:

Yellow-rumped Warbler: This species is larger which we noticed by seeing them just before and just after we saw the Cape May Warbler. The bright yellow rump is always very distinctive.

Palm Warbler: This species will have a bright yellow under tail coverts.

Magnolia Warbler: The species is always brighter yellow underneath and will show much brighter under tail coverts.

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

Cape May Warbler: I have seen 2 previous immature males in fall in Colorado and I have also seen one on the Salton Sea (south) CBC in 1993, with Guy McCaskie.

Yellow-rumped Warbler: I have seen many in Colorado, California, Arizona, and Kansas.

Palm Warbler: I have seen seven in Colorado and one Kansas.

Magnolia Warbler: I have seen eight in Colorado and one Kansas.

List books if they helped in your identification:

Warblers of the Americas.

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

Reporting observer: Brandon K. Percival Signature: Brandon K. Percival

Address: 835 Harmony Drive, Pueblo West, Colorado 81007-2604 (719)-547-3722

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

ACCEPT 7-0

NEW STATE RECORD _____

UNUSUAL RECORD X**Species:** Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*)**Date:** 16 December 1995 **Number seen:** one**Sex:** female**Plumage:** immature**Locality:** Valco Ponds area, west of Pueblo**Elevation:** ?**Nearest town:** Pueblo**County:** Pueblo**Time observed:** about 12:45 PM MST**Duration of observation:** about 5 minutes

Description: This bird had been found by Mark Janos and Brandon Percival on 15 December at this site and was found by another party on the Pueblo Reservoir CBC on 16 December. After lunch, Brandon Percival, Mark Janos, Bob Dixon, and I, among others, decided to take a break from working our respective areas of the circle to look for this bird and the Prairie Warbler that was also at this site on this day (and for as much as a month and a half before). After watching the Prairie Warbler for about 5 minutes, Janos found the Cape May, which promptly flew away. After a bit of searching, we refound it and watched it for at least 5 minutes, sometimes with the Prairie in the same field of view.

The bird was very active and it was difficult to see the top of the bird well, as it was usually well above us in the trees. It was a small (smaller than nearby Black-capped Chickadees), very active warbler. It was easy to see that it was at the dull extreme of Cape May Warbler plumages. The crown was grayish-green (seen well when the bird bent its head over), contrasting somewhat with a pale supercilium. The eye was dark and bisected a thin, dark eyeline. The auriculars were about the color of the crown and the chin and throat were pale. The bill was very thin and dark. I could not discern any intrusion of a paler color behind the auriculars as virtually all Cape Mays show, albeit some just barely, but, again, it was difficult to see this area well.

The back appeared the same color as the crown and was vaguely streaked with a darker color. The wings were dark with a somewhat strong upper wingbar and a weak lower wingbar. The rump, seen briefly only once, was contrastingly paler than the back, but I could not discern the color. (Brandon said that the rump was obviously yellowish when seen the day before.) The tail was dark from above; from below it showed white spots in the outer rectrices. The breast was heavily streaked with olive on a pale greenish-white background. The very center of the underparts from just below the throat to the upper belly was unstreaked and strongly washed with yellow. This yellow separated the streaking into two clumps. The undertail coverts were very dull grayish or grayish-white. The legs were all dark.

Similar species eliminated: Even the dullest of Blackburnian Warblers shows a stronger face pattern (strongly-defined ear patch, stronger and thicker super), darker, better-defined back streaking, and thinner streaking on the underparts. Palm Warbler has a bright yellow vent region and wags its tail nearly constantly, which the bird in question did not do. The dullest of Black-throated Greens would also have a stronger face pattern and would also have a greener back and a whiter belly. A dull Blackpoll Warbler would have a very white vent region, a shorter super, stronger wingbars, stronger back streaking, and much less streaking on the underparts.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen 100s of Cape May Warblers and 100s to 1000s of all similar species in extensive birding in eastern North America. I have also banded in excess of 25 of each of these species.

Light conditions: sky was overcast and fairly dark

Optical equipment used: 7x42 Zeiss

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest distance was about 20 feet

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Mark Janos, Brandon Percival, Bob Dixon

Other observers who saw the bird independently: see above

If photographed, type of equipment and film: (How is this relevant?) Photographed at long range in poor light. I will send copies upon getting the roll developed.

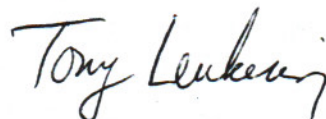
List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Piccadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: 20 December 1995 from notes written within a few hours of seeing the bird and without consultation to references