

PRAIRIE WARBLER - - - - Dendroica discolor

On May 10, 1975, Colorado recorded its first Prairie Warbler, a single adult male in breeding plumage along the South Platte River at Waterton, Jefferson County. Written documentation supporting this Sight Report was received from Dr. Paul Julian of Boulder, Hugh Kingery of Denver and Allen Stokes, also of Denver. Based upon the details provided by these three observers, the CFO Official Records Committee has ruled to accept this record of the Prairie Warbler and add its name to the Official State List of the Birds of Colorado (number 424).

Dr. Julian reports from notes made at time of observation: "Bird was feeding in cottonwoods in company with other warblers. Bill, actions and color all were indicative of warbler species. All yellow underparts, striped sides, wags tail. Double black face marks. (At this point I said 'Prairie Warbler'). All olive back. Hugh Kingery says to look for wing-bars. None or very faint on second look. Later look included brief instant when bird was head down with back facing me and the sun to my back. At that instant I got the impression of faint, reddish streaking. During second sighting, 40-45 minutes later, I looked again for these elusive marks but could not see them. Throat, all yellow. Underside of tail, whitish entire length. Only questionable point at the time was the lack of pronounced wing-bars. Peterson and Robbins Guides portray bird with pronounced white bars. However, Griscom and Sprunt (Warblers of North America) and Bent both say bars are yellowish-white."

Hugh Kingery: "Eleary-eyed from many Yellow-rumped Warblers, I first noticed this one because it had a yellow breast with black streakings. At first I thought Magnolia, but it had no white; thereupon I guessed Prairie. After we had studied it for ten minutes, another warbler flew at it and chased it out of the tree. We lost it and fifteen minutes later someone found it again. The bird was feeding in medium to small cottonwoods, at the top half. It picked off insects, contracting or pumping its tail regularly (I wouldn't call it 'wagging'). He moved constantly, not conducive to noting field marks. It had an olive back and cap, yellow face with two black horizontal streaks (I don't remember that one went through the eye or not). It also had a black spot, below these two black lines, in the cheek. It had a yellow breast with black streaks on the side, yellow throat, breast, belly, undertail coverts and had a white under side of the tail. The wings had only faint wing-bars, not at all conspicuous. The bird was the size of a Virginia's, smaller than Audubon's. We looked for the reddish streaks in the back, but I did not see any. The feeding action was distinctive - as it picked insects off the catkins it would pull the tail down - contract or pump it - and stretch out again. This was a frequent action. It almost seemed like a habit the bird had to keep its balance while feeding."

Allen Stokes: "On three different occasions bird was about 30 feet above ground in cottonwoods. Bird stayed on one branch for several minutes before moving to another branch. Frequently it would bend forward being upside down on a branch. It was not easily disturbed by observers. Six inches long; warbler shape; yellow underparts, olive back, yellow head, very black streak through eye and under eye. Black streaks extending along sides from head to tail. White under tail feathers for complete length. On one of three occasions I saw a reddish blur on the back as it was tilting over on a branch toward me. I don't remember paying any attention to the bill. Wings had two faint wing-bars."

Chairman's comment: A second Prairie Warbler was reported from Boulder May 30 and 31, 1975 complete with magnificent color photographs.

August 25, 1975

Jack Riddell
CHAIRMAN

Species: Prairie Warbler (Vernacular Name) Dendroica discolor (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 10 1975 Time Bird Seen: 0945, 0930 to total 5-10 minutes

Locality: Platte River

Nearest Town: Waterton County: ?

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
<u>Reed Kelley</u>		
<u>'Berts' Ferguson</u>		

This observer identified bird with H. Kinsley and A. Stokes

Optical Equipment: 28.5 mm lens

If photographed, type of equipment used: H.K. Inst. pix

Light Conditions: clear, bright sun

Distance from bird (how measured): estimated 15 to 25 yards

Number of Birds Seen: one Sex: male Plumage: adult breeding

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Birds was feeding in cottonwoods in company with other warblers. Bill, actions, and color all were indicative of warbler species.

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:

My notes exactly as made in field. "1st marks, all yellow underparts, striped sides, wavy tail. Double black face marks." [at this point I said Prairie Warbler.]

"All olive back. H.K. says look for wing bars. None or very faint on second look." Later look included brief instant when bird was head down with back facing me and the sun to my back. At that instant I got the impression of faint reddish streaking. During second sighting 40-45 minutes later, I looked again for these elusive marks but could not see them. Other notes made "Throat all yellow. Under side of tail whitish entire length."

Only questionable point at the time was the lack of pronounced wing bars. Peterson + Robbins Guides portray bird with pronounced white bars. However, Griscom and Sprunt (Warblers of North America) and Bent both

(OVER)

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

(cont) says bars are yellowish-white. Eckelberry's Plate in Pough is much closer to our bird. Yellowish bars on a largely yellow + olive bird would be much less noticeable.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Small cottonwoods and shrubs interspersed among larger cottonwoods. Typical eastern slope stream bottom. Habitat strangely reminiscent of bird's Florida habitat.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

- All yellow underparts, striped sides, eliminate Yellow-throated + Grace's
- Double black face mark eliminates Cape May
- Lack of tail windows and strong wing bars eliminate Magnolia

As observer Stokes read from Robbins at the time, "This is the only tail-wagging warbler with an olive back."

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

Observer familiar with this species on its breeding grounds in Florida and other eastern states.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Ross: Gviscom + Sprint, Bent, standard field guides

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

PRINT NAME: Paul R. Julian

SIGNATURE:

DATE: May 13

Street Address: 1269 Chincoks Way

Town and State: Boulder Co

ZIP:

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 1450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

90303

Species: PRAIRIE WARBLER
 (Vernacular Name)

Dendroica discolor
 (Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): 5-10-75 Time Bird Seen: 8:40 to 9:15 on Three
 Locality: Along S. Fork S. Platte River below Kessler Treatment Plant OCCASIONS
 Nearest Town: KASSLER, COLORADO County: ARA

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
<u>PAUL JULIAN</u>	<u>1269 Chinook Way Boulder</u>	<u>499-9807</u>
<u>HUGH KINGERY</u>	<u>869 Milwaukee Denver</u>	<u>333-0161</u>

Optical Equipment: Bushnell 7x35 Custom Binoculars

If photographed, type of equipment used: None

Light Conditions: Sun on bird

Distance from bird (how measured): 50' visual estimation

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: M Plumage: BREEDING

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

On three different occasions bird was about 30' above ground in cottonwoods. Bird stayed on one branch for several minutes before moving to another branch. Frequently it would bend forward being upside down on a branch. It was not easily disturbed by observers.

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:

6" long, warbler shape, yellow underparts, olive back, yellow head, very black streak through eye and under eye. Black streaks extending along sides from head to tail. White under tail feathers for complete length. On one of three occasions I saw a reddish blur on the back as it was tilting over on a branch toward me. I don't remember paying attention to the bill. Wings had two faint wingbars.

Describe the bird's song or call, if heard, including method of delivery, i.e., from perch, in flight, etc: *No recall.*

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird: *Cottonwood trees on three occasions. 40' from river. 30' high in tree. Other vegetation was low-scrub variety and somewhat open.*

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

reddish blue definitely occurred in Hutton and the dark streaks on sides and face distinguished it from palm warbler

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

None

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?
Two other observers identified the bird and after looking in Birds of North America I agreed.

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

PRINT NAME: *Allen W. Stokes, Jr.* SIGNATURE: *Allen W. Stokes* DATE: *5-15-75*

Street Address: *879 S. Gaylord St.* Town and State: *Denver, Co* ZIP: *80209*

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110

Species: PRAIRIE WARBLER

(Vernacular Name)

(Scientific Name-use binomial)

Date(s): May 10, 1975

Time Bird Seen: 8:45 to 8:30

Locality:

Nearest Town:

County: Arapahoe

Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Paul Julian	1260 Chinook Way	Boulder
Reed Kelley	758-4144; Boots Ferguson; Joanna and John Booser; Allen	758-4144
	Stokes.	

Optical Equipment:

If photographed, type of equipment used: 35 mm Soligor lens on Pentax; 35 mm

Light Conditions:

Distance from bird (how measured): 2-3 feet

Number of Birds Seen: 1 Sex: unk. Plumage: Like adult male, except that wing bars were not conspicuous.

Describe the bird's overall behavior and demeanor:

Bleary-eyed from many Yellow-rumped Warblers, I first noticed this one because it had a yellow breast; at first I thought Magnolia, but it had now white; thereupon I guessed Prairie. with black streakings

After we had studied it for 10 minutes, another warbler flew at it and chased it out of the tree. We lost it. I hooped it back to the car for my camera, with hopes of our finding it again. We didn't, until 15 minutes later and several hundred yards downstream. The same thing happened again--a warbler chased it out of a tree, and 15

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:

minutes later, someone found it again.

The bird was feeding in medium to small cottonwoods, at the top half. They had little catkins, no leaves showing yet. It picked off its insects (?), contracting its pumping tail regularly (I wouldn't call it "wagging"). He moved constantly, not conducive to noting

field marks it had an olive back and cap, yellow face with two black horizontal streaks (I don't remember that one went through the eye or not). It also had a black spot, below these two black lines, in the cheek. It had a yellow breast with black streaks on the side, yellow throat, breast, belly, undertail coverts, and had white under the tail. The wings had only faint wing bars, not at all conspicuous..

The bird was the size of a Virginia's, smaller than Audubons. We looked for the reddish streaks in the back, but I did not see any.

The feeding action was distinctive -- as it picked insects off the catkins it would pull the tail down - contract or pump it - and stretch out again. This was a frequent action. It almost seemed like a habit the bird had to keep its balance while feeding.

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

No sound.

Describe the habitat in which you observed this bird:

Cottonwood river bottom of South Platte River, where it comes out of the mountains.

How were similarly appearing species eliminated?

Magnolia has white spots in wings and tail, gray back.

Canada has necklace or black streaks on breast, gray back and face.

Kirtlands has gray back and face.

Cape May has red cheek and face, yellow neck patch, white in wings (male), white undertail coverts.

Yellow-thrated and Graces have gray backs, white eye stripes, white bellies.

Black-throated Green has black throat, white breast and belly.

Palm has less distinct black breast streakings, reddish, not olive, cap, less distant facial markings.

Pine has faint, not prominent breast streakings, muddy face markings, white tail spots.

Tail-wagging, or pumping during feeding also eliminates most other species.

Prior experience with this and similarly appearing species:

I've seen it in Florida some years ago. I've seen most of the others within the past 5 years, some well, some not so well.

Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentation?

Birds of North America and Peterson's Eastern Guide consulted to discuss similar species. Birds of North America used in field to identify necessary diagnostic marks.

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

PRINT NAME: Hugh Kingery SIGNATURE: Hugh Kingery DATE: 5/11/75
Street Address: 860 Milwaukee St Town and State: Denver ZIP: 80206

Return to: JACK REDDALL - 4450 South Alton Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110