

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - Rarity Report Form

Common Name: Prairie Warbler **Scientific Name:** *Dendroica discolor*
Number of Individuals: 1 **Sex/Age:** First fall male
Locality: Cottonwood Canyon, **Colorado:** Baca **County:**
Date(s) Seen: August 22, 1997 **Time:** 7:40 - 8:00 am
Reporting Observer: Christopher L. Wood
Other Observers: Joey Kellner and Steve Stachowiak
Light Conditions: Sun had just rose above the canyon rim; no clouds.
Optical Equipment: B&L "Elite" 10 * 42 (new model)
Distance to Bird: 10-20 feet
Duration of Observation: Actually seen for about 90 seconds.
Habitat: First observed in junipers along the main road at the base of the canyon, and then in cottonwoods.

Behavior: I first noticed the bird loosely associating with a group of Lark Sparrows as we walked along the road. The first time I saw it well, it was perched in the upper third of a ten-foot juniper. As I brought my binoculars up, I noticed it was pumping its tail down and up. Before I could see it well, it had flown out the back of the tree. After about five minutes of searching, we relocated it at the very top of a cottonwood. It sat there and looked from side to side. As we watched, it moved around the top-most branches, gave a brief, three note, rising song fragment and flew off. We could not relocate it.

Description: My first impression was of a small warbler with a proportionately long tail. It was noticeably smaller than the Yellow Warblers we had just seen. **Head** pattern distinctive: crown and hindneck dull olive; auriculars more grayish-white; indistinct yellow supercilium; dark gray moustachial crescent interrupted in places with grayish-yellow; very narrow whitish eye crescents; yellow from breast coming up and around the base of the auriculars. **Upperparts** dull olive; mantle with faint chestnut streaks, which, most often, were not visible. **Underparts** yellow; black crescent below base of auriculars of sides of throat; two rows of black streaks on sides and flanks (breast streaks shorter, and wider than those on flanks); undertail coverts muted yellow. Wings dark; each feather edged with olive-yellow; two very narrow olive-yellow wing bars formed by tips of greater and median coverts. **Bare parts:** small, narrow bill blackish with fleshy colored cutting edges; legs blackish.

Vocalizations: The bird gave brief fragment of its typical song: three rapid buzzy ascending notes, all given within the span of about one and one half seconds.

Similar Species: **Pine Warbler:** larger, chunkier, with larger bill; facial pattern more subdued; belly and undertail coverts white; streaking on flanks not as defined; wing bars whiter, more prominent. **Magnolia Warbler:** Head is grayish overall with conspicuous complete white eye-ring; Undertail coverts white; wings bars white; yellow rump contrasts with the upperparts.

Photographs/Tape Recordings? None.

References:

Curson, J., D. Quinn, and D. Beadle. 1994. *Warblers of the Americas*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Dunn, J., and K. Garrett. 1997. *A Field Guide to Warblers of North America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Description from: _____ Contemporaneous notes; xx Later notes; _____ Memory.

Experience with this and Similar Species: I have only seen about 10 Prairie Warblers in my life. While working on the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas in Grant County, however, I found a Prairie Warbler that remained in one of my priority blocks for most of the summer. I probably spent more than 10 hours watching, photographing and tape recording this bird, so I am fairly familiar with this species. In Wisconsin, I have also seen hundreds of Magnolia and Pine Warblers.

Are you Positive of the Identification?: Yes

Signature:

Christopher L. Wood

Date:

Dec 30, 1997