

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

ACCEPT 7-0
Red 1/20/00 wgl

PRAIRIE WARBLER
Dendroica discolor

Location: "Van's Grove" about 2 miles east of Ft. Lyon Wildlife Easement; Bent County; near Las Animas, Colorado

Date: September 19, 1999

I was birding with Bob Dickson and Brandon Percival. We found the bird early at 4:30 p.m. and observed it for over an hour. It was very cooperative at times, secretive at others, and mainly stayed in a dense shrub at the entrance to the grove. At one point the bird was in the open on dead limbs. It foraged at heights of 10-30 feet. It had a distinctive, obvious tail-wagging behavior. The bird gave a light, faint, sharp chip not "chup". We observed the bird at various angles to the sun (though it was overcast), often from directly underneath, using binoculars (mine are B&L Elites 10x40).

Description:

The bird was an immature male. It was small, slim warbler, about 5" long. The bill was small, sharp, pointed and black. The legs and feet were blackish. The bird was fairly uniform grayish above without any apparent wingbars. The face was grayish with two off-white, white eye crescents, above and below the eye. There was a shadow of the inverted "D"-shaped face pattern, mainly seen as a gray curl below the eye on a yellowish ground color. The bird was yellow underneath, paler yellow on the undertail and it had distinct, sharp black flank streaking.

Similar Species:

Kinglets and vireos lack the distinct flank streaking. Although this was a fall female, the brightness of the yellow underparts ruled out many other warblers. Orange-crowned has yellow undertail coverts, lacks the distinct flank streaks and does not wag the tail. Blackburnian can sometimes be yellow underneath but has wingbars, a distinctive face pattern and a diagnostic yellow streak across the back that this bird lacked. Magnolia has a yellow rump, lacks this face pattern and has distinct wingbars. Yellow-rumped has a yellow rump, is never bright yellow below in this plumage and lacks the face pattern. Pine never has this distinct streaks below, has whitish wingbars and does not wags its tail. Canada has a spectacled face, slate gray back, pink legs and lacks the tail wagging habits.

Experience with Species:

I have seen many Prairie Warblers -- twice before in Colorado.

This report is prepared from notes made after observation.

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