

2001-68

CFO-RC FILE #: 2001-020
RESULTS:

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS SIGHT RECORD FORM

(Please print or type. Attach photographs, drawings, and additional pages if necessary.)

R-18 Aug 01

ACCEPTED

Species: Prairie Warbler (PRAW) Dendroica discolor
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

Date(s) of observation: August 10, 2001 65°F, no wind, overcast

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: adult ♂ (Sibley)

① Exact location: U.S. DOE property on Lower Gunnison River (see note 1)

County: Mesa Nearest town: Grand Junction Elevation: ~ 4600 ft

Length of observation: several minutes each location Times(s) of observation: 0700, 0715

Other observers who saw the bird(s) with you: none

Other observers who independently saw the bird(s): none

Light conditions (quality; direction relative to bird's; position): excellent but overcast ① sun behind me ② sun to right

Optical equipment used: Bausch & Lomb Elite 10x42 binos

Distance from bird(s) (estimated unless otherwise noted): 15 ft - 20 ft

Was bird photographed?: no If so, have you submitted photographs? _____

Who took the photographs? N/A

② Describe the general and specific habitat in which the bird(s) occurred: see note 2. (attached)

③ Describe the bird's behavior (flying; feeding; habits; behaviors used in identifying the species or in supporting the identification):
see attached note 3

④ Describe the bird(s) in detail. This is the most important part of this report. Include overall size and shape, and how you placed the bird(s) in the general group that you did. Give complete details of plumage, including head, throat, undersides, nape, back, wings, and tail. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Describe other details, such as color and shape of bill, legs, eye, (etc.) that were important in making the identification. (Fill out this portion even if photographs are submitted; you may attach additional sheets, drawings, field sketches, or copy of field notes):
see attached note 4.

⑤ Describe bird's call or song:
see note 5

⑥ Discuss similar species and how you eliminated them:

see note 6.

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

none with PRAW.

Have observed female/immature Townsend's warbler.

List books, guides, recordings, or other sources consulted and how these influenced your identification (during and after observation):

⑦ see note 7

This report was made from notes made during ✓ or after _____ observation, or later from memory _____

Date of written report: 8/13/01

Reporting observer: Larry Arnold Signature: [Signature]

Observer's address: 308 Country Club Park, Grand Junction CO 81503

Send report to: Bill Lisowsky, 2919 Silverplume Drive, Fort Collins, Colorado 80526 (970) 263-0115

Author: Larry Arnold at DOEGJPO
Date: 8/17/01 8:40 AM
Priority: Normal
TO: Larry Arnold
Subject: PRAW - GJO - AUG2001

----- Message Contents -----

PRAW - Prairie warbler in Grand Junction, August 10, 2001
Supplemental Notes for CFO Sight Record Form

1. GPS LOCATIONS

Two observations at sites separated by a 6-iron shot (about 175 yards)
First sighting - 4590 ft, N 39°02.752' and W 108°34.595'
Second sighting - 4580 ft, N 39°02.807' and W 108°34.448'

2. HABITAT

First sighting - along the east bank of the lower Gunnison River on the river dike toward the north end of the DOE property (riparian), in an area of tamarisk, Russian olive, Fremont cottonwood and willows.

Second sighting - at the northwest edge of the North Pond in an area of tamarisk.

3. BEHAVIOR

First sighting - bird was with several other warblers, the closest being an Orange-crowned that was singing, and a couple of Virginia's warblers that were interacting with each other. PRAW was foraging, giving me good looks, coming closer to me in response to my pishing, was flicking/bobbing it's tail, and it's call note was new to me and actually what caught my attention. Bird seemed to stay just above my eye level at ca. 10 ft above the ground.

Second sighting - at the North Pond I heard that strange call note again, so I pished it closer, to within 10-15 ft, it kept foraging, doing the tail thing, and acted very inquisitive about my pishing, definitely not a shy bird. Bird stayed at eye level in both tamarisk plants I saw it in, i.e., at about 6 ft above ground.

4. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Bird was about 4.5" to 5" long. Overall, it was olive above and bright yellow below, and its jiz, beak size and shape, foraging habit and level of activity suggested warbler. At first look I thought I had a strange-plumaged Yellow-rumped warbler, but I then noticed that the black dashes or streaks on the body were confined to the sides of the bird, and that the chest and belly were relatively bright yellow and clear of markings. Then I noticed two distinctive black lines on the face, one through the eye (transocular), and another just below

that angled downward from the bill and formed a subocular crescent of yellow (please refer to attached sketch). These markings were strikingly unlike anything I had ever seen before. The field guides I have (n=8) illustrate the bird as somewhat variable, and the male PRAWs illustrated in the Peterson's series of field guides are closest in appearance to what I saw. Chestnut streaks on the back of the bird (as mentioned in NGS, etc) were not apparent on this bird.

5. SONG/CALLS

I did not hear the bird sing, but it was often calling with a check note that was subtly different from the other warblers' vocals, and again this is what grabbed my attention. One of my field guides describes the call as a flat "tsip" or "tsup", but that doesn't quite do it justice. Peterson's fieldguide to Warblers mentions a "smacking tchick" that sounds closer to what I heard, and the Stokes' recording (Eastern Birdsongs on CD) of PRAW is also fairly close to what I actually heard.

6. SIMILAR SPECIES

In my mind, because of how they appear in my field guides, no other warbler closely resembles an adult male PRAW, but I can mention the following species in genus *Dendroica*:

Townsend's warbler - adult male has a significantly different black and yellow pattern on the head, with a blackish cheek patch and throat, does not bob tail.

Pine warbler - facial pattern is more subdued than PRAW, lacks blackish accents (dashes or stripes) on face and on sides of body

Palm warbler - has a different facial pattern, lacks blackish accents (dashes or stripes) on face and on sides of body

Magnolia warbler - male has blackish upper parts, large white wing patches, broad band on tail, does not bob tail

Golden cheeked warbler - male has black back and bib, white belly

Kirtland's warbler - too rare, too dark-headed, and generally too different looking to even be considered, lacks subocular crescent of yellow

7. FIELD GUIDES, ETC.

Mesa County Checklist (GVAS 1998) shows this bird as accidental, and Colorado Birds (2Bobs, 1992) shows eight records as of 1991, with only one accepted record in Western Colorado (25 Sept 1991).

Peterson's Western, 3rd edition - I always carry this with me, and this is what I consulted onsite with the bird in front of me. Actually, during my first observation I didn't take my eyes off the bird for several minutes. Then I studied the fieldguide and focused on fieldmarks, but only the adult male PRAW was a match. And

then... I was the luckiest person on the planet to get another good look at the bird at a second location with a different angle of light, even closer than i was the first time, and having studied the fieldmarks I was left with little doubt as to the bird's identity.

Peterson's Eastern, 4th edition - has a bit more description of PRAW than the Western, and a mirror image illustration.

Peterson's Warblers, 1st edition (1997) - has much descriptive and illustrative detail on PRAW, shown in several plumages

Sibley's fieldguide (2000) - doesn't quite show the blackish accents on the face and sides of body like I saw them, but helped convince me i had an adult male.

Kaufman's fieldguide - points out the overall color and general aspects of the species

National Geographic (both 2nd and 3rd editions)

American Bird Conservancy fieldguide (1997)

Golden Guide (revised edition, 1983)

Recordings - Stokes Eastern set of CDs has PRAW song and call

Respectfully,

Larry Arnold
Grand Junction CO

August 13, 2001

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'LA', is written over the typed name 'Larry Arnold'.

PRAW 10-Aug-01

THE PARTS OF A BIRD

