

VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN UNUSUAL RECORD

1. Species: BAY-BREASTED WARBLER Dendroica castanea
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)
2. Number: One (1) male certain; one (1) other possible female
3. Location: In conifer tops along cliffside about 200' / SW of western side of breast of dam at Tarryall Reservoir, Colorado.
4. Date(s): June 17, 1973 5. Time bird seen: 1500 to 1515 hrs
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern: Slightly larger than Black-capped or Mountain Chickadee; bit longer and thicker bill than that of chickadees; yellowish light-gray underparts with spots atypical of Yellow-rumped Warbler on bottom of undertail coverts; crown, throat and sides bright rust; very dark brown or black legs and feet; white wing bars. When in shade, head appeared entirely black but sunlight clearly marked bright rusty crown apart from black appearing face mask and head.
7. Description of voice: Not heard
8. Description of behavior: Warbler like flitting about but yet reticent; seemed to prefer top third of several tall conifers; acted as though a nest were nearby. I tried unsuccessfully to find the nest but had to leave the steep slope after a short search to move a camper away from upcoming very high winds.
9. Habitat: General: Altitude about 8000'; in conifers on very steep hillside adjacent to water. Specific: moved somewhat among five or six conifers, always in the upper third portions about 10 to 20 feet above ground.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by 6, 7, and 8 above; Explain: Black-capped Chickadee is usually heard; noticeably smaller: has shorter and thinner bill; sports black cap and chin; and, very slight rust sides compared to bright chestnut of Bay-breasted.

Mountain Chickadee has white eye stripe; somewhat smaller overall; has shorter and thinner bill; lacks predominant chestnut crown, throat and sides. Chestnut sided warbler crown is light yellow, overall is a smaller bird; and, lacks rusty chestnut throat.

11. Distance (how measured)?: From about 12 to 20 feet since my 400mm lens close focus distance is about 12 feet 2 inches and several times I had a chance to obtain a better picture than I did but the bird was too close to focus the lens sharply enough. Another 20 feet further out and I would have dropped into the reservoir.

12. Optical equipment: Leicaflex 35mm camera and 400mm lens

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and observer): Light was such that proper exposure on ASA 160 color film would have been 1/60th of a sec at f 4.5 in shade and 1/250th of a sec at f 11 in sunlight. Unfortunately I had to underexpose the shot using 1/100th of a sec (hand held telephoto) at f 6.8 (largest aperture of the 400mm Telyt lens). Light included some diffused sun but the bird was mostly in shadow. Overhead sun and clouds would permit better exposure were it not for dense evergreen foliage. From observer's position with the bird to the immediate front, the sun was over, behind and about 30 degrees to the right of the bird from the observer's position..

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species? I have seen thousands of various Chickadees and photographed many from extremely close up. I have not seen and positively identified a Bay-breasted heretofore. I have, with two other observers, observed Chestnut-sided warblers in the southeast U.S. and once during June 1972 at Castlewood, Colorado.

15. What made you think this species was unusual or rare? I hadn't seen it before and CFO's interest in this species (see page 7, CFO, No. 15, Mar 73).

16. Other Observers: None

17. Did others agree with your identification? Yes. I described the bird to Mrs. Ellen Bartol (wife) and Mrs Sandra ~~Bartol~~ (daughter) upon my

return to the camper as noted above. Before moving the camper because of upcoming high winds each of us independently checked Robbins "Birds of North America" against my description and those of the Mountain, Black-capped and Boreal chickadee and Chestnut-sided Warbler therein. We all agreed to the Bay-breasted but since I had been able to obtain one color shot at close distance of the bird, we would wait until the film was developed. I knew the shot was underexposed but also realized there may have been enough light to afford positive identification.

Upon receipt of the processed film we felt the sighting was accurate.

18. Other observers who independently identified this bird? See 17, above.

19. Books, illustrations and advice consulted and how did these influence this documentatation?

National Geographic, "Song & Garden Birds", page 279

Robbins, Bruun, Zim, Singer, "Birds of North America", page 266-267

These texts affirmed my description and color slide to my satisfaction..

20. Photograph? Submitted separately to Mr. Reddall

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