

SPRING 1979

APPENDIX II

52-80-74

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDSSpecies: Bay-breasted Warbler ; Dendroica castanea
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): male: 16 May 1979 female: 20 May 1979 Time Bird Seen: male: 6:50 a.m. to 7:05 a.m.
female: 7:10 am - 7:20 am
8:00 am - 8:10 am

Locality: Hanna Ranch (Div. of Wildlife property)
Fountain, Colorado - El Paso County
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell Binocs 8x40

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: -

Number of birds seen: 2 Sex: 1♂ 1♀ Plumage: Breeding
(diff. dates)

Light conditions: male: excellent, clear sun on exposed perch

female: fair - shaded by tree at times, high overcast clouds - filtered light.

Distance from bird, and how measured: male: closest 8-12 meters (est.)

female: closest 7 meters (est.) (Very close look)

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

male: fairly obvious as tree not yet leafed out. Changed perch on tree frequently - moved to 3 separate trees in 15 min. of observation. Allowed my slow + cautious approach - did not respond much to squeaks etc.

female: stayed low + rapidly flitted about in dense low branches of willow. at one point hopped down to shore of beaver pond + backup - erect - eating. I fairly curious to psh-psh call - we observed from opposite sides of tree. She allowed one cross movement.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird: Cottonwood-willow river bottom - riparian corridor that follows Fountain Creek N. from Arkansas River + Pueblo. This particular spot borders a cat-tail marsh + beaver pond. Male observed in 2 large cottonwood trees + one small c-wood approx 30m. apart from other - various perch height: mostly 8-15m. high. } ♀ low in large willow along edge of cat-tail marsh + willow stand, shore of beaver pond. Flitted about 2-5m. high.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

male: No others

female: Lynn Grace 1238 Wood Ave. Apt. 5 - Colo Spgs Co. 80903

secreture

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field.

male: warbler beak, size + shape. Brilliant coloring in light: rust sides

drawing (ugh! ☹️)
from my field notes
showing thickness of
rust + placement of white



rust head-like cap & on sides (thick; becomes streaky to mid body)
white at shoulder apex
white wing bars
eye area seems slightly darker?
white belly to mid breast

female: 1st noticed white on outer tail - flapped when moved: unlike juncos - more spotty. Buffy pink wash on throat & sides - rusty cap (lighter than ♂'s) Buffy brown upper back. White vertical line tail
Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery -- Spots & wing bars slight white V-effect of line on face + shoulder white
i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

No song

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

male: chestnut-sided warbler: rust on body thicker. Rust face + cap + throat
I know of no other warbler (def. a warbler) that is dark + rusty - very distinctive bird!

female: Oregon race of Dark-eyed Junco: had warbler beak: spot effect of white on tail different: wing bars
Swainson's warbler (brown back): had wing bars: spots on tail
wrong time of year for juveniles of Blackpoll or others. ♀ C. Yellowthroat: had no eye line, no yellow on tail
prior experience with this and similar species:

No previous experience w/ Bay-breasted - yet familiar w/ other eastern warblers + had characteristics well memorized from book. Not fam. w/ Swainson's except leaving this both considered it.

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

Name (print) : Margaret L. Abbott

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Signature: Margaret L. Abbott

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee
c/o Curator - Dept. of Zoological Collections
Denver Museum of Natural History
City Park
Denver, CO 80205