

52-93-11

Reading
A

Observer: Steven Feldstein

Species: Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*)

Date and time of observation: Dec. 17, 1992, 1:30 pm.

Weather: Clear skies, sunny, temperature about 40F

Duration of observation: Approx. 10 min

Bird-sun orientation: Bird seen toward east, sun toward the south

Distance from bird: Approx. 2-5 yards

Optical equipment: No binoculars

Habitat: In Ponderosa Pines in a building on the University of Colorado east campus in Boulder.

The bird was observed outside my office window. As with the accompanying documentation for an immature male Pine Warbler, I did not have binoculars available. Throughout the observation, the bird was in close view as it perched on a branch of a Ponderosa Pine that is about two yards from my office window. The bird was not present with any other birds. The movement of the bird was very slow, as it walked along branches, would often stop and rest, and periodically pick what I assume are insects off the branches of the tree. I also went outside to listen to its call, and it did give a chip that was somewhat similar to the chip of a Yellow-rumped Warbler.

The bird had a slender shape, typical that of a warbler, with a long thin bill and a square or very slightly forked tail. The crown, nape, back, rump, and upper surface of the its tail all appeared to be a uniform olive brown. There was no evidence of any streaking anywhere on its upperparts. Its wings were slightly darker than its upperparts and there were two dull white wing bars. The throat, breast, and belly of the bird were a dull white in color. For a few brief moments, in good lighting, there was a slight yellowish tinge to its throat and breast and a slight brownish tinge to the belly. However, most of the time, this slight coloration was not apparent. In addition, also under good lighting, and only when the bird was right next to my office window, I could see some streaking on both sides of the breast. There was no streaking evident anywhere on the belly. The undertail coverts were white and the undersurface of the tail exhibited two white oval shaped spots. The face of the bird showed a very dull whitish supercilium. There was no obvious eye-ring and no other obvious field marks on its face. The bill was long and thin (like the bill of most *Dendroica* warblers), and it appeared to be slightly longer than that on most other warbler species, and the upper and lower mandibles of its bill were both black. Also, the legs on the bird were uniformly black. The bird did not exhibit any distinctive behavior such as flicking its wings or raising and lowering its tail.

These field marks suggest to me that this bird is an immature female Pine Warbler. The absence of streaking on the sides (except, as mentioned above, when the bird was one yard away) and the very faint supercilium suggest that this is an immature bird. Furthermore, the entirely white underparts (again, except when the bird was one yard away) suggest that it is a female since immature male Pine Warblers tend to have a yellow breast.

Similar species that one could confuse Pine Warbler with are Blackpoll Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Olive Warbler. I have had field experience with all of these species. Blackpoll Warbler can also be eliminated as the bird did not have streaking on the back and the breast, and the bird had dark legs. Also, Bay-breasted Warbler can be eliminated as the bird lacked streaking on the back, its back was olive-brown and not green. Lastly, adult female or immature Olive Warbler can be eliminated as the bird did not have the dark ear patch nor the grey upperparts that is characteristic of Olive Warblers.

Pine Warbler is a bird that I have had much experience with as it is a common breeding species in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Ontario where I previously lived. I have probably seen about one hundred Pine Warblers before the present observation. The above description of the Pine Warbler was written immediately after seeing the bird on the day of the observation. A field guide was never consulted in writing the above description of the observed bird.

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