

APPENDIX II

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

52-89-40

Species: Blackburnian Warbler ; Dendroica fusca
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

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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): 11/5/89 Time Bird Seen: 12:30 to 1:00 p.m.

Locality : Jefferson county side of Platte River 1/4 mile upstream from Kingfisher Bridge
in Chatfield State Park, CO.

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Bushnell 10x40 Custom "Audubon" binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: n/a

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♀ Plumage: immature

Light conditions: bright afternoon sun

Distance from bird, and how measured: 20' at closest

Describe the bird's overall behavior: This was a "mystery" warbler on the "Colorado Bird Report" controversial because it was called both a Black-throated green Warbler and a Blackburnian. The unique characteristic of the bird was that it had no tail. It foraged through russian olives, gleaning insects from these trees, the only trees left that had leaves still on them.
Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:
Always in Russian olive trees, some of which were nearly 20' tall, within 100' of the S. Platte River.

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

Randy Lentz (initial finder of the bird, also present when correctly identified)

Warren Finch

Dick Schottler

Joe Roller

Nick Watmough (we discussed this bird at length on phone afterward.)

APPENDIX 1I 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. Known as warbler by Actions, size, shape of Bill (long + thin, for insect eating). Known as Dendroica genus by combination of wingbars and dark legs (excepting - BTh Blue no wingbars, Blackpoll pale legs).

Throat and Breast were yellow, but not bright as in a Wilsons or Canada - more subdued. There was light streaking along the flanks, but this was not the most noticeable field mark. The belly was a pale off white, contrasting with the white undertail coverts. The most obvious field mark which alone defines it as this species, were 2 broad beige stripes, one on each side of the back, which extended from the nape to the upper tail coverts. The rest of the back was olive, lightly streaked. The auricular patch seemed to terminate at a point rather than being rounded, as in Black-throated Greens, and it was much darker than in the im. B1-Th Greens I've seen. A yellowish patch was unobvious but evident on the crown. Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

none were ever given

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Black-throated Green Warbler - never has back streaked like this, in no plumage has yellow breast, or yellow crown. It (B1-Th Green) has creamy, not white, UT coverts. Other Dendroicas eliminated by combinations of solid, unstreaked backs, (B1-Th Green, Pine), lightly streaked backs (Townsend's + others), heavier streaking on upper breast, face pattern.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I have seen 2 previous Blackburnians (both Adult ♂'s) in Colorado, and dozens in other states ranging from Texas to Illinois to Maine.

I have observed an immature B1-Th Green in Colorado, which was consistent with pattern described above, as well as in many eastern states.

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

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Signature: Dwane L. Nelson

Return Form To:

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