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## COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER  
Dendroica fuscaLocation: Grove at Lake Henry; Ordway; Crowley County, ColoradoDate: May 4 and 5, 1996Background:

The grove at Lake Henry is a mixed riparian grove of shrubs and trees. I was birding the grove alone on the 4th. I walked to the end of the nearly submerged dike in the grove and heard this bird singing. He delivered the song from high in the foliage, singing it a single time at intervals of about 2-10 minutes between songs. It was a high thin song that did not carry well "seet see-wee see-wee seep seep seep". Although I did not recognize the song to species, I knew that it was an unfamiliar eastern warbler. I had to wade out to see the bird. After searching for about 15 minutes high in the trees overhead, I succeeded in finding it and observed it for about 40 minutes (between 12:30 - 1:10 p.m.). The sky was clear and the light good. On the 5th we re-found the bird and this time I was with several others (including Brandon Percival, Bob Dickson and Mark Hullinger). We all saw the bird. On both occasions the sky was clear, conditions good and there was excellent light. I observed the bird from 20-50 feet with B & L 10 x 40 binoculars.

Description:

The bird was an adult male in breeding plumage. It was difficult to find and observe as it stayed very high, near the treetops (1/2 to 2/3 of the way up) in cottonwoods and willows. It was usually at least 30 feet up. It was small and short-tailed. It was very active -- staying close to terminal branches and twigs; gleaning and picking in the foliage with small movements and sometimes hanging in the foliage like a chickadee. It did not do any flycatching. It was a small, slim, active warbler about 4 1/2" long. At times it revealed itself in the open and it was a brilliant and breathtaking bird. It had a brilliant, fiery orange forehead and fore-crown stripe, face, chin, throat and upper breast. The orange breast was delineated sharply against the white belly and undertail coverts. There were sharp, abundant black streaks on the sides of the breasts and the flanks. The face patch and eyeline were black with a small orange spot below the eye. The cap was black as was the nape, back and wings. There were two off-white diagonal stripes on the back. It had two distinct broad white wingbars. The bill was small, sharp and black. The eyes, legs and feet were blackish.

Similar Species:

The small size, slim shape and small, pointed bill indicate a warbler. Really no other warbler is so bright orange and the white diagonal streaks on the back are diagnostic for this species. The Northern Parula is bluish above and lacks black streaking and many other features of this bird. Cape May Warbler lacks the black face patch and orange crown streak. Kentucky Warbler is plain olive above and does not have white in the wing and lacks flank streaking.

Experience with Species:

I have seen Blackburnian Warbler once in Colorado before. I have seen male Blackburnians in other states.

This report is prepared from notes made during and after observation.

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