COLORADO OBSERVATION

1997-83

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Report Form
The Audubon Society of Missouri
Missouri Bird Records Committee (MBRC)
COLORADO

MBRC No.: 1997-83

1. Species: BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER. Number Observed: 1 3. Age/Sex: ♂

4. Location (Including County): CUB LAKE TRAIL, ROCKY MT. N.P.

5. Date(s) Observed: 26 JUNE 1997 6. Time Bird(s) Seen: From: 10:30 To: 11:00 am

7. Reporting Observer, Address, And Phone No.: WILLIAM C. ROWE, 9033 BIG BEND, ST. LOUIS, MO 63119 314-962-0544

8. Other Observers Present Or Known: ANITA RUNGE (STAFF NATURALIST, YMCA OF THE ROCKIES), 3 OTHER MEMBERS OF BIRDING WORKSHOP GROUP

9. Was(were) The Bird(s) Photographed/Videotaped? Yes ____ No X By Whom: ____

____ (Enclose Duplicate If Possible)

10. Habitat (General And Specific): MATURE ASPEN-CONIFER GROVE ON SLOPE,

11. Distance To Bird: MIN. 40 ft. 12. Optical Equip.: NIKON SE 10×42 BINOCS

13. Light (Sky, Light On Bird, Angle Of Sun):
CLEAR SKY, PLENTY OF LIGHT DIFFUSED THROUGH ASPENS; BIRD ALWAYS IN SHADE

14. Please Attach Copy Of Any Field Notes.

15. Documentation Based On: Field Observation ✓; Photograph/video ____;
Tape Recording ____; Specimen ____.

16. Describe In Detail (On Back Of This Form And Include Only What Was Observed) The Size (Preferably In Relation To A Similar-sized, Well-known Bird), Shape, And Color Pattern Of The Bird(s). Include A Description Of The Bill, Legs, Feet, Tail, Body, And Wings, As Well As Other Diagnostic Characteristics. Describe Behavior And Voice. (SEE OVER)

17. How Distinguished From Similar Species?:
UNLIKE ANY OTHER N. AM. BIRD

18. Previous Experience With This And Similar Species: HAVE SEEN MANY B-T BLUES IN EASTERN U.S.

19. Signature Of Reporter: William C. Rowe

20. Date Completing This Form: 7/2/97

(Note: all material submitted becomes the property of MBRC at the time of submission unless otherwise requested). (Revised 07/94:ASM/MBRC/PMcK: Prestige Elite- 12 pt.)

I was hiking the Cub Lake Trail in RMNP with a small group of beginning/intermediate birders from a workshop I was leading at YMCA of the Rockies, when I heard a vocalization upslope that I didn't recognize. It consisted of four loud slow buzzes, each slightly downslurred, and all the same (no change of pitch); they had a nasal, fussy quality like a vireo scold note, but the pattern was that of a song. It thus sounded something like bzzh, bzzh,bzzh, bzzh, or beer, beer, beer ,beer. This was repeated tirelessly, each repetition taking about 1.5 to 2 seconds, with pauses of 10 seconds or more between bouts.

I clambered up the slope among mature aspens and shrubby understory with fallen logs and finally found, to my surprise, that the singer was a male Black-throated Blue Warbler, of which I had brief but excellent views as it perched on shaded lower branches of the aspens just above me. It was small, trim, all dull blue-gray above (head and back), with an extensive solid black face, throat, and upper breast and a white lower breast and belly. A small squarish white patch in the primaries was conspicuous. There were no visible wingbars or other obvious field marks. The undertail seemed to be blackish distally and white at the base.

I spent quite a bit of time calling my group up and helping them get views of the bird, and it was unfazed by this activity, simply continuing to sing away at the same pace and explore the under-canopy of the aspens in a leisurely fashion, never moving outside a radius of maybe 100 feet from where I first located it. Later, as we rounded a switchback up the trail and turned back by this area at a higher level, the bird was still singing. We were about 80-85% of the way from the trailhead to Cub Lake itself, just before the steepest part of the trail, and a contour map suggested that we were at about 8400 feet.

The bird's song was, in quality, typical of Black-throated Blues I have heard elsewhere, but it did not ascend in pitch, even on the last note. Most of the repetitions were of four notes, occasionally three.

Bill Rowe
Member,
Missouri
Bird Records
Committee