

CFO-RC FILE #: 1997-94
rec'd 9-20-97

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
SIGHT RECORD FORM

RESULTS : ACCEPTED 7-0

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE. ATTACH PHOTOGRAPHS AND ADDITIONAL PAGES IF NECESSARY.

SPECIES: CERULEAN WARBLER Dendroica cerulea
(Common Name) (Scientific Name)

DATE(S) OF OCCURRENCE: 5-25 AND 26-1997

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: FEMALE PLUMAGE: ALTERNATE

EXACT LOCATION: NE CORNER OF HOMELAKE SWA

COUNTY: RIO GRANDE NEAREST TOWN: MONTE VISTA ELEVATION: UNKNOWN

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: TOTAL APPROX 45 MIN TIME(S) OF OBSERVATION: 3:45 PM and later
5:5

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO SAW THE BIRD(S) WITH YOU:

CLIF SMITH, PEARLE SANDSTROM-SMITH AND VIVIAN (NICKIE) PLILER WHEN THE BIRD WAS FIRST FOUND; AND LATER WITH PETER GENT, RON AND AUDREY RIDER, LINDA VIDAL, JOHN AND LISA RAWINSKI, DEAN AND MONA HILL AND NUMEROUS OTHERS. MANY ATTENDEES OF THE CFO CONVENTION IN MONTE VISTA.

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO INDEPENDENTLY SAW THE BIRD(S):
MARK JANOS, BRANDON PERCIVAL AND MANY OTHERS THE NEXT DAY (5-26)

LIGHT CONDITIONS (QUALITY; DIRECTION RELATIVE TO BIRD(S); POSITION):
VARIED CLOUDY AND SUNNY. THE INITIAL SIGHTING HAD THE SUN AT OUR BACKS LOOKING AT BIRD.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED:

BANSCH & LOMB 10X40 CUSTOM BINOCULARS AND EYES (NO OPTICAL EQUIP.)

DISTANCE FROM BIRD (ESTIMATED UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED): VARIED. AT TIMES CLOSE THAN 15 FEET

WAS BIRD PHOTOGRAPHED? YES IF SO, HAVE YOU SUBMITTED PHOTOS? NO (OTHER HAVE

WHO TOOK THE PHOTOGRAPHS? CLIF SMITH, DEAN HILL, JOHN RAWINSKI

DESCRIBE THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC HABITAT IN WHICH THE BIRD(S) OCCURRED:
SMALL GROVE OF COTTONWOOD TREES ALONG AN IRRIGATION CANAL FOR INITIAL SIGHTING
ALSO IN OTHER SMALL TREES AND WILLOWS; WHEN SEEN LATER THAT AFTERNOON. WHEN SEEN THE NEXT MORNING, SHE WAS BACK IN THE ORIGINAL COTTONWOOD GROVE.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S BEHAVIOR (FLYING; FEEDING; HABITS; BEHAVIORS USED IN IDENTIFYING THE SPECIES OR IN SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION):

WHEN FIRST SEEN, THE BIRD WAS ACTIVELY FEEDING AND MOVING QUICKLY IN AND OUT OF LEAF COVER, ALONG BRANCHES, INSPECTING BARK CRANNIES ON THE TRUNKS OF TREES, ETC. FREQUENTLY FLYING OUT TO HAWK INSECT PREY. VERY "BUSY" AND INTENT WITH FORAGING.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD IN DETAIL. THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS REPORT. INCLUDE THE OVERALL SIZE AND SHAPE AND HOW YOU PLACED THE BIRD IN THE GENERAL GROUP THAT YOU DID. GIVE COMPLETE DETAILS OF PLUMAGE, INCLUDING HEAD, THROAT, UNDERSIDES, NAPE, BACK, WINGS AND TAIL. GIVE PARTICULAR EMPHASIS TO MARKS YOU USED TO IDENTIFY THE BIRD(S). DESCRIBE OTHER DETAILS, SUCH AS COLOR AND SHAPE OF BILL, LEGS, EYE, ETC. THAT WERE IMPORTANT IN MAKING THE IDENTIFICATION. (FILL OUT THIS PORTION EVEN IF PHOTOGRAPHS ARE SUBMITTED; YOU MAY ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS, DRAWINGS, FIELD SKETCHES OR COPY OF FIELD NOTES): PLEASE SEE ATTACHED DRAWING.

SIZE WAS BETWEEN 4 AND 5 INCHES LONG. WARBLER-TYPE JIZZ IMMEDIATELY APPARENT - SMALL SIZE; SHARPLY POINTED THIN BILL; AND VERY ACTIVE, QUICK BEHAVIOR. HEAD DETAILS: BILL SHAPE THIN AND POINTED, DARK COLORED. CROWN AND NAPE WERE BLUISH - GRAY (MORE BRIGHT BLUE ON CROWN THAN NAPE AND BACK), WHITISH SUPERCILIUM, AND DARK EYE LINE. GRAY EAR PATCH. WHITISH CRESSENT UNDER THE EYE, WHICH WAS MORE DISTINCT IN CERTAIN VIEWS THAN OTHERS. THROAT AND UPPER BREAST WERE A VERY PALE BUFFY OR BUTTER YELLOW. THIS COLOR EXTENDED UP THE SIDE OF THE NECK, CHANGING TONE TO A MORE WHITISH COLOR BEHIND THE EAR COVERTS, FORMING A PATCH OR PARTIAL COLLAR. ALL OF THE UPPERPARTS WERE UNSTREAKED AND COLORED BLUISH - GRAY WITH OLIVE TINGES IN DIRECT LIGHT. WHEN THE BIRD WAS FIRST NOTICED FORAGING IN THE SHADOWS UP IN THE COTTONWOOD TREES, THE BLUE TONES WERE NOT DISCERNABLE, AND THE BIRD APPEARED DARK GRAY. (THIS INITIALLY CAUSED CONFUSION FOR ME, AS THIS EFFECT IN THE BAD LIGHT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD SEEN THIS CHANGE. WHEN THE BIRD CAME INTO DIRECT LIGHT AND THE BLUISH TONES WERE VISIBLE WITH THE GREEN TINGES, I RECOGNIZED THE BIRD IMMEDIATELY. THE WINGS WERE BLACKISH WITH TWO DISTINCT WHITE WINGBARS. THE LOWER BAR BEING THE BOLDEST. THE ~~WHITE~~ TAIL WAS ALSO DARK, AND ONLY SLIGHTLY NOTCHED AT THE CENTER. ON THE UNDERSIDE OF THE TAIL WERE TWO WHITE SPOTS (SEE DRAWING). THE BREAST-SIDES HAD AN OBSCURE FINE SPECKLING OF SMALL SPOTS AND STREAKS. THESE BECAME LONGER AS THEY EXTENDED DOWN THE SIDES AND FADED ON THE FLANK. THERE WAS NO BREAST BAND AS ON MALE BIRDS. THE BELLY AND UNDERTAIL COVERTS WERE WHITE. THE LEGS A DARK COLOR.

DISCUSS SIMILAR SPECIES AND HOW YOU ELIMINATED THEM:

WHEN THE BIRD WAS FIRST SEEN, IT WAS STAYING IN SHADOW, AND IT'S COLOR WASN'T DISCERNABLE. ONCE THE BIRD WAS SEEN IN SUNLIGHT AND THE BLUENESS OF IT'S COLORATION WAS VISIBLE, I KNEW WHAT IT WAS IMMEDIATELY. I HAVE PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SPECIES AND DIDN'T FIND IT NECESSARY TO GO THROUGH A LIST OF SIMILAR SPECIES.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILARLY APPEARING SPECIES?

THE CERULEAN WARBLER IS A NESTING SPECIES IN MINNESOTA, AND I HAVE SEEN SEVERAL OVER THE LAST 7 YEARS. WHILE ADMITTING THAT MOST OF THOSE HAVE BEEN MALES, I HAVE ALSO SEEN FEMALES MANY TIMES.

LIST BOOKS, GUIDES, RECORDINGS OR OTHER SOURCES CONSULTED AND HOW THIS INFLUENCED YOUR IDENTIFICATION (DURING AND AFTER OBSERVATION):

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WAS USED TO CONFIRM TO THE OTHERS IN OUR PARTY THE FIELD MARKS AND ID OF THE BIRD. FOR MORE ACCURATE STUDY, WARBLES OF THE AMERICAS, BY CURSON, QUINN & BEADLE

THIS REPORT WAS MADE FROM NOTES MADE DURING OR AFTER

OBSERVATION, OR LATER FROM MEMORY

DATE OF WRITTEN REPORT: JULY 23, 1997

REPORTING OBSERVER: DREW SMITH

ADDRESS: Mark Janos

10 Sedum Ct.

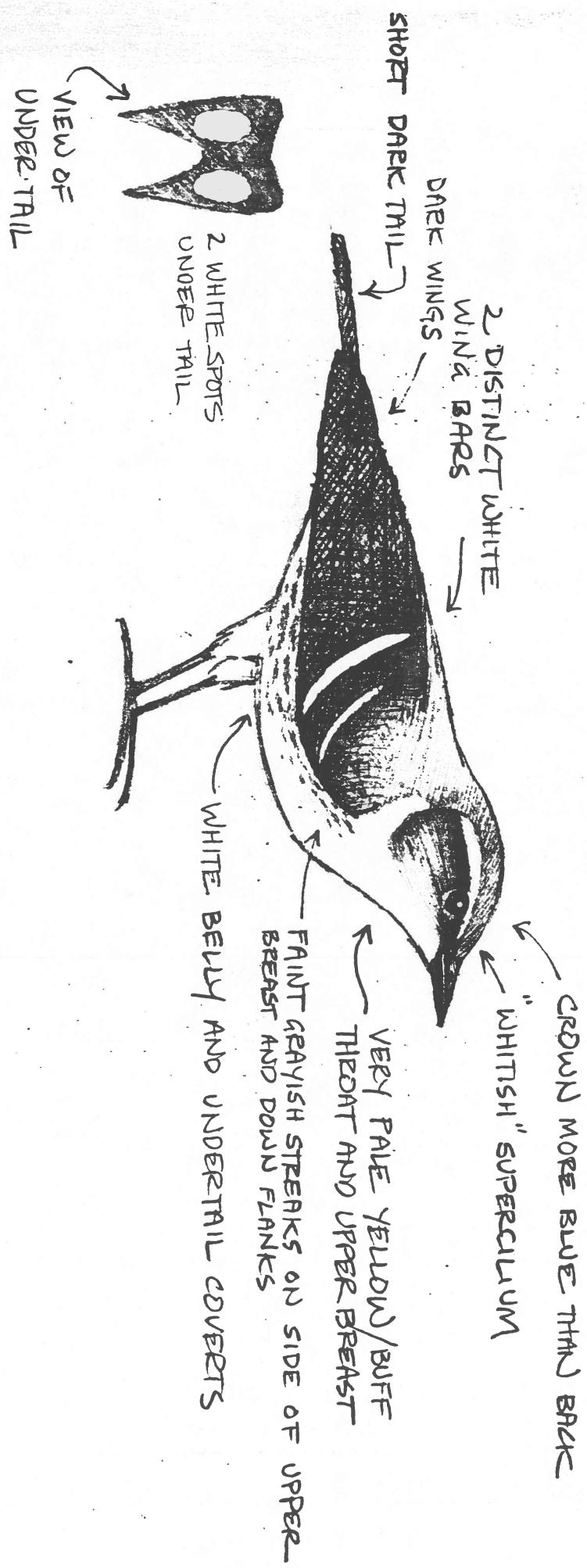
Pueblo, CO 81001

SIGNATURE: 

3606 Widgeon Way
Eagan MN 55123

DREW SMITH 5-25 AND 26 '97
NEAR MONTE VISTA, CO
RIO GRANDE COUNTY

FEMALE CERULEAN WARBLER



DRAWN BY DREW SMITH 5-26-97
(FROM MEMORY)

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: CERULEAN WARRLER
(Vernacular Name)DEN PROICA CERULEA
(Scientific Name)Date(s): 25th MAY 1997Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: FEMALE Plumage: BREEDINGLocality: HOME LAKE 2 MILES FROM Elevation: 8500'Nearest town: MONTIE VISTA County: RIO GRANDETime(s) observed: 5pm UNTIL 6:15pmDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 45 MINUTESOther observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
DREW SMITH, JOHN & LISA RAWINSKI, LINDA VIOLE, RON RYDER, SCOTT SERTMAN ETCOther observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)
MARK JAWA, BRANDON PERCIVALLight conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
SUNSHINE WITH GOOD LIGHT CONDITIONSOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 10X40 BINOCULARSDistance, and how measured: 10' CLOSEST, ESTIMATED

If photographed, type of equipment and film:

Who else photographed the bird?

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):
ACTIVELY FEEDING IN MEDIUM AND LARGE WILLOW TREES. IT STAYED QUITE LOW FEEDING FROM NEAR THE GROUND TO ABOUT 20' HEIGHT. IT ALSO WOULD FLY OUT TO CATCH INSECTS EVERY SO OFTEN.

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

THIS WARRLER LOOKED SMALL MOSTLY BECAUSE IT HAD A VERY SHORT TAIL.THE BIRD HAD ONE VERY PROMINENT WHITE WING BAR, AND THE SECOND WAS MUCH SMALLER, BUT STILL EASILY SEEN. THE WINGS AND LOWER

Description (continued):

UPPERPARTS WERE DARK. THE UPPER BACK, NAPE AND CROWN WERE A GREENY BLUE, BEING BRIGHTEST ON THE CROWN. THIS COLOR COULD CHANGE IN BRIGHNESS DEPENDING ON THE ANGLE OF THE BIRD AND WHETHER THE SUN WAS ON IT. THE SUPERCILIARY WAS A DULL YELLOW, WITH A DARKER CHEEK PATCH. THE UPPER BREAST WAS A LEMONY YELLOW FADING TO WHITE ON THE LOWER BELLY. THE FLANKS WERE LIGHTLY STREPPED. BOTH THE BILL AND LEGS WERE DARK.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

NONE GIVEN

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

MEEDIUM TO LARGE WILLOW TREES, ADJACENT TO. HOMELAKE.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

THE COMBINATION OF COLORS AND 2 WINGBARS REALLY ELIMINATES ALL ELSE.

OTHER DENDROCATS WITH WINGBARS HAVE MUCH MORE DARK AND BLACK ON THEM.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

HAVE SEEN CERULEAN WARBLER ONLY A FEW TIMES, WHICH WERE NOT IN COLORADO.

AM FAMILIAR WITH ALL SIMILAR SPECIES.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: NONE

b) after observation: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation from memory
Date and time report was written: 31st MAY 1997

Reporting observer: PETER R. GENT Signature: Peter R. Gent

Address: 55 S 35th St, Boulder, CO 80303

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:
Return to:

CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
CITY PARK
DENVER, CO 80205

1997-94

(PHOTO)

recd 6-25-97 ✓

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

SPECIES: CERULEAN WARBLER (Vernacular Name) (2 BLOCK DETOUR" CER

SPECIES: Dendroica cerulea (Scientific Name) (DAMGOODLUCTICUS)

DATE(S): 5.25.97 (5.26.97 by OTHERS)

TIME BIRD WAS SEEN: 3:45 P.M. to 5:50 P.M.

LOCATION AND HABITAT: N.E. CORNER OF HOMELAKE, MONTE VISTA, CO.
IN COTTONWOODS ALONG IRRIGATION CANAL FILLED WITH WATER
SPENT TIME IN COTTONWOODS BETWEEN HOMELAKE + CANAL - THEN
ACROSS CANAL IN COTTONWOODS + WILLOWS IN THE STATE WILDLIFE
AREA AND SO IT WENT BACK + FORTH (SEE "MAP")

Nearest town, county and state: MONTE VISTA, RIO GRANDE COUNTY, COLORADO.

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT: 10X40 BAUSCH LOMB BINOCULARS + EYE BALLS!

PHOTOGRAPHED: Yes No If yes, Equipment used: PENTAX SLR - K1000
FUJI FILM - SLIDES 100 ASA BY CLIF SMITH

PHOTOGRAPH ENCLOSED: Yes No

NUMBER OF BIRDS SEEN: 1 SEX: F PLUMAGE: ADULT / SUMMER

DISTANCE FROM BIRD 6 TO 8' (HAD TO STEP BACK TO USE BINOC'S!)
THEN 10' TO 20' IN SECOND SET OF TREES

LIGHT CONDITIONS: VARIED - SHADOWS + SUN

WIND CONDITIONS AND WEATHER CONDITIONS: CALM + PARTLY CLOUDY - THEN
VERY WIND + CLOUDY + THEN BACK TO CALM + PARTLY CLOUDY
@ 60°

OTHER OBSERVERS WHO IDENTIFIED THIS BIRD: (Name and address, phone if available)

CLIF SMITH 2823 5th Ave PUEBLO, CO 81003 / 719-543-6427

* IDER → DREW SMITH 3606 WIDGEON WAY EAGAN MN 55123 / 612-688-6467

VIVIAN "NICKIE" PLILER 13197 E. EXPOSITION DR. AURORA, CO 80012

JOHN + LISA ROWINSKI 2239 COTTONWOOD LN MONTE VISTA, CO 81144

PETER GENT 55 S. 35th ST. BOULDER CO 80303 / 303-494-1750

LINDA VIDAL 1305 SNOWBUNNY LN. ASPEN CO 81611 / 970-925-7134

RON + AUDREY RYDER 748 EASTDALE DR. FT COLLINS CO 80524

MANY OTHERS: STEVE BUEHLER, BILL + MARGARET ELLIOTT, DEAN + MONA HILL
+ A GROUP THE NEXT MORNING.

DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S OVERALL BEHAVIOR: VERY ACTIVE! IN A FEEDING FRENZY!
Came down from high branches where there was a CHESTNUT-SIDED
WARBLER + WARBLING VIREO were also active. Also in the tree was
a YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER. At mid-level stayed close to trunk on
branches going up, down looking for bugs. Twice it tried to
"FLY CATCH" in the canopy. When in shadows she appeared a darker
blue-backed and when she'd lean down and hit the sunny spots
the lower back looked olive. Didn't "perch" long - kept moving and would
show all kind of angles.

DESCRIBE THE SPECIFIC HABITAT(S) IN WHICH THE BIRD WAS OBSERVED:

MAN-MADE RIPARIAN w/ TALL COTTONWOODS, SHRUBS + WILLOWS.
HIGH WATER IRRIGATION CANAL LINED WITH TREES + LOTS OF
INSECTS. Homelake area.

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. DETAIL: of bill (shape and size),
wings, tail and undertail coverts (if seen). (REFERENCE TO ITS RESEMBLANCE TO FIELD GUIDE
DESCRIPTIONS IS NOT ENOUGH). DESCRIBE WHAT YOU ACTUALLY SAW IN THE FIELD DURING
YOUR OBSERVATION.

SEE PHOTOS
* 
I CAN'T DRAW!
SIZE @ 4 to 4 1/2" long. Small + RATHER SHORT-TAILED. "WARBLER" SHAPE
w/ "sharp-pointy" Bill. HEAD + BACK BLUE-GREYISH with OLIVE CAST
AT LOWER BACK. HAD TWO VERY DISTINCTIVE WING BARS. *STREAKS
ON SHOULDER AREA OF UNDERSIDE EXTENDING DOWN TO FLANCS WHERE
THEY LOOKED MORE "DIFFUSE". NO STREAKING OR BAND ACROSS BREAST AS A
MALE WOULD HAVE. NO STREAKS ON BACK. WHITE UNDERTAIL COVERTS.
WHITE TO PALE BUFF EYEBROW GOT WIDER BEHIND THE EYE. BLUE-GREYISH
EAR PATCH AREA. THROAT + BREAST BUFFY COLOR OR VERY PALE yellow.
DARK BILL + LEGS BOTH GREY-BLACKISH - NOT PALE. OVER ALL MANTLE
LOCKED SMOOTH AND HAD COLOR VARIATION DEPENDING ON SHADOWS.

IF HEARD, DESCRIBE THE BIRD'S CALLS OR SOUNDS, INCLUDING THE METHOD OF DELIVERY i.e
from a perch, in flight, deep within shrub, etc.:

DID NOT HEAR ANY SOUNDS OR NO "buzzing".

LIST SIMILAR SPECIES AND STATE HOW THEY WERE ELIMINATED:

1. TENNESSEE WARBLER - NOPE - THIS BIRD HAD 2 DISTINCTIVE WHITE WING BARS.
UNDERSIDES BUFFY NOT YELLOW AS TEWA. ALSO HAD STREAKS AT SHOULDER
TO FLANK. TEWA HAS MUCH THINNER BILL.
2. AUTUMN BLACKPOLL - THIS BIRD HAD DARK LEGS NOT PALE LEGS OF A BLACKPOLL + NO STREAK
ON ITS BACK LIKE A BLACKPOLL. BLACKPOLL'S EYEBROW MUCH LESS DISTINCTIVE.
3. AUTUMN BLACKBURNIAN HAS A STREAKED BACK, YELLOWER EYEBROW + FACE PATTERN
MORE DISTINCTIVE.
4. FEMALE BLACK-THROATED BLUE ONLY HAS BARELY SEEN ONE WING BAR + BROWNER
OVERALL
5. IMMATURE BAY-BREASTED - HARDLY VISIBLE EYEBROW. NO BLUE ON MANTLE
6. IMMATURE NORTHERN PARULA - NO WHITE-BUFF EYEBROW. HAS BROKEN EYERING
NO STREAKING ON SHOULDERS OR FLANKS. BRIGHT YELLOW ON BREAST

* PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES: ONLY IN MY DREAMS!

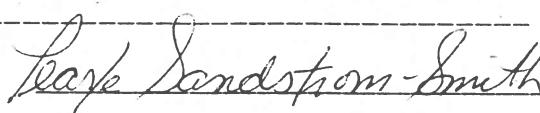
ALSO, FIELD GUIDES. IT WAS A LIFER. THANKS TO
DREW SMITH, WHO HAS HAD A LOT OF EXP w/ THIS BIRD WE GOT.
References: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, PETERSON FIELD GUIDES, GOLDEN
BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA + OTHERS

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN FROM NOTES MADE DURING AFTER
OBSERVATION; FROM MEMORY With Photo

SUBMITTED BY: NAME (print): PEARLE SANDSTROM-SMITH

MAILING ADDRESS: 2823 5th Ave
PUEBLO, CO 81003

PHONE: (719) 543-6427

SIGNATURE: 

* SIMILAR SPECIES

7. PINE WARBLER - WAY TOO YELLOW + OLIVE SMALLER + YELLOW EYEBROW
8. IMMATURE BLACK-THROATED GRAY - DARK CHEEK PATCH + FAINT STREAKS ON
BACK SEPARATE IT FROM CERULEAN ♀.

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Cerulean Warbler

Date(s): 26 May 1997 Time seen: 7-7:30 a.m.

Bird found on 25 May by somebody at C.F.O. convention.

Locality: Home Lake SWA, Monte Vista

Latilong: 26 Optical equipment: 7x35 binoculars

Number of birds seen: one Sex: FE (probably) or Imm. Male

Light conditions: Excellent--sunlight from backs of observers

Distance from bird: 20-30 feet

Weather at time of observation: Sunny, cool

Prior weather & number of days since change: Severe thunderstorms previous night; unsettled weather for several days.

Habitat: Cottonwoods and willows line edge of fishing lake and canal; two homes on one side have tall trees around them; state wildlife area lies across irrigation canal and has marsh and grassland habitats.

Describe behavior: Fed actively (picking insects?) from leaves and branches in clump of medium-high cottonwoods (40-50 feet high). Worked around tree, almost always on sunny side of tree, starting almost at the ground and moving up to within 10 feet of treetop, then started at the bottom again. Bird did not interact with Yellow Warblers or Wilson's Warbler in tree.

Field marks observed: size, color, pattern, shape, bill, etc.:

Warbler, by behavior, bill, and body shape.

Size: Similar to Yellow and Wilson's,

Head: Brilliant greeny-blue hood, light superciliary line and darker eye stripe. Gray collar divided side of head from back.

Back: Bluish color, less brilliant than cap, with about 5-6 very faint longitudinal stripes or darker areas.

Wings: Two white wing bars, upper one faint and apparently fainter on one side than on the other; primaries gray-black, lighter gray-brown outlined wing bars.

Throat: Pure, pale yellow, and extended into face and down onto breast where it faded to whitish. No streaking.

Breast: Whitish. 3-4 fine streaks on upper edges of breast, next to folded wing..

Tail: Short; white tail spots on bottom of tail, visible when bird seen high in tree.

Bird's call or song: Silent.

Field marks not seen: Saw all field marks, but I didn't write them all down, especially details about face.

Similar species: I don't think any other warblers have that blue! A very distinctive bird.

Prior experience: One or two observations of adults in the tops of New York trees.

Description from: Notes written immediately after observation.

1997-97

PHOTOS

recd 6-3-97

1997-94

PHOTOS

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

CERULEAN WARBLER

Dendroica cerulea

Location: Homelake; Monte Vista; Rio Grande County; Colorado

Date: May 26, 1997 (but discovered on May 25)

Background:

This bird was found by Drew Smith and initially seen by him and Pearl Sandstrom-Smith and Clif Smith. It was seen by probably 30 people before Brandon Percival and I observed the bird from 6:30 a.m. - 7:40 a.m. on May 26. The sun was excellent, full on the bird the whole time. Wind was calm. We watched the bird forage in a canal-side narrowleaf cottonwood at distances of 20' - 40'. Homelake is a small fishing lake near Monte Vista with a canal curving around the north side. The bird worked in a small copse of trees, very tamely gleaning insect from the warmer sun-exposed leaves. It worked up and down the exposed sunny face of the cottonwood, actively feeding, almost like a kinglet. It gleaned, working up to the tops of the cottonwoods, then would fly down to begin again. It made a few short fluttering flycatching sallies into the open during the hour that we watched. I observed the bird with B & L Elite 10x42 binoculars.

Description:

The bird was an adult female. It was quite easy to observe over the course of time and gave really breath-taking views to all. It was silent the whole time. It was a very small warbler with a tiny, sharp bill and an extremely short, almost tiny tail. I noted it as being 4 1/2" - 5" long. The wings and tail were dusky, blackish. The underside of the tail had two large white spots. The underparts were white (especially the lower belly and undertail) with a faint yellowish wash on the chin, throat, upper breast and sides of the face. The color of the upperparts was darker, but hard to describe. The back and crown were a bluish-green color, almost glowing or "stained glass" looking. Maybe this is the color I sometimes see written as "bottle green". It was brightest green on the crown and nape, duller on the face and darker and a little bluer on the back. The sides of the face were greenish-gray and the bird had a distinct, pale yellow superciliary line. The rump was the same color as the back - bluish-green. It had two white wingbars, the anterior wingbar smaller and the posterior one large and glaring. The breast was clear pale yellow but the flanks were obscurely streaked with dusky marks.

Similar Species:

The small size, slim shape and small, pointed bill indicate a warbler. No other warbler has quite this color of blue-green. Female Black-throated Blue is plainer, lacks wingbars. Fall female Chestnut-sided Warbler (wrong season) has a plain face and unstreaked flanks

Experience with Species:

I have seen one previous Cerulean Warbler in my life, a male in Wisconsin about 8 years ago. I have never seen a female Cerulean.

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

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

Mark Janos

