

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD

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

Species: Swainson's Warbler Limnothlypis swainsonii
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): May 1, 1994Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: unknown Plumage: unknown (probably adult)Locality: Lamar Community College Woodlot Elevation: 3622Nearest town: Lamar County: ProwersTime(s) observed: 8:20-9:00 AMDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 20 minutes

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Mark Janos 10 Sedum Court Pueblo, Colorado 81001 719-544-5002
Ben Janos 10 Sedum Court Pueblo, Colorado 81001

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

Joe Roller Denver, Colorado

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

excellentOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 10x40 Bush & Lomb Custom BinocularsDistance, and how measured: 5-20 feet, guessed.If photographed, type of equipment and film: not photographed.Who else photographed the bird? no one

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

This bird was seen in a large wood ~~lot~~ in Southeastern Colorado. The bird was always seen on or near the ground. Sometimes under wood piles. The bird sat very still. 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 observed in the field: I identified the bird by its brownish color on the back. Also by its bold whitish eyelines over both eyes. The bill was lightish. The head was brownish. The back and wings were olive colored. The tail was also olive colored. There was two pale eyelines over both eyes and below the brownish head. The eyes were blackish. There was a blackish eye stripe through both eyes. The ear patches were brownish. The chin, throat, breast and belly were

Description (continued): a pale yellow color. The under tail coverts were yellowish white. The size of the bird was about 5 1/2 inches. The legs were pinkish. The shape of the bill was long and pointed. The wings were typical warbler shaped. The tail was somewhat long and thinish. The overall shape was typical warbler shaped. The plumage was ~~that~~ an adult.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): none

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

The bird was seen in a large woodlot in SE Colorado.

The bird was always seen on or near the ground.

Sometimes under wood piles.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Worm-eating Warbler? This species is an all buff orange color, and is not as dark as Swainson's Warbler.

Ovenbird? This species has an orange crown and an eye ring around the eyes.

Northern & Louisiana Waterthrush? These species is larger and pumps the tail up and down.

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

I have seen one in Colorado, in Colorado Springs in 1992.

Worm-eating Warbler? I have seen one in Colorado, in Lamar in 1993.

Ovenbird & Northern Waterthrush? I have seen several in CO.

Louisiana Waterthrush? I have not seen this species.

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

a) at time of observation: National Geographic Society Birds of North America

b) after observation:

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation ☒ from memory _____

Date and time report was written: May 2, 1994 7:00 PM

Reporting observer: Brandon Percival Signature: Brandon K. Percival

Address: 835 Harmony Dr. Pueblo West, CO 81007-2604 719-547-3722

Return to:
Bill Prather
C.F.O. Official Records Committee
13810 WCR 1
Longmont, Colorado 80504

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

52-94-77
Accepted

SWAINSON'S WARBLER

Limnothlypis swainsonii

Location: Behind Lamar Community College near Willow Creek, Lamar, Prowers County, Colorado

Date: May 1, 1994

Setting:

I was birding at 8:30 a.m. on a cool lightly overcast Saturday with my 10 year old son behind the college in Lamar. the previous week had been stormy. It had rained or snowed in Pueblo on three of the previous five days. Willow Creek is a riparian grove with cottonwoods, willow, juniper and Russian olive, a small stream and a marsh. Bird activity was low, with few warblers or other migrants. I was walking along the path near the north end when I scared a small brown bird out of a brushy tangle near my feet. It flew low and landed at the shrubby base of a small Russian olive 30 feet away, perching about a foot off the ground. I focused on the spot with my binoculars and saw the bird perching quite still and in the open. My first view was brief but distinct: It was clearly a Swainson's Warbler. However it flew before I could get more than a brief 15 second look.

Brandon Percival was independently birding southeastern Colorado that morning. He met up with us shortly after I discovered the bird. We spent the next hour and ten minutes re-finding the bird (twice) and getting superb views from as close as 10 feet, and as far as 40 feet. Our total binocular observation time with the bird, was probably about 20 minutes over a span of about 45 minutes (15 minutes at 8:30 a.m. and 30 minutes at 9:20 a.m.).

Description:

This bird's behavior was rather distinctive. It preferred the ground where it would leisurely walk along, looking for food by turning dead leaves with its bill. It searched leaf litter either near, or inside, tangles and brush piles. It was fairly tame. One time it walked out of a brush pile and came around the edge, nearly walking right up to me. When flushed it flew low, never over four feet high. It appeared rich brown in flight. Its flight was direct and strong, with a slight undulation. It would typically fly into, or through, a brushy tangle and land on a twig. It perched from just off the ground, to up to four feet high. It perched nearly motionless, with a distinctive horizontal posture (much like a thrush), and gave us clear prolonged views of it from every angle. From my field notes:

It was about 4 1/2" long; dark above, light below. This was a plain warbler and rather short-tailed. The eyes were black. The legs and feet pink. The grey bill was relatively long for a warbler, chisel shaped (straight, tapered and sharply pointed), and had a faint pink/fleshy tone to the lower bill. It lacked wingbars. The upperparts (tail, rump, back, nape and wings) were totally plain and unmarked and brownish-grey with an olive tinge. The cap was continuous with the dark nape and back, but contrasted with that color. The cap was distinctly browner than the back and was lacking in the slight olive tone. The undersides were light beige with a slight yellowish tinge, being especially buffy-yellow on the throat. There was very diffuse greyish mottling, or streaking, on the flanks and sides of breasts. It had a fairly bright off-white superciliary, creating a distinct border with the greyish-brown cap. There was a diffuse dark, brownish eyeline, running from the bill, through the eye and back through the face. The cheek was light brown. The bird twice gave a loud, sharp, high, dry "chip" note when I first saw it.

Similar Species:

Sparrows are plumper and have a conical bill. No sparrow is this plain and unstreaked. Vireos have heavier, slightly hooked bills, unlike the sharp, pointed bill of this bird. Also, vireos are more active, would not walk on the ground, hug tangles, or perch motionless for long periods. Warbling and Philadelphia vireos are chunkier, and lack the brown cap. Tennessee Warbler also lacks the brown cap, and has whiter underparts, with colder and greyer-green tones above. Orange-crowned Warbler is much yellower below, has a smaller bill, and lacks the brown cap. Virginia's and Nashville warblers have a yellow breast, lack the pale superciliary, have eyerings and lack complete brown caps. Female Black-throated Blue Warbler shows a whitish spot in the wing, has a narrower and sharper superciliary, and a darker face. None of these I.D. contenders would show this behavior. Worm-eating Warbler is most alike in behavior but is distinctly different in plumage with clear black lines against a tan face, a distinct tan central crown line and a rich buffy breast.

Experience with Species:

I have seen three Swainson's Warbler previously, once in 1974 in Florida, once in coastal Texas in April 1984, and once along Fountain Creek in Fountain in July 1992. I have experience with the other species mentioned above.

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

Mark Janos
10 Sedum Ct.
Pueblo, CO 81001

Mark Janos