

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

51-94-54
accepted

WHITE-EYED VIREO

Vireo flavifrons

Location: Grove at the northwest edge of Lake Henry; Ordway; Crowley County, Colorado

Date: May 8, 1994

Setting:

I was birding the trees in the migrant trap near the northwest point of Lake Henry. It was early afternoon and I was working through the heavy, recently flooded vegetation below the access road. Shortly after encountering a male Nashville Warbler and a singing Palm Warbler I heard the distinctive song of a White-eyed Vireo coming from a small tangle of cottonwoods about 50 feet away. The song was unmistakable. I have seen and heard White-eyed Vireos singing this song often in other parts of the country, as well as in the Olive Marsh in Pueblo in August 1992. The bird was very vocal, and although the song was enthusiastic, it was not very loud. The song was repetitive, being a simple "burble" of about 5 or 6 notes, with an emphatic "hiccup" at the end. I worked towards the song and the bird kept singing for the entire ten minutes that it took me to work past the mud, muck and flooded undergrowth and finally find the grove from which the song came. As soon as I broke into the clear the bird must have seen me for the song stopped. But I "pished" and it immediately hopped up and perched against a 6" trunk of a cottonwood. It perched rather still, sideways to me and I observed it there and elsewhere, off and on, for the next 10 minutes as it moved around in the foliage of the cottonwood. I was able to observe it well at about 20-50 feet with B & L 10 X 40 binoculars. I observed the bird at about 12:30 p.m. The sky was sunny and light conditions were very good.

Description:

This was a bird in breeding plumage. Overall it was a small bird, about 5" long and plump, with a short tail and large head. The bill was black and short, but rather stout and with a small pointed hook. The face was light grey with bright yellow lores and eye-ring. The upperparts were grey, but the crown had an odd yellowish-green wash to it. The undersides were white with a yellow wash to the flanks and breast. The wings were blackish with two white wing bars. The tail was black and rather short. The brightest color overall were the yellow lores and eyering. The iris was white.

Similar Species:

Small size, active habits, small stout bill indicates vireo. Red-eyed, Philadelphia and Warbling vireos can be eliminated because they lack wingbars. Gray, Hutton's and Bell's vireos lack the strong yellow spectacles and white iris of this bird. Solitary Vireo has white, not yellow, spectacles and a dark, not white, iris. Yellow-throated Vireo has yellow chin and throat and lacks the white iris.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all the vireos mentioned in the section above. This is the fourth White-eyed Vireo that I have seen in Colorado since 1992.

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

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