

August 2 1995

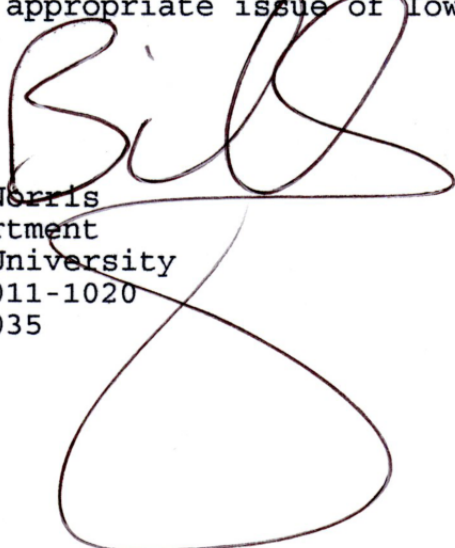
Dear Dr. Dinsmore,

Hello, hope the summer is going well! I would like to submit reports of unusual birds that we have seen during the NE Iowa Migrant Songbird Project this summer. As you will see, we have observed a number of northern warblers (Canada, black-throated green, parula, chestnut sided) at various places throughout the region. In a few weeks, you will receive a detailed report of two separate winter wren observations made by our field technicians this summer.

As you may remember, I had planned to finish up and defend my master's thesis this summer. However, on April 15 thesis work ceased. The thesis is almost complete, though, and I will be visiting you early this semester to set up a time for my defense.

I hope the bird reports are of interest to you and can be mentioned in the appropriate issue of Iowa Birdlife.

Take care!!



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All entries

Chestnut-Sided Warbler - Delaware County

On June 1, 1995 I heard and saw a chestnut-sided warbler at the edge of a large wooded tract (DNR land) in the very NE part of Delaware County (Ram Hollow Hoffman). This observation occurred between 6:30 and 7:00 AM as I prepared to enter the tract to conduct bird point census counts. As I was crossing a pasture near the mouth of a draw, I heard the familiar song (please, please, please to MEET you) of the chestnut sided warbler. I located it in my 8.5 X 44 Swift binoculars about 10 feet up in a tree (about 40 feet away). I easily saw the yellow cap and chestnut sides of this bird at this distance.

Although I passed by this same route at least three other times during the summer of 1995, I never relocated this bird. Perhaps it was a very late spring migrant.

William R. Norris

Red-Shoulder Hawk

~~Aug 6~~ 1995
June 6

Backbone State Park -
Delaware Co.
W R Norris

Heard clearly in floodplain
forest (NOT seen)

Canada Warblers - White Pine Hollow State Preserve (Dubuque County)

At least two Canada warblers made a repeat visit to White Pine Hollow State Preserve during the summer of 1995. On June 1 1995, in mid afternoon (between 2 PM and 4 PM), I observed two birds on the same steep algific talus slope where they occurred last year (1994). I watched one bird flit from branch to branch, vocalizing repeatedly, while another bird sang in response (and out of my sight) far down the slope. The identification of this bird was easy through my 8.5 X 44 Swift binoculars: gray back (no wingbars), yellow belly, black necklace on a yellow throat and yellow spectacles. Their songs were an almost undecipherable "sip su clippity, clippity clop" (mnemonic supplied by Pat Schlarbaum).

On June 13, another Canada warbler was observed (heard, not seen) on another rich north-facing slope in another part of the preserve (over 1/4 mile away from the original site). My experience with these birds at White Pine Hollow is that they are rather sluggish and not inclined to venture far from the particular slope where they occur . . . thus the June 13 bird may represent a third Canada warbler at White Pine Hollow.

The original (2) birds were heard again on June 29 by me and on July 20 by me, Denise Friedrich, Sue Anderson, LeRoy Anderson, Russ Reiss and Molly Havilek.

William F. Norvus

Chestnut-Sided Warbler-Allamakee County

A chestnut-sided warbler was observed on at least 3 separate locations on pastured woods owned by Leland Weymiller in far northeastern Allamakee County (New Albin quadrangle). In particular, these pasture woods occur on both sides of a long, narrow, open ridge that is currently an active pasture.

This bird was first heard and seen by me, Kathy Anderson and Andy Clement on June 5 1995. Andy Clement heard and saw this bird on June 17 during a bird census point count. Finally, all three of us heard and saw this bird again at close range (within 30 feet) on June 23 1995. The song was the familiar "please please please to MEET you" and we all saw the yellow cap, chestnut side striping and wing bars on this bird.

William R Norris

Parula Warbler-Delaware County (Backbone State Park)

A parula warbler was heard (but not seen) on three separate occasions in Backbone State Park (Delaware County) during the summer of 1995. On the morning of June 15 1995 (between 9 AM and 10:30 AM) Andy Clement and I were doing vegetation surveys in a rich, remote bottomland when we heard a slow, upward spiraling song that ascended in pitch. Andy identified it as a parula warbler and I agreed. We both ruled out pine siskin as a possibility because of the spiraling nature of the song (like water draining down a sink, but in reverse direction).

On the morning of June 26 Andy Clement again heard this bird in the same location.

On July 12, 1995 four of us (me, Andy Clement, Kathy Anderson and Denise Friedrich) all heard the song of a parula warbler while standing high above the floodplain of the Maquoketa River while standing atop the "Backbone" itself. This bird was singing from a different floodplain than the one where the first two observations were made this summer, but could possibly have been the same, very mobile bird.

I have good experience with the song of the parula warbler, having heard it frequently in the moist northwoods of northern Michigan and Wisconsin through the 1980's as well as in migration this year in central Iowa. Denise Friedrich has excellent experience with the parula song, having conducted bird censuses in northern Wisconsin (on a Bob Howe project) for each of the last three years.

William R Norris

Kentucky Warblers in NE Iowa, summer 1995

Kentucky Warblers were observed (at least heard) in the following locations in NE Iowa during the summer of 1995:

May 30 Dubuque County, White Pine Hollow State Preserve (William R. Norris)

May 31 Delaware County, Backbone State Park (William R. Norris)

June Clayton County, Pike's Peak State Park (Julie Carr)

June Delaware County, Ram Hollow Hoffman (William R. Norris)

June 30 Allamakee County, Yellow River Forest - Paint Creek Unit (Kathy Anderson, William R. Norris)

Cerulean Warbler in NE Iowa, summer 1995

Cerulean Warblers were observed (at least heard) in the following locations in NE Iowa during the summer of 1995:

June Clayton County, Bixby State Preserve (William R. Norris)

June Dubuque County, White Pine Hollow State Preserve (William R. Norris, Kathy Anderson, Andy Clement)

June Allamakee County, Yellow River Forest - Paint Creek Unit (William R. Norris, Kathy Anderson, Andy Clement)

June Delaware County, Backbone State Park (William R. Norris)

Louisiana Waterthrush in NE Iowa, summer 1995

Louisiana Waterthrush were observed (at least heard) in the following locations in NE Iowa during the summer of 1995:

June Clayton County, Bixby State Preserve (William R. Norris)

June Dubuque County, White Pine Hollow State Preserve (William R. Norris, Kathy Anderson, Andy Clement)

June Allamakee County, Yellow River Forest - Paint Creek Unit (Kathy Anderson, Andy Clement)

June Delaware County, Backbone State Park (William R. Norris, Andy Clement)

Orchard Oriole with young-Allamakee County

On July 6 1995, Kathy Anderson and I clearly saw and heard a pair of orchard orioles in a wide, open valley between steep hills on property owned by Raleigh Buckmaster just south of Lansing IA. These birds were accompanied by at least two young orioles, indicating a successful nesting for the summer of 1995.

Active Wood Thrush Nest - Clayton County (Bixby State Preserve).

On July 27, 1995 an active wood thrush nest was found by me on a moist north-facing slope adjacent to the ice cave at Bixby State Preserve in Clayton County, IA. I flushed the bird from the nest as I walked directly underneath a tall pagoda dogwood, and couldn't help but see the rufous orange coloration on its upper back, neck and back of the head as it flew away. The nest was directly over my head, and when I pulled the branch down I saw two young nestlings inside. This nest was also seen by Denise Friedrich, Ruth Herzberg and Franklin Voorhes.

This nest has been monitored by us since this date and an adult wood thrush was seen sitting on the nest (and photographed) today (August 1 1995).

Active Ruby Throated Hummingbird Nest - Allamakee County

A ruby throated hummingbird nest with eggs was found by Kathy Anderson and Andy Clement in early June, 1995 in the Paint Creek Unit of the Yellow River Forest. This nest was about 12 feet off the ground in a horizontal branch of a white oak on a high ridge overlooking the Yellow River Valley (Paint Creek Overlook).

An adult was seen feeding young on July 21 1995 by Andy Clement, Kathy Anderson, Lisa Hemesath and Julie Carr. An adult was seen sitting on the nest on July 26 during a heavy storm.

Active Yellow Bellied Sapsucker Nest

An active yellow-bellied sapsucker nest was found in early June by Andy Clement and Kathy Anderson in the Paint Creek Unit of the Yellow River Forest. I visited the nest site with Kathy in late June and witnessed an adult feeding young.

William R. Norris

Hooded Warbler-Allamakee County (Yellow River Forest - Paint Creek Unit)

On May 24, 1995 a hooded warbler was heard and seen by myself, Andy Clement, Kathy Anderson and Bruce Ehresman in the Paint Creek Unit of the Yellow River Forest (Paint Creek Unit). This bird was yellow with a very obvious black hood. The bird sang frequently and we listened to it for at least ten minutes, giving us all a good opportunity to become acquainted with the hooded warbler song. This sighting occurred along a trail through deciduous woods due south of an information booth near the park headquarters.

On June 19, 1995, I heard this bird again at the exact same spot. It sang its song only three times, with at least a minute pause between each song. The bird was deep in the woods and I made no attempt to track it down for a look with my binoculars.

Although I passed this spot in the woods several other times later in the summer of 1995, I did not hear this bird again.

William R. Norris

Clay Colored Sparrow in Allamakee County

While I was employed as a field technician on the NE Iowa Forest Songbird Study, on June 7 1995 I had the opportunity to hear and see the clay colored sparrow in Allamakee County. The location of this siting is in the N1/2, sec 19 of the New Albin quadrangle, Allamakee County Iowa. This tract of land is owned by Donald Hitchins of rural Lansing Iowa.

On June 6, 1995, Bill Norris (supervisor for this project), Andy Clement (technician) and myself were in the process of placing a census point on this tract of land when Bill noted the song of a clay colored sparrow in a stand of red cedar. This stand of red cedar is on an east-facing slope at the forest edge adjacent to a pasture. Time of day was approximately 2 pm.

The following day, June 7, 1995, at about 6:45 AM, on my way past the cedar stand to my bird census point, I heard the song as a series of low buzz notes just as I had heard the previous day. I decided after I had finished my census, on my return trip, that I would stalk this bird to confirm it. I found it perched a top a small cedar several meters from a fenceline. This bird had the streaked cap and a buff colored cheek patch and gave it's series of buzz notes as a song. I had it in my view for several minutes. The weather was clear and cool.

Kathy L. Anderson

Clay Colored Sparrow - Bill

On July 4 1995 I had the opportunity to closely observe the clay colored sparrow referred to by Kathy Anderson in the accompanying report. This observation occurred in the same location mentioned by Kathy, between 7:00 and 7:30 AM. The weather was overcast. I used Swift 8.5 X 44 binoculars. I should also add that this bird had been first observed by me, Kathy Anderson and Andy Clement on June 6 1995, and that I am very familiar with this bird's appearance and song (at least 9 years of yearly observations near Green Bay Wisconsin in the 1980's).

The bird was sighted on a low ridge in a pasture. This ridge was covered with scattered red cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*), between 4 and 10 feet high, with a ground cover of ground cedar (*Juniperus communis*). I had several prolonged (at least 30 seconds) views of this bird from no more than 30 feet away. The bird had a very well defined thin crown stripe, which was bordered on both sides by broader chocolate stripes. On the cheek I could see a tan patch. The short, finch-like bill was yellow-brown in color. The breast of this bird was unmarked by any streaking. This sparrow was very vociferous, with a buzzy song broken into 2 or 3 parts. The song fragments were all on one pitch, with no trace of ascending or descending song fragments. This differs from some clay-colored sparrow vocalizations I have heard in Wisconsin, where there are definite ascending and descending song fragments much like the song of a blue-winged warbler.

This bird was last seen on the morning of July 6 by Bruce Ehresman and Andy Clement.

William R Norris
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Black-Throated Green Warbler - White Pine Hollow State Preserve

On June 12, 1995, I heard (but did not see) a black throated green warbler at White Pine Hollow State Preserve (Dubuque County). This observation occurred between 6 AM and 6:45 AM in a steep, remote wooded ravine on the far western end of the property. The weather was clear and sunny, with little wind.

My observation occurred as I approached a bird census point in the preserve. I heard a buzzy "zee zee zee zoo zee" (with the fourth syllable lower in pitch than the other four syllables) and immediately recognized the song as that of a black throated green warbler. The bird continued to sing every 20 or 30 seconds and in fact continued singing throughout my actual 10 minute bird census. There was no variation on the song described above (for instance, the zeeeeee zooooooo zee zoo zee version that is just as frequently heard in this bird's customary nesting grounds north of here).

Two days later (June 14 1995) I returned to near this spot with Kathy Anderson and Andy Clement and we all heard the bird singing again (morning hours). Andy is an experienced bird watcher and agreed with my original identification. However, the bird always sang from a high perch across a ravine from us, and attempting to visually track it down was out of the question (as it was on June 12). This bird was not heard again after June 14 1995, despite several attempts to relocate it.

I have long experience with the song of the black throated green warbler, having encountered this bird in the forests of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and/or the forests of northern Wisconsin each summer from 1980 to 1990. Furthermore, I have maintained my familiarity with this bird's song through observation in central and northeast Iowa during spring migration from 1991 to 1995.

William R Norris
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