

Western Tanager

3 Jun 1997

Swan Lake, Carroll Co., IA

*Rob Thelen

female; IBL 67:127, 68:86

Record Number: 97-30

Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Rob Thelen, 1744 Salinger, Carroll [*6/9/98]

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 67:127

Records Committee: 68:86

VOTE: 6 A-D, 1 NA

A-D, Female.

A-D, A tanager at this date with wing bars should be Western.

A-D, Identification of female based on dark wing with yellowish wing bars. This would represent only the 2nd June and 3rd female for Iowa.

NA, I'm not convinced that this is other than a female or 1st yr Baltimore Oriole. Description is brief as is discussion of species.

RE-VOTE: 5 A-D, 2 NA

NA, Description is suggestive of female Western Tanager, but without additional details (such as shape, color, and length of bill) female orioles can't be ruled out.

A-D, female.

A-D, NA voter's point well taken, but observer does say "bill was thicker than orioles". This tells me that he made a conscious distinction. Would have liked a bit of discussion on the differences between his bird and Orchard Oriole, however.

A-D, Description was brief, but clear. "Yellow" underneath, not orange. "Yellow rump." And "thicker billed than orioles", which (along with the shape) would be where I'd look if I thought I had a female tanager.

A-D, A female Western Tanager should have a thin yellow eye ring. A female oriole should be orange and have white wing bars. The thick bill (it should have been short compared to oriole) argues against an oriole. Separation from Summer Tanager rests on wing bars. Why are all our Western Tanagers males? Someone should find a female. Why not Rob Thelen?

NA, I see no convincing argument to convince me otherwise.

RE-VOTE (by mail Feb 1998): 6 A-D, 1 NA

NA, The description rules out other tanagers but does not preclude the possibility of a female Baltimore or Orchard oriole. Females of both oriole species may have yellowish underparts (see illustrations in Peterson's Eastern Birds), and the remaining plumage characteristics described could also apply to an oriole. The shape of the bird, especially the bill and tail, is not described in detail. The bill is described as only thicker than an oriole's. An oriole's bill is blackish, long, slightly curved, thick at the base, and tapers to a sharp point. A tanager's bill

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is yellowish, shorter, and less sharply pointed. An oriole's tail is long and rounded, whereas a tanager's tail is shorter, square-tipped, and notched. These important features were not noted.

A-D, The "bright yellow" underparts, the "thicker bill", "tint of yellow" on wing bars, length "(6-7)", all argue against a Baltimore Oriole, and all but the length exclude Orchard Oriole. The only discrepancy for Western Tanager is "no (eye) ring.

A-D, I concur that the description was brief but feel it was adequate for female Western Tanager, primarily based on bill shape.

A-D, He examined and compared the bill and found it "thicker than orioles". Western Tanager "saddleback" pattern of olive back and yellow rump seen. No orange tones or white belly as on oriole. Yellow-tinted wingbars not found on orioles.

A-D, My complete analysis was given on the previous round. The documentation is not as complete as it might be, but considering the information given and the experience and expressed awareness of the observer, I think data is adequate to accept this record.

A-D, Details adequate to eliminate orioles at time of year seen.

What species? Western Tanager Female How many? 1Location? Swan Lake Carroll Co.Type of habitat? Grassy Area with scatter tree up to 15' tallWhen? date(s): 6-3-97 time: 7:00 AM to 7:10 AMWho? your name and address: Rob Thelen 1744 Salinger Carroll 712-792-1793others with you: NONEothers before or after you: NONE

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

- Bird was app. a 6"-7" bird
- Dark eye no ring
- Bright yellow under bird from throat to under tail
- Tail was darker than body
- wing were dark with wing bars that had a tint of yellow
- back was olive color
- rump was yellow
- head was a lighter olive color than back
- bill was thicker than orioles.

Similar species and how eliminated: Tanagers - had wing bars.
N. Oriole Thicker bill + yellow rump and olive backDid any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
clear skys. 20 FT. est. 7x42 Wind River binosPrevious experience with species and similar ones:
HAVE SEEN other Tanagers.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? 5 min this form completed? 7 daysMAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240