

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Warbler How many? 1Location? Croton Unit, Shimek Forest, 2½ miles west of Argyle, IowaType of habitat? Along overgrown slash road or path adjacent to heavily overgrown brushy area with saplings. Mostly lower bushes, poison ivy, tall weeds.When? date(s): Aug. 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, Various times in morning
Sept. 1, 15. Also possibly time: _____ to _____
July 7, 1984Who? your name and address: Robert I. Cecil 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632others with you: Francis L. Moore on Aug. 25. Ray Cummins also saw it, I understand.

others before or after you: _____

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.

Head: Noted Black Line through eye, like Blue-winged, another thin black line below, along jaw(malar). The two black lines joined behind cheek, forming small yellow triangle on cheek. (What I saw looked more like the head of the adult male in the N.G.S. Field Guide or photo in Iowa Birds than the head in Peterson(1980)). Bright yellow extended all the way up the throat. Eye was dark or black. There was a thin stripe of yellow between the black eye streak and the gray-green crown.

Throat and Undersides: Uniform bright yellow. Center breast was ~~br~~ ~~right~~ yellow--no streaking. The bird faced me and preened for several minutes and I was able to see this clearly. Along the sides were distinct and obvious, but not necessarily sharply defined blackish streaking. It was as if the blackish streaking was just a little blurry.

Legs: Dark gray or gray-black.Wings: Showed whitish along the outside edges of the primaries, as if from wear rather than actual coloration. If there was a wing bar, it was indistinct.Tail: Appeared to be some white near base of tail underside. On the sightings where I had time for a good long look, the bird bobbed tail continuously as I watched it.Back: Including crown to rump--uniform gray-greenish, with no markings on crown or rump. I looked ~~x~~ repeatedly for chestnut streaking on back and had some good views of the back, but could see nothing.Voice: No sounds at all.Behavior: Fed actively in small tree of perhaps 20 feet in height. Bird probably never went above 15 feet, sometimes dropped to within 5 feet of ground. Occasionally followed a branch or two, generally just flitted about. Did stop for perhaps 5 minutes to preen. Unlike the possible predecessors I have seen here (before Aug. 24, when these notes were made), this one seemed fairly tame and unconcerned about my presence. *Continued on next page.*Similar species and how eliminated: Not much similarity to other summer Iowa warblers. Could, I suppose be confused with imm. Blackburnian, but I had opportunity for comparison--~~see comments~~. saw immatures on same day and noticed significant amount of white in wings.Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

A variety of viewing conditions and distances, including close range under clear skies.
Binoculars: 8x Zeiss

Previous experience with species and similar ones: None. Life bird.

References and persons consulted before writing description: Petersons,(1980); NGS Field

Guide. Iowa Birds. (USED DURING IDENTIFICATION ONLY)
How long before field notes made? 15 minutes this form completed? 1 hourMAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240
(Retyped with updated dates)

Other comments: Although I am inexperienced as a serious birder, I have spent a great deal of time this year in the field, concentrating on Warblers and have become very familiar with most summer wood warbler species found in Iowa. I have had virtually no experience with fall Warblers. In support of this record, however, I was able to view this bird as long as I wished, I had my Petersons with me, and was able to go through field mark by field mark. Everything fit, except for the Chestnut back streaks which I understand are difficult to see. Similarly, I was able to go through the field marks of possibly similar species, compare them to the bird I was watching, and eliminate them.

Although I saw and heard a bird I thought was probably a Prairie Warbler on July 7, I am not convinced the bird remained in the area as some 10 more trips to the immediate area failed to produce it again. These recent birds were fairly conspicuous and easy to find, and I think they may have just moved in(or back in) to the **area**. All three sightings, however, were in the same immediate area.

Finally, I did not officially report the bird I saw on July 7 due to the brevity of the sighting and my total lack of experience with the species. And although I made notes, I would not have reported the Aug. 23 sighting because although I was fairly confident, the sighting was brief and I thought there was a chance of confusion with other fall Warblers which had already showed up in the area.

I last saw the bird on Sept. 15th.