

DOCUMENTATION FORM

For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

Species: Black-throated Green Warbler, adult male.

Number: 1.

Location: Red Bird Farms Natural Area, Johnson County.

Habitat: Deciduous woods, no foliage.

Date and time: 1 April 1999, approx. 10:00 to 10:15 a.m.

Name and address: Mike Dooley, 4365 Kountry Lane, Apt. 307-B, Iowa City IA 52240-8123.

Others with you: None.

Others before or after you: None known.

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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior:

This was a small active bird first noticed while observing two Golden-crowned Kinglets, and seen mainly in the mid-to-upper parts of the bare trees. It had a generally yellow head, which is to say the entire side and foreparts of the head, offset sharply by a substantial black bib. There was a vague (not by any means strong) eyeline; perhaps best described as the suggestion of an eyeline. The underparts were quite light and not yellow, green, or any tint thereof. The flanks had black streaking just below the wing. The wings were basically charcoal and not green or any green tint. With its wings closed I had glimpses of white streaking in the general area of the coverts, but close to and at times seemingly parallel to the flanks. This was not readily readable to me as "wingbars." The markings of the wings, therefore, were not definitively apprehended and characterized by this observer. The back seemed simply "dark"; I do not recall reading the back as "olive." I noted no rump patch, nor did I specifically look for one. The bill was small and pointed as per the typical wood warbler.

The bird behaved in typical warbler fashion. It was highly active, foraging from branchlet to branchlet in mature deciduous trees, never resting. It would remain foraging in one tree two to three minutes before flying to a nearby one. One incident of flycatching was observed. Most importantly, this warbler sang regularly, and was clearly observed doing so. The best transliteration of the song would be Peterson's second entry, *zee zee zee zee zoo zee*, the *zoo* being lower-pitched. This bird's song did match precisely the first version of the Black-throated Green Warbler's song found on Peterson's *Birding by Ear* audio cassettes. This would be the high-pitched, thinner song; it was not the buzzy, so-called "murmuring trees" song on that cassette. I heard this bird's song for at least ten minutes.

Similar species eliminated: Hermit Warbler unlikely and lacks eye line.

Did anyone disagree or have reservations about the identification? Not applicable.

Viewing conditions: I easily obtained close range, at times no more than 20 yards. I use variable-setting binoculars habitually kept between 7 x 35 and 9 x 35. The prevailing light was very good; the sun was usually behind me but at worst 45° to the side as I faced the bird. Weather was partly cloudy, temperature in the high 50s to 60 (F). This followed two days of strong southerly winds

and high temperatures at or above 60.

Previous experience with this species and similar ones: Only one other Black-throated Green Warbler (with an experienced birder); in 22 months of very active birding, I have 29 warbler species positively identified.

References and persons consulted before writing description: *National Geographic Society* and *Peterson* field guides; *Audubon Society Master Guide to Birding*, *Peterson's Birding by Ear* audio cassettes (all these were within 90 minutes of sighting; *N.G.S.* was referred to on site).

How long before field notes made: No field notes.

How long before this form completed: 33 hours.