

D O C U M E N T A T I O N

Ruby-Crowned Kinglet -- Early date

On Sunday morning, March 28, 1993, just before going to church I noticed a small bird flitting in the bushes in my yard. I quickly determined it to be a Kinglet, and, given the time of year, initially assumed it would be a Golden-crown. Since I believe in looking at birds at least twice, I checked the bird with binoculars from my kitchen window, and was surprised to note that the little creature looked like a Ruby-crown. In fact, I was sure it was: I saw an eye-ring and could not detect any kind of striping on its head. But I could not be absolutely sure, since I studied the bird from a distance of at least 25 yards.

Walking back home after church I noticed a number of Golden-crowned Kinglets in the evergreens along the route. So I said to myself: I guess I didn't see the Kinglet this morning as clearly as I should have: it probably was a Golden-crown. So I decided to "let it go."

Right after lunch, however, I saw a little bird once again in the same spot I had observed it in the morning. This time I could see it clearly: a Ruby-crowned. As if the bird realized my doubt, it flew off to the other side of our house, and flitted about in a bush less than four feet away from our living room picture window. I called one of my daughters (a budding birder), and we observed the bird in leisurely fashion: eye-ring and no stripes of any kind on its crown. A Ruby-crown, without any doubt.

In checking James Dinsmore's e.a. Iowa Birds, we realized that this is a very early observation indeed, especially given our far northwestern location. The weather was mild (upper 50's) and the day before there had been a strong southerly wind. The bird, by the way, stayed in our yard all day. We observed it at leisure at least four or five times that afternoon. At one point it came close enough to me to touch it!

As a point of interest, I believe this is the first time I added both the Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglet to my annual list on the same day!

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