

Rare Bird Sighting in Iowa

GOELLNER

Species: Yellow-throated warbler (Dendroica dominica) Number? 1

Location: NE Cedar Rapids, at 1764 Sherbrook Dr. NE, 52402
in bushes and on woodpile by bay window, and on bush in backyard.
6 feet from bay window; 30 feet from patio door.

Date: Wednesday, Nov. 4, 1981, for about 10 minutes, at about 5 or 10 to 12 noon.

Observers: Ruth E. and Karl E. Goellner

(We called Ms. Oppedahl and Ms. Liljedahl, who came promptly, but the bird had left and did not reappear.)

Description: obviously a warbler, by shape, size, and manner; not a goldfinch like those on the thistle feeder nearby, nor a nuthatch or chickadee. Without binoculars, we saw the black side of throat, ~~with~~ and ear patch, with white edging dorsad to it, ^{and above the eye} and especially the bright yellow throat. Back was generally grayish or bluish; good wing bars.

Then, with 8x binocs, and Peterson book in hand, the warbler bill, wing bars, bright yellow throat, black auriculars, the black continuing down the throat and side to broken black striping on the side, the gray-blue back and white belly, were all easily confirmed. We checked also in Brunn and Zim, and in Bull and Farrand, and finally, in Griscom and Sprunt, and all described diagnostic features were easily seen (except the small white streak in center of forehead shown by Dick in Griscom and Sprunt, but Peterson does not show that either). The book checking, esp. with Peterson, was done while bird still under observation, the rest were checked within 15 minutes of its leaving.

With 8x binocs, at 6 feet and 30 feet, we had good vision, despite light rain falling and overcast. The bird was not hidden in foliage but sat and flitted in clearly visible places. Total observation about 10 minutes.

No singing was heard thru the window (nor expected in November). It was not seen to "creep about on trees", as mentioned by Peterson.

Similar species: Sutton's (hybrid) warbler eliminated by the bright white area from terminus of eyestripe down to the striped sides. No other species comes close to these patterns. "Sexes similar" Peterson says; this one was so brightly colored and patterned that we felt it could look like this in breeding season- like a breeding male!

Disagreement: none; both of us convinced.

Viewing conditions: overcast, light rain, temp. about 50 degrees F.
Two pairs 8x40 binocs.

Previous experience: none with this species; but we knew it had been seen in Iowa.

Use of references IN WRITING the above: all of it written a few days later; obviously the book checking was done during the half hour or so during and after the observation. To imply that all the above was from memory and not from book checking would be ridiculous.

Other species: 15 or so minutes before the Yellow-throated Warbler we had noted a Red-breasted Nuthatch at the suet and sunflower feeders. That "alerted" us, one might say. Then, about 2 p.m., all four of us, Ruth and I and Ms. Liljedahl and Ms. Oppedahl saw clearly a Winter Wren in another woodpile and on our large white oak tree, for about 5 minutes or less.

Ruth E. and Karl E. Goellner

Karl E. Goellner