

DOCUMENTATION FORM

Species: Prairie Warbler

Location: Lake Ahquabi State Park, Warren County

Date: 20 May 1999 **Time:** app. 2:30 pm **Length of observation:** 10 minutes

Name and Address: Ann Johnson, 532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211
Jim Bangma, 319 Lakewood Terrace, Newton, NJ 07860

Other observers: Jim Sinclair on following day

Background: We had walked in the south side of the park in search of the Hooded Warbler that was being regularly reported there. About 1/4 mile in we heard a Prairie Warbler singing and spent the next few minutes getting a look at it in the tops of the trees.

Viewing conditions (light, distance, optics): Sky was bright so we had to wait for the bird to get against a darker background to see it well. We were within 25 feet of the tree it was in. Observation was through binoculars.

Description of bird: The bird was first identified by song as it sang an ascending chromatic scale. Knowing that this was an unusual sighting, and very much out of habitat, we searched for visual confirmation of the bird. It was warbler size and was primarily yellow below with an olive back. From below we observed black flank streaking and white undertail coverts. The face was seen briefly and the black cheek outline was observed.

Similar species/discussion: No other warbler has the combination of black outlining the cheek and black flank streaking. The song is unmistakable and we watched this bird sing. While watching the bird we remarked on how it had overshot suitable habitat across the road and that is exactly where Jim Sinclair found this bird the following day. As we watched it forage in the treetops, it was constantly moving to the south and toward better habitat for this species.

Previous experience: Both observers have seen and heard numerous Prairie Warblers and are very familiar with other more expected warbler species.

References consulted: None