

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Prairie Warbler (Dendroica discolor) How many? 1Location? Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest, 3 miles west of Argyle, Lee County, IowaType of habitat? Large brushy upland area with some saplings, small planted conifers, surrounded by mixed deciduous woodlandWhen? date(s): July 4,5,6,7,9,11,12,15,16 (heard and seen) time: _____ to mornings-appx 7:30-9:00 AMWho? your name and address: Robert I. Cecil 327 S. 6th, Keokuk, Iowa 52632others with you: S. Dinsmore, J. Sandrock, Chas, Jim, and Jane Fuller, John Cecil, F. Moore, John Hoogerheide, M. and B. Proescholdt.others before or after you: Don't know

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.

I was specifically looking for Prairie Warblers in a large open, brushy area when I heard thin rising "zee" notes coming from the area's wooded edge. The song consisted of about 8 notes, well separated, that lasted about 1½ seconds and rose in scale. I assumed I had found my Prairie warbler. Over a period of perhaps 10 minutes I approached the area from which the call came, glassing the trees and shrubs. I finally found the bird some 15 to 20 feet off the ground in the middle of a clump of trees overlooking the open area. Clearly visible were the black eye and malar streaks against the yellow cheek. Like my Prairie warbler last year, these streaks appeared to meet behind the eye, forming a small triangular yellow patch below the eye (like the picture in the NGS guide, unlike picture in Peterson 1980). I also observed the black streaking along the sides only. Otherwise, the undersides of the bird were bright yellow. The bird's back was grayish-greenish. I also observed the bird flip its tail a couple of times but did not consider this diagnostic.

I was concerned about disturbing the bird--I knew some other birders would also want to see it--so I left the bird alone after making certain of its identification.

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The above observations made on July 4. Similar features observed on subsequent dates listed above.

The suggestions of a female also present were tantalizing but as far as I know, unsubstantiated. The bird I saw on 26th appeared not as bright, malar and eye streak did not appear to connect as fully behind eye, but this was the first time I could make out chestnut back streaks (it was also the first time I looked very hard) They were visible only when light was just right, and consisted of two short, very indistinct chestnut streaks. These were invisible when light was not perfect.

Similar species and how eliminated: I don't think this species could be reasonably confused with other Iowa summer Warblers, especially since it was singing.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

Viewing conditions, usually excellent, sun to back in mornings.

Binoculars: 10x40 Zeiss Dialyt

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Had one or more last year perhaps .3 mile from this year's sighting. I have not seen this species outside Iowa.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

None

How long before field notes made? not made this form completed? 1 hour. Later retyped.

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