

Virginia's Warbler

Record 644-16-19

RARE BIRD REPORT **from Tim Rodenkirk**

Species: **Virginia's Warbler**

Date of Sighting: 9/11/2016 Time Found: 9:00AM

Length of Time Observed: a minute or two

Distance to Bird: as close as 20 feet

Number, Age, Sex: 1, 1st fall (due to the lack of any yellow in the chest area)

Observer: Tim Rodenkirk

Other Observers: None.

Location: Pistol River, Curry County, Oregon.

Habitat: In a willow patch next to Pistol River about ¼ mile from Hwy 101.

Description: A small passerine close in size and shape to the many Yellow-rumped Warblers in the area. The bird was with a chickadee flock and was briefly out in the open just below me while I observed it from the bridge that crosses the Pistol River. When I first saw the bird I thought maybe it was a Nashville Warbler as it had a bright white, complete eye ring and strikingly bright yellow undertail coverts. However, the bird appeared entirely gray above without contrast between the head, nape, coverts, and primaries. Below the bird had a white throat and belly with no visible yellow except on the undertail coverts. The bill was small, dark and warbler-like. I checked closely and did not see any green hue to the coverts or tertials, they were all an even gray color (I made sure to check these not to confuse it with a very dull Nashville Warbler).

Vocalization/Behavior: It flew out into the top of a small willow for about a minute, then flew into a patch of dense willows where it disappeared. I did not try and refind it as I had excellent looks at it and was certain on the ID. I heard no call notes.

Similar Species:

Orange-crowned Warbler (celata ssp). Celata-type Orange-crowned Warblers have a split eye-ring. This bird had a very prominent complete eye-ring thus eliminating Orange-crowned Warbler.

Nashville Warbler. Nashville Warblers have yellow undertail coverts and a complete eye-ring also. However, they usually have at least some yellow in the chest or belly area- the bird I saw had absolutely no yellow except on the undertail coverts. Also, Nashville Warblers normally have at least some contrast between the head and mantle area giving them a hooded look- the bird I observed was even-colored above with no contrast visible (I was able to view this quite well). Also, as mentioned above, there was no green hue to the coverts or tertials as would be expected on a Nashville.

References: I didn't use any, I have seen this species on its breeding ground many times and am quite familiar with it.

Experience: I have seen this bird many times in the SW US where it breeds as well as three other times in Oregon. Coincidentally, I noticed after seeing this bird that the Virginia Warbler I found years ago in Coos County was on the same day! Too bad no one went back to look for it- everyone was busy chasing the Yellow-throated Vireo on the north coast found minutes after I reported this bird.

Light/Weather: It was early AM, with the sun behind me providing good lighting.

Optics: Ziess 10 x 42 Bins

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