

3-1997

11 September 1997

Ella D. Sorensen
3868 Marsha Drive
West Valley City, UT 84120

Dear Ms. Sorensen:

I enclose details of a sighting of a Golden-winged Warbler in Utah. I saw it on 30 August along Fish Creek, Wayne Co., UT, with Al Schmierer of Torrey, UT. This report is on an official UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHTING RECORD FOR UTAH form (this supplements my report to you of 2 September 1997).

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tim Reeves". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Tim Reeves, Ph. D.
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Farmington, NM 87402

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UTAH ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

(filename: gwwa in utah report UTAH form.doc)

Common Name: Golden-winged Warbler Scientific Name: Vermivora chrysoptera

Date: 30 August 1997 Time: 8:25 & 9:05-9:10 AM Length of time observed: 5 min

Number: 1 Age: adult Sex: female-plumaged bird

I think it was a female although an immature male might be more expected; in comparison with Curson, Quinn, & Beadle I note that the eye patch and throat were darkish gray (NOT black) and the cap color was intermediate between what they show for the female and the male and was noticeably different than the wing bar color.

Locality: UTAH: Wayne County, SE ¼ Sec 29, T 29 S, R 5 E, Fish Creek, Morrill Ranch Road, 0.5mi SSW of Utah 12 3.3mi S of Torrey (jct Utah 24).

Latilong: Elevation (if known): 6800 feet

Distance to bird: 12 - 20 (40) ft Light conditions: Sun, side & direct

Optical equipment: B & L Custom 10x40 binoculars 3-year old, good condition.

Weather: Clear and sunny.

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.) Pale warbler with bold bright large yellow wing bar. Gray above, with cap an unusual olive-yellow (suggestive of the color of fall plumage Chestnut-sided Warbler as shown in NGS guide), face with bold white eyebrow, dark broad eye mask, prominent white cheek line/stripe; wings with very conspicuous broad wing bar (like 2 wing bars with the entirety of the greater coverts yellow thereby making the entire area yellow); throat darkish gray (narrow at chin and flaring downward to become broadest at base); whitish below, breast broadly pale gray on sides with narrow longitudinal white median area, undertail coverts white.

Voice: Not heard (on subsequent visits a tape recording of a GWWA song was played and no bird responded).

Behavior: Perching, feeding/gleaning, flying. The bird was first sighted in a 3 - 4 ft skunkbush at the edge of the open area on the west side of the creek and close to birch. The bird flew to the birches and was observed in detail feeding and perching in and near the tops of birches on the east side of the creek which are mostly denuded from insect feeding on the leaves (the tops of most birches here are bare and birds perched there are very easy to observe).

Habitat: Riparian woodland along flowing creek and 2 irrigation ditches. Birch is dominant tree along creek mostly about 20 ft tall supporting Clematis vines in places. Open meadows with Smilacina, wild licorice, and milkweed and tall grasses/sedges surround birches especially between creek and ditch to east. Between creek and ditch on west has rabbitbrush, big sagebrush, wild licorice, grasses, another sage/wormwood species, buffaloberry, skunkbush, Lappula, and ragweed. A stand of willow shrubs lines the west ditch. The surrounding vegetation is pinyon-juniper woodland with big sagebrush on a steep hill on the east side of the site and more open and gently sloping west of the site. A few ponderosa pine trees are nearby.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated: Very few warblers have yellow wing bars and only two have a wide yellow wing bar/patch, this species and female & immature male American Redstart. An immature male American Redstart was present at the site and was observed at length and photographed shortly after the GWWA was seen. The redstart is dark above with a yellow wing patch and orange shoulder patch and yellow patches in the tail and it lacks the patterned face of the GWWA. Other warblers with yellow wing bars are the hybrids between Golden-winged Warbler and Blue-winged Warbler: "Lawrence's Warbler" has a yellow breast and "Brewster's Warbler" has a clear white or yellowish throat and lacks the prominent white eyebrow and cheek line.

What experience have you had with this and similar species: I have seen the species only once before, about 24 years ago in New York with Al Schmierer! I observed and photographed a Blue-winged Warbler in San Juan Co., New Mexico, in May, 1997 (1st county record). I observed and photographed an immature American Redstart at the same site and date as the GWWA). Other warblers observed at this site during several days of visits near the time of this observation were: Nashville Warbler (photos), Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Virginia's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and MacGillivray's Warbler. Warbling Vireos were also observed there.

Books, illustrations, and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: NGS, Field Guide to North American Birds (in field); Peterson, Western Birds (3rd ed.) (later); Curson, J., D. Quinn, & D. Beadle, 1994, Warblers of the Americas: An Identification Guide (later). The above description is based on notes and sketches made in the field.

Significance of record in this area or the state: This is apparently the FIRST report for the state of Utah.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available) A copy of my sketch made in the field is attached. NO photographs were made, since neither of us was carrying a camera when we found the bird and when we returned with cameras (5 subsequent visits, once immediately, twice later that same day, once the next day = 31 Aug, and once on 1 Sept) the bird could not be relocated).

Description from notes taken at time of sighting x notes made later___ from memory___

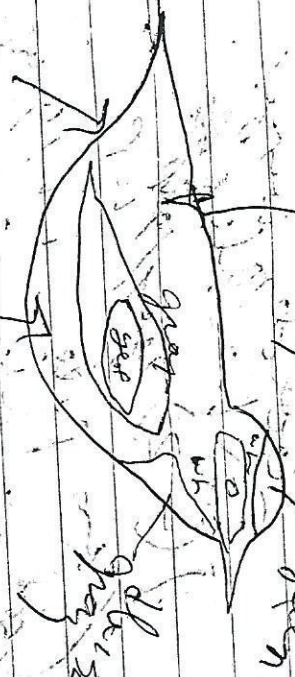
Observer: Tim Reeves

Signature: 

9:05 - 9:10
30 Aug 97

12' grass

yellow green



dark grey

W

dark grey

side

palest mid W

top

Flair creek - deep shaded ground

1295 RSE 564 SE 29
1375 Fish Creek 6800,
Bottle Willow

P.B. Millwood Bell

Wild berries
Stemmed

sun by P.S.

Red's
Some 100 lbs Tomatoes

1 Belle
can

1 ZBT in da RAS

SPHOTO 500 5100
712

Yours Mr. Joe

Field Sun