

DOCUMENTATION FORM FOR UNUSUAL BIRD SIGHTINGS

This form is submitted as supporting documentation of an Unusual species

1. Cassin's Vireo
2. 1 male
- 3 JULY 12, 2002
4. Waterfall Glen FP (southeast section where Sawmill Creek borders a N-S service road) in DuPage county.
5. Bob Fisher, [REDACTED]
no other observers were present
6. A small vireo like bird. Whitish eyeglasses or spectacles. Gray head. Uniformly drab gray green mantle and back. Dull wingbars. Faint yellow wash on flanks. Throat, breast and belly a dull white. Grayish bill and legs.
7. Feeding, moving through an elm, an oak and then a box elder. Sang fairly regularly as it foraged.
8. The bird's song was what first caught my attention, before I saw it. As with a bird I had in this same general area 2+ years ago, the song sounded like the raspy hoarse quality of a Yellow-throated Vireo, except it was lower pitched and the pauses between phrases seemed a little longer than the latter species. My first reaction when I first saw it was "Oh no, not another one of these oddballs". It was clearly not a Y-thr Vireo.
9. A creek formed the western border with the service road to the east. The trees are mostly oaks, with a few elms, and hickories mixed in, along with 'weed' trees like box elder and ash.
10. B&L 10x42 Elites. Viewing distance was between 25 and 75 feet (paced off). The bird was observed for about 4-5 minutes at 7AM. Weather was mostly sunny; while observing the bird the sun was at a good angle, over my left shoulder. The bird was fairly actively foraging, moving in and out of fairly dense foliage.
11. I've seen Cassin's Vireo only twice before, while on a visit to SE Arizona several years ago and 2 years ago at this same preserve. Many, many sightings (and listening to their song) of Blue-headed Vireos here in Illinois and in N Wisconsin where I have observed them on their breeding territories. A few sightings of Plumbeous Vireos in SE Arizona. We frankly did not pay too much attention to these other members of the Solitary Vireo complex at the time (before split)
12. The whitish spectacles and whitish throat eliminate all Vireos except the Solitary Vireo complex. The song quality plus the field marks described above eliminates Blue-headed Vireo (see 14 below). Plumbeous Vireo is larger and grayer, usually lacks the yellow wash on the flanks and does not have the drab gray green upperparts this bird possessed.
13. No photos were obtained.
14. Sibley. He suggests the western 'race' of Blue-headed has a more burry song.
15. Field notes were made on the spot on my digital recorder.
16. This form was completed 1 week after the sighting.

17. The overall dull, drab appearance of this bird, coupled with its song, convinced me it was a Cassin's, but I suppose the possibility of a western Blue-headed can't be ruled out. In any case, the appearance of any of the species from the Solitary complex on this date in Illinois is quite unusual. The next time I see one of these guys, I sure hope there are 10 other birders present!

Bob Fisher July 19, 2002