

A NEW WARBLING VIREO FROM HIDALGO

BY GEORGE MIKSCH SUTTON AND THOMAS D. BURLEIGH

FIVE members of the subgenus *Vireosylva* Bonaparte that have at one time or another been considered full species (namely *gilvus* of Vieillot, Baird's *swainsonii*, Lafresnaye's *leucophrys*, Sclater's *josephae*, and *amauronotus* of Salvin and Godman) are now thought to be conspecific (see in particular, Ridgway, Amer. Journ. Sci., (3) 4: 456, 1872, and Hellmayr, 'Cat. Birds of the Americas,' Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., zool. ser., 13: no. 347, 152, footnote, 1935). They are alike in being dull in general appearance and in having no striking markings such as wing bars, sharply defined superciliary line, eye ring, or mystacial streaking. Their habits apparently are similar. Their breeding ranges do not, so far as we know, overlap. Since Vieillot's name *gilvus* antedates the four others, the group may properly be called the Warbling Vireos.

The several races of the Warbling Vireo fall into two general groups, however—a *gilvus* group, with gray or grayish-olive upper parts and white under parts; and a *leucophrys* group, with brown or brownish-olive upper parts and yellow under parts. In color, as well as on geographical grounds, *amauronotus* of Mexico (with the white under parts of *gilvus* and the brown upper parts of *leucophrys*) might be thought to represent a third, and intermediate group. At any rate, when placed side by side, the races *gilvus*, *swainsonii*, *brewsteri*, *connectens*, *amauronotus*, *strenuus*, *chiriquensis* (including Ridgway's *costaricensis*), *mirandae*, *leucophrys*, *josephae*, and *laetissimus* lead from one more or less directly to another without abrupt break. However, the extreme in white-breastedness is not found in the most northward-ranging races, *gilvus* and *swainsonii* of the United States and southern Canada, any more than the extreme in yellow-breastedness is to be found in the most southward-ranging race, *laetissimus* of Bolivia. We have not examined *V. g. leucopolia* Oberholser, named from the Warner Mountains of Oregon, but it is said to be close to *swainsonii*.

In the mountains of Hidalgo lives an undescribed form that, like *connectens* of Guerrero, falls between or connects *amauronotus* and the '*gilvus* group'. It is grayish brown on the crown, grayish brown (of a lighter shade than the crown) on the back, and has little more than a trace of yellow on the under parts. This bird we propose to call

Vireo gilvus eleanorae subsp. nov.

Type.—Adult male in fresh plumage, Louis Agassiz Fuertes Memorial Bird Collection at Cornell University, no. 7341; six miles north of Jacala, Hidalgo (along the main Nuevo Laredo to Mexico City highway, at an elevation of 6000 feet), March 28, 1939; collected by George Miksch Sutton.

Subspecific characters.—Separable at once from *V. g. amauronotus* Salvin and Godman and *V. g. strenuus* Nelson (the forms it should, on geographical grounds, resemble most closely) in being much grayer (less brown) throughout the upper parts. Obviously different from all members of the 'gilvus group,' *V. g. gilvus*, *V. g. swainsonii*, and *V. g. brewsteri*, in having brownish-gray upper parts, the crown, hind neck, back, rump, wings and tail being browner than in any of the three races just named but not nearly brown enough for *amauronotus* or *strenuus*. Browner and darker above (especially on pileum and rump) than *V. g. connectens* van Rossem. The type of *connectens* is in the British Museum, but van Rossem, who has examined two of our birds, assures us that "they are browner and darker than *connectens* on the pileum and rump" (personal letter to senior author, April 23, 1940).

The new race is wholly different from the more southward-ranging subspecies *V. g. chiriquensis* (Bangs), *V. g. leucophrys*, *V. g. josephae*, and *V. g. laetissimus* (Todd) in having virtually no yellow on under parts, but is surprisingly similar to *V. g. mirandae* Hartert (from northern Colombia and northern Venezuela), though with less yellow below, especially on the middle of the belly and on the under tail-coverts; and with less brown (more gray) throughout the upper parts.

Measurements.—Type: wing, 73 mm.; tail, 50; exposed culmen, 12; tarsus, 18. Four other males: wing, 69, 69.5, 70.5, 71.5; tail, 47, 48, 49, 48. Two females: wing, 68, 69; tail, 44, 46.5.

Range.—Mixed woodlands of the mountains of northern Hidalgo. Six of our seven specimens were taken in the vicinity of Jacala (at from 5000 to about 7000 feet elevation) and one at El Barrio, near Chapulhuacan (3500 feet).

Remarks.—The similarity of *eleanorae* to *mirandae* suggests the possibility that the Hidalgo form may winter in northern Colombia and northern Venezuela, and that *mirandae* is simply the winter plumage of the present race. It is probable, however, that if *eleanorae* migrates at all, the movement is largely altitudinal. In any event, the differences between the two races are constant and perceptible, for not one of the seven specimens in our series of *eleanorae* is as yellow below or as brown above as the type or other comparable specimens of *mirandae* examined.

Notes on habits.—During our sojourn at Jacala (March 27–30 and April 8–13, 1939) we noted Eleanor's Warbling Vireo repeatedly in the mixed oak and pine woodlands on the mountain slopes above the town. The bird's cheery, hurried song was noticeable, the more so because it so unfailingly called to mind that of *V. g. gilvus* 'back home'. It was, however, more musical and less wheezy, in this respect suggesting the songs of certain buntings of the genus *Passerina*.

In behavior *eleanorae* is a typical vireo, pensive in bearing, deliberate in movements, and thoroughgoing in its search for insect food. We observed no courtship antics and discovered no nest.

This new race is named in honor and in memory of Mrs. Eleanor Semple Gayley, daughter of John Bonner Semple.

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York