

## TWO FALL YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS IN CALIFORNIA

On 14 October 1969 I mistnetted a Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) in my yard on Point Loma, San Diego. The bird was weighed (8.9 gm.) and measured (wing, 62 mm; tail 42 mm; culmen 14.1 mm); further examination by A. M. Craig revealed a trace of subcutaneous fat and an incompletely ossified skull. Sex was not determined. Before its release the bird was photographed (Fig. 1. Color transparency deposited in the San Diego Natural History Museum) and described by Guy McCaskie; the following is adapted from his notes:

Upperparts: top of head and back uniform gray with a very slight hint of olive showing on the tips of the feathers. A black line extends across the forehead and above the superciliary stripe, merging into the gray of the head. Supercilium yellow from the bill to the eye and white from the eye to where it ends about ¼ inch behind the eye. White half eye ring below the eye. Face and ear coverts dark gray merging into black toward the back of the ear coverts. The black continues as a border along the sides of the throat and breast and merges into the blackish streaking along the flanks. A narrow white area at the sides of the neck, directly behind the ear coverts. Underparts: Throat and upper breast bright yellow, bordered with black; belly and undertail coverts white, washed with brown, the flanks streaked with black and quite strongly washed with buffy brown. Wings and tail: Dark gray, the feathers edged with a paler gray; the ends of the upper wing coverts white, giving distinct double wing bars. A sub-terminal white spot present on the inner webs of the two outer-most rectrices. Bill black, legs and feet yellowish brown.

McCaskie thought that in the field it somewhat resembled a fall plumaged Grace's Warbler (*Dendroica graciae*) except that the yellow of the throat and upper breast was much more intense and was boldly framed with black which extended to the flanks. In addition, the white area on the sides of the neck, quite noticeable on this bird, would not have been present on a Grace's Warbler. It appeared to have the same size and posture as a Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*).

This bird remained in the vicinity for at least 22 days and was observed by several people during this period.

The identification to race of individual birds far out of range is usually somewhat speculative at best. However, the three generally recognized races of the Yellow-throated Warbler are of two fairly distinctive types, the white-lored, short-billed *albilora* (Sycamore Warbler) and the yellow-lored, long billed *dominica* and *stoddardi*. The Point Loma bird is certainly not *albilora* because of the yellow in the anterior portion of the supercilium and the length of the bill. Ridgway (1902) gives measurements of 10.9 - 12.7 for the bill of *D. d. albilora* and 12.4 - 15 for that of *dominica* (this bird 14.1). This individual is almost certainly referable to *dominica* although *stoddardi* cannot be entirely excluded since the culmen length is within the range of this race (14 - 17 mm, Sutton, 1951). Dr. Sutton has examined the photographs and measurements and also thinks the bird is most likely *dominica*.

On 21 September 1969 L. C. Binford and others found a Yellow-throated Warbler in the Carmel River Valley, Monterey County, California (Baldrige, et al., 1970). It, too, was observed by many people and remained for several days. This bird could not be identified to race, according to Binford (pers. comm.) because it was not possible to accurately judge the key characters in the field.

## NOTES

The yellow-lored form, *dominica*, breeds from the Appalachians east and from eastern Maryland south to north central Florida. The breeding range of *albilora* extends westward from that of *dominica* to central Oklahoma, Missouri and northern Ohio, and south to east Texas and southeastern Mississippi. *Stoddardi* occupies a very restricted breeding range in northwestern Florida (Griscom and Sprunt, 1957). *Dominica* winters from South Carolina, Georgia and Florida to the Caribbean Islands while *albilora* migrates to Mexico, west to Nayarit, Colima and Guerrero, (Miller, et al., 1957) and Central America south to Costa Rica. There is an August record for Clipperton Island, 600 miles southwest of Guerrero (Stager, 1964). The winter range of *stoddardi* is unknown. (Griscom and Sprunt, 1957).

The Point Loma record appears to be the first of a yellow-lored *D. dominica* in California and the south-western United States. A spring vagrant of the white-lored *D. d. albilora* has been caught on the Farallon Islands on 8 July 1969 (Chandik and Baldrige, 1969).

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FIGURE 1. A Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica dominica*) banded on Point Loma, San Diego County, on 15 October 1969.

Photo by Alan M. Craig

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