

A PRESUMED HYBRID WARBLER IN BROOKLYN'S PROSPECT PARK: COMMON YELLOWTHROAT X MOURNING WARBLER.

Andrew C. Vallely and Thomas Fiore
132 High Ave. apt. 6 Nyack, New York,
10960, valand@prodigy.net

ABSTRACT

Details are given of a sight record of a presumed hybrid: Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) X Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*).

INTRODUCTION

On 11 May 1991 we noticed an unusual looking warbler as it flushed from low herbaceous undergrowth in Prospect Park Brooklyn. By flushing the bird repeatedly to low perches over a period of about 30 minutes, we were able to note most of the bird's plumage characters and to hear it call a few times. A painting of the bird was prepared the following day (see pg. 125). Our field notes contained the following description;

DESCRIPTION

Bill: fairly large for a warbler, and slightly decurved. Upper mandible blackish; lower mandible pinkish near the base.

Face: mostly gray and showing a black eyeline extending from the base of the bill (similar to, but slightly broader than that of a Blue-winged Warbler).

Forehead, crown and nape: uniformly gray.

Throat and chin: white, contrasting strongly with the breast.

Remaining underparts: uniform bright yellow.

Upperparts: uniform olive green.

Feet and legs: dull pinkish

VOCALIZATION

The only vocalization given by the bird was a single note chip which we judged to be consistent with that of a Mourning Warbler.

DISCUSSION

The description above does not fit any known warbler plumage, but includes characters which are consistent with members of both *Geothlypis* and *Oporornis*. Dr. Kenneth C. Parkes kindly examined the painting as well as our written descriptions, and concluded that our bird was almost certainly a hybrid; Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*) X Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*). (K.C. Parkes in lit. August 12, 1991)

The first, and as far as we know, only other report of this combination was given by Bledsoe (1988). Bledsoe describes a specimen in the Peabody Museum which was collected on September 21, 1955 near New Haven, Connecticut.

Hybridization in the Parulinae was reviewed by Morse (1989). Hybrid combinations involving species from different warbler genera have been shown to be more common than hybrid pairs occurring within genera (Parkes 1978).

Parkes et. al (1991) have pointed out that hybrids sometimes show characters, such as the white throat of the bird described here, which are not consistent with either putative parent species. This is also true of the common form of hybrid Blue-winged Warbler X Golden-winged Warbler ("Brewster's" Warbler).

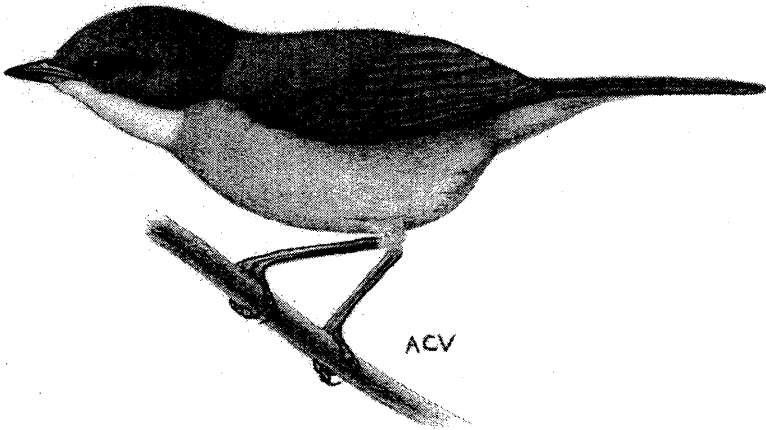
Parkes (in lit.) concluded that In both "Brewster's" Warbler, and this new hybrid combination, the hybrid has inherited 'lack of throat patch' from one parent, in this case, the Yellowthroat parent. In "Brewster's" Warbler, the underparts color, inherited from the golden-wing parent is white, there is no separation between throat and the posterior underparts. In the case of the present hybrid, the underparts color is inherited from the Mourning, but lack-of throat-patch from the Yellowthroat. Examination of spring male Mourning Warblers indicates there is no yellow substrate to the black/gray throat. With the melanin of the throat of the Mourning lacking in the hybrid, one is left with a white throat, just as in "Brewster's" Warbler.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Guy Tudor for his comments and of course, Dr. Kenneth C. Parkes for providing an explanation for this puzzling bird.

LITERATURE CITED

- Bledsoe, Anthony H. 1988. A hybrid *Oporornis philadelphia* x *Geothlypis trichas* with comments on the taxonomic interpretation and evolutionary significance of intergeneric hybridization. *Wilson Bulletin* 100: 1-8
- Morse, Douglass H. 1989. *American Warblers, an Ecological Perspective*. Harvard University Press. Cambridge Mass.
- Parkes, Kenneth C. 1978. Still another parulid intergeneric hybrid and it's taxonomic and evolutionary implications. *Auk* 95: 682-90.
- Parkes, Kenneth C., Greig, Eldon G. and Van Woerkom, Gordon J. 1991. A dose of genetics. *Birders World* 5 (4): 34-37.



Common Yellowthroat X Mourning Warbler