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Several web pages:

- Indiana Audubon Society (bird hotlines)
<http://www.indianaaudubon.org/hotline>
- VGI Vision Foundation
<http://www.visionfoundation.org>
- The University of Arizona Center for Computing and Information Technology
<http://listserv.arizona.edu>
- Birding on the Web (Louisiana listserv)
<http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/LOUI.html>
- The University of Tennessee (Tennessee Bird Records Committee)
<http://www.utm.edu/departments/artsci/biology/tbrc/wkingb.htm>
- Great Lakes Birding (The Arkansas Kingbird in Ohio (1933))
<http://www.greatlakesbirding.com/arkngbrdinohio.htm>

A Bell's Vireo in Far Eastern Ohio, with a Summary of its Status in Eastern North America

by Michael A. Patten

On 10 August 1999 I discovered a Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) at Barkcamp State Park, Belmont County, Ohio. This park is situated in the foothills of the Appalachians near the border of West Virginia (~25 km due west of Wheeling), a state in which this species has never been recorded (Hall 1983). I observed the bird at close range (4-5 m) for several minutes through Bausch & Lomb Elite 10x42 binoculars. It was with a small flock of Carolina chickadees (*Poecile carolinensis*) that had responded to my "pishing." The vireo was silent during my observation. I noted the following:

The bird was larger and of heavier build than a chickadee, and larger than a typical warbler (Parulidae). Most noticeable was the thick, rather heavy bill, which had a distinct hook at the tip of the maxilla. The bill was mostly grayish in color. The feet and sturdy legs were bluish. The eyes were dark, with no distinct paling in the irides. It foraged rather slowly, but actively jerked about its long tail in a manner reminiscent of a gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila* spp.). Its plumage was somewhat worn; thus, it looked less like a first fall bird than an adult. It was basically grayish-olive above and whitish below. Olive color on the upperparts was brightest on the back and rump, and extended into the nape. Even though the crown was slightly grayer, it did not contrast with the mantle but rather blended into it. The chin and throat were white, and neither was sharply set off from the gray auriculars (i.e., it lacked a clean division such as shown by a blue-headed vireo *V. solitarius*). The flanks were strongly washed with bright yellow; this color extended across the undertail coverts (at least distally) and expanded laterally at the sides of the breast. The wing coverts were olive-gray, contrasting with blackish-gray remiges. Small whitish tips to the greater coverts formed a single somewhat narrow wing-bar; there was no appreciable upper wing-bar. The innermost secondaries (including the "tertials") were narrowly edged with whitish.

Aside from the bird's behavior, its facial pattern was its most distinctive feature. It had neither a bold supercilium nor bold spectacles. Instead, it exhibited a thin whitish supercilium not much wider than the dusky-gray transocular line. The supercilium extended anteriorly to the bill, stopping at a narrow point just above the dark lores, and thus not connecting across the fore-head. The posterior end of the supercilium arced down a bit at the back edge of the eye, but did not encircle the rear edge because it was broken by the ragged terminus to the transocular line. A blurry whitish arc bordered the lower one-fourth of the eye, but it, too, was stopped at either end by the transocular line.

Geographic variation in the Bell's vireo follows a simple, nearly clinal pattern. Nominate birds in the eastern part of the range are fairly bright olive above with bright yellow flanks, whereas birds in the far West are essentially all gray in spring, with little to no trace of olive or yellow. The two described subspecies in the middle are intermediate. Based on the olive upperparts and bright yellow flanks, the Ohio bird, quite expectedly, showed the characters of the nominate subspecies. A bright example of *V. b. medius* of western Texas is perhaps not eliminated, but that subspecies would be extremely unlikely to reach Ohio and it tends to be grayer on the upperparts with less extensive yellow on the breast (pers. obs.). Both *V. b. arizonae* of the Southwest and, especially, the Endangered *V. b. pusillus* of coastal southern California are much

grayer birds, especially in spring and summer. Neither shows extensive olive in the upperparts nor extensive bright yellow on the flanks, although the latter can be somewhat bright on a small percentage of fresh fall *V. b. arizonae* (pers. obs.).

Status in the Eastern United States and Canada

The Bell's vireo is a species of the western and central United States, with some breeders in northern Mexico. At the eastern limit of its breeding range (Figure 1) this species occurs from the Indiana Dunes area of northwestern Indiana (Brock 1997) and adjacent southwestern Michigan (Payne 1983) southward through west-central Ohio (Peterjohn 1989) to extreme western Kentucky (Monroe 1994). There are six records for western Tennessee (Robinson 1990), one of which involved a pair that unsuccessfully bred in Memphis in June 1935 (Coffey 1935).

It is a vagrant further east, except in Florida, where it is a rare but regular transient and winter visitor, with records from mid-September through May (Robertson and Woolfenden 1992). This vireo is a rare to casual, but somewhat regular, migrant (especially in fall) through the Gulf States (DeSante and Pyle 1986, AOU 1998). Lastly, there is some tendency for birds to "overshoot" the northeastern limits of their breeding range during spring migration, with almost all such records from 6 May to 27 May. Birds have been observed in Michigan north to Houghton in the Upper Peninsula on 17 May 1973 (Payne 1983) and east to Detroit on 26 May 1885 and Macomb 6-20 May 1982 (Payne 1983). There are also a few records for southern Ontario in May (Godfrey 1986, *Am. Birds* 46:419), east to Presqu'île Provincial Park. An outlier in this temporal pattern is of a bird collected at Point Pelee on 23 June 1970 (Godfrey 1986).

Well-documented records of vagrants in the East include three from Cape May, New Jersey, where birds were photographed 30 October-3 November 1994 and 4 December 1996-3 January 1997 (Sibley 1997), and well seen on 15 September 1998 (*N. Am. Birds* 53:37). There are three records for New York, where singles were photographed in-hand at East Quogue on 25 September 1959 (Buckley and Post 1970), collected at Robert Moses SP on 26 September 1970 (Quinlan and Fritz 1998), and observed in Central Park, New York City, on 18 September 1996 (New York State Avian Records Committee 1999). Rounding out the well-documented records for the East are specimens from Durham, New Hampshire, on 19 November 1897 (Brewster 1901) and Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, on 14 October 1985 (*Am. Birds* 40:99), and one carefully studied at South Harpswell, Maine, on 23 October 1998 (*N. Am. Birds* 53:33). Fall vagrants have also occurred at Whitefish Point, Michigan (Evers and Granlund 1991), and twice in Ontario, with singles at Rondeau Provincial Park on 7 October 1985 (*Am. Birds* 40:108) and at Fifty Pt. on 18 October 1994 (*Field Notes* 49:43).

There are a number of hypothetical or provisional records for the East. The species has not definitely been recorded in Pennsylvania (Wood 1979), although there are reports from Erie on 14 July 1957 and Presque Isle on 17 May 1959 (Stull *et al.* 1985). One reported at Southampton, New York, on 26 October 1996 was not accepted by the New York State Avian Records Committee (1999). A sight record from Redding, Connecticut, on 11 May 1947 (Ross *et al.* 1948) was treated as hypothetical by Zeran-ski and Baptist (1990), but the species was accepted onto the state list by the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut. There are additional sight records from Roches-



Figure 1. Range map of the Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii*) in the eastern United States and Canada. The shaded area represents the approximate eastern extent of its breeding range. Arrows show directions of somewhat regular movement, even if only in small numbers, with open arrows being spring overshoots and solid arrows being fall migrants through the Gulf States. It regularly winters in Florida (hence the light shading). Squares represent spring records (6 May to 23 June); circles represent records from fall (3 August to 19 November) and winter. Small symbols indicate one record, mid-sized two, and large three or more. Open symbols indicate hypothetical or provisional records (but records judged unacceptable are not included).

ter, New York, on 14 May 1997 (*Field Notes* 51:851), Maplewood, New Jersey, on 13 May 1980 (*Am. Birds* 34:761), Pocahontas SP, Virginia, on 12 August 1962 (Kain 1987), and Santee National Wildlife Refuge, South Carolina, on 1 November 1988 (*Am. Birds* 43:302). Lastly, there are sightings from Zebulon, North Carolina, on 10 August 1974 (*Am. Birds* 29:42, Potter *et al.* 1980), and Columbus, Georgia, on 3 and 24 August 1975 (*Am. Birds* 30:53, Haney *et al.* 1986), the latter believed to involve different individuals on the different dates. These records were accepted as "Provisional" by the North Carolina Bird Records Committee and the Georgia Ornithological Society Checklist and Records Committee, respectively, meaning there is an acceptable sight record but no physical evidence for the species' occurrence in the state.

Thus, aside from the regular transit of a few through the Gulf States and Florida, with a few wintering annually in the latter, the Bell's vireo is a casual vagrant anywhere east of the Mississippi River away from its limited breeding range. In spring, records are largely of overshoots just north and east of their breeding range, and thus principally to Michigan and southern Ontario. In fall, of the few physically documented vagrants from the East, all but the wintering bird at Cape May occurred in the two-month window of 25 September to 19 November. Inclusion of acceptable sight records and provisional records expands the front edge of this window to 3 August, adds a spring record from Connecticut, and extends records southward to Georgia. Even so, there appear to be no prior records for the Appalachian region, making the individual at Barkcamp State Park, Ohio, the first.

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Demonstrating their affinity to beaches at inland reservoirs, these Franklin's Gulls (foreground) were some of a group of 16 visiting the beach at Caesar Creek State Park, Warren Co., on 1 October 1999. Photo by Larry Gara.