

Literature Cited

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Townsend's Warbler on the Coast of North Carolina

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Just before noon on 7 November 1992, Roger McNeill was birding along the northern dike of North Pond at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, Dare County, NC. The weather was cool and overcast, with a still wind. Among the loose flock of Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) that were flycatching from the shrubbery was a bird with bright yellow on the face that also made a sally from the bushes. McNeill noticed the bright circle of yellow around the face that also extended down the breast, and he then realized that the bird was a Townsend's Warbler (*D. townsendi*). The yellow was offset by a black center spot in the shape of a football. The yellow was in the basic shape of the "C" used as a symbol for the Cincinnati Reds baseball team (*i.e.*, pointed at the closed end of the "C"). Toward the bottom of the cheek patch, near the base of the bill, was a yellow patch shaped like a crescent moon. Black was seen on top of the head as well as mottled on the throat, and thick black streaks were present down the side of the breast. The black triangle across the breast came to a thin point at the base of the bill and was broad at the base of the throat. The yellow extended halfway down the breast past the throat line and extended into the black lines down the side. The lower breast and belly were white. Two bold, thick wing bars were present; both were gray-white in color and about the same size, just slightly offset. The top of the back was olive and

longitudinally streaked. The tail was not observed. The bill was black, whereas the eye color was not noted. The bird's basic shape was that of a Yellow-rumped Warbler, and no differences were noted in size with that species.

The bird was observed pitching into a Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*). McNeill "pished" briefly before the bird popped into view. He observed this adult male Townsend's Warbler for 30 seconds as close as 15 feet. He removed his camera from his backpack and was able to obtain one identifiable photograph of the bird.

There is a previous report of Townsend's Warbler for North Carolina -- of at least two birds in Swain County on 24 April 1975 (Roe 1978). An earlier records committee accepted this report and placed the species on the Provisional I list (North Carolina Records Committee 1980). However, the current N.C. Bird Records Committee had "concerns about the sighting, some members believing that Black-throated Green Warblers (*D. virens*), common in that area at that time of year, were misidentified, despite descriptions that are seemingly those of Townsend's" (North Carolina Bird Records Committee 1990, p. 58). This latter committee considered the report as "Unresolved" (North Carolina Bird Records Committee 1990, p. 57); it has not acted on the report since that decision in 1990.

The N.C. Bird Records Committee accepted the report made by the senior author on a Rare Bird Sighting Report form, and the Committee also accepted a color photograph, which places the species on the Official List (North Carolina Bird Records Committee 1994). There are thus two reports for North Carolina, only one of which has been accepted by the present committee.

A copy of the Rare Bird Sighting Form (which contained a color sketch of the warbler) and a color photograph have been given to the N.C. State Museum of Natural Sciences for documentation.

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