

General Field Notes

General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.

First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in *The Chat*.

First Record of Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) for South Carolina

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On 22 September and 27 September 2016, Blaine H. Carnes, Michael Gamble, Ryan Donnelly, Collette Lauzau, and Allison Nevins captured a Yellow-green Vireo (*Vireo flavoviridis*) on Kiawah Island, South Carolina. The bird was captured in a mist-net as part of an ongoing study monitoring songbird migration during the fall. Fall migration banding occurs on Kiawah Island at two locations: the Captain Sam's banding site since 2009, and the Little Bear banding site since 2015. The Yellow-green Vireo was captured at the Little Bear banding site which is located at the far eastern end of Kiawah Island. At Little Bear, 20 permanent 12-m mist-nets placed in maritime scrub-shrub are operated daily from 22 August through 17 November. Nets are opened approximately 30 min before sunrise and remain open for 5-6 hours, weather permitting.

On 22 September the bird was captured and banded at approximately 11:10 AM EST in net #2, which is located within scrub-shrub. Vegetation surrounding the net consists primarily of Marsh-Elder (*Iva frutescens*) and Cabbage Palmetto (*Sabal palmetto*) from 7-12 ft in height. On 27 September the bird was recaptured at approximately 10:25 AM EST in net #16, which is located on an old dune ridge. Vegetation surrounding the net consists of Wax Myrtle (*Morella cerifera*) up to 15 ft in height with a dense thicket of brier (*Smilax sp.*). On both occasions the bird was placed in a cloth bag and brought back to the banding station within ten minutes.

Description of the Bird

The bird resembled a very brightly colored Red-eyed Vireo, with vivid yellow along the flanks, undertail coverts, underwing coverts, vent, and breast (Fig. 1). The cap was a paler gray than in Red-eyed Vireo, without dark edging,



Figure 1. Yellow-green Vireo recaptured on Kiawah Island, SC on 27 September 2016.

and the upper mandible appeared paler than in Red-eyed Vireo.

The bird had a molt limit within the alula (A1 had been replaced, with A2 and A3 retained) and the eye was brownish, which indicated a hatch-year bird. A small amount of subcutaneous fat was recorded in the furcular region (fat score = 1) on the original capture date, which had slightly increased by the recapture date (fat score = 2). Morphological measurements recorded included: wing chord was 73.0 mm; exposed culmen was 15.2 mm; the difference between the length of the 9th primary and the 5th primary was 2 mm; mass was 13.7 g at original capture and 18.9 g upon recapture.

Identification

Bright yellow coloration. This individual exhibited much brighter yellow coloration than shown by even the brightest Red-eyed Vireos, especially on the breast, underwing coverts, flanks, and undertail coverts (Fig. 2-3).

Exposed culmen measurement. This individual had an exposed culmen measurement of 15.2 mm, well outside the maximum length found in Red-eyed Vireos of 13.6 mm (Fig. 4) (Pyle 1997).

Wing morphology. There is very little overlap between Red-eyed and Yellow-green Vireos in the closed-wing measurement of the difference between the length of the 9th primary feather and the 5th primary feather, with



Figure 2. Close up of underwing coverts, flanks, and undertail coverts.



Figure 3. Comparison with Red-eyed Vireo of the same age.



Figure 4. Exposed culmen measurement. Figure 5. Difference between the length of the 9th primary and the 5th primary.

Red-eyed Vireo showing a range of 4-8 mm and Yellow-green Vireo showing a range of 1-5 mm (Pyle 1997). This individual had a P9-P5 measurement of 2 mm (Fig. 5).

Conclusion

The photos and description noted above describe South Carolina's first Yellow-green Vireo. Of the two similar North American species, Black-whiskered Vireo can be ruled out by that species' much duller coloration and dark lateral throat stripe. Red-eyed Vireo can be ruled out by coloration and by bill and wing measurements.

Based on the above diagnostic photos and description, the South Carolina Bird Records Committee accepted this record as the first Yellow-green Vireo in South Carolina (Hill et al. 2017). There have been other vagrant records of this species in North America, mostly in western states such as California, Arizona, Nevada, and the Canadian province of British Columbia, which most likely pertain to the *V.f.hypoleucus* subspecies, which breeds in western Mexico. In the east this species has appeared out of range along the Gulf Coast in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida, in the Florida Keys and south Florida, and one individual captured and banded in Massachusetts in September 2011 (Flemer et al. 2011).

It is likely that this bird is an example of a misoriented reverse-migrant (Howell et al. 2014). In this phenomenon, a bird's internal compass is wrong, causing it to migrate the wrong way, often on a 90-degree or 180-degree track from their species' typical migration path. Yellow-green Vireo has a breeding range that extends from the west and east coast of Mexico down through Central America to Panama and a wintering range in Amazonia, mainly along the base of the east slope of the Andes (Rodríguez-Flores et al. 2010), with a migration route that theoretically runs from northwest to southeast through Central America.

By measurements and coloration, the Kiawah Island bird was not from the hypoleucus subspecies that breeds in west Mexico (Pyle 1997), and seems most likely to be of the nominate flavoviridis subspecies, found along the east slope of Mexico up to far south Texas.

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