

Subj: BTGW at Presque Isle
Date: 9/15/01 2:01:20 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: rfridell@redrock.net (Rick Fridell)
To: jerrymcw@aol.com
CC: aeridia@velocity.net

Hello Gerald,

I apologize for the delay in contacting you with information on the Black-throated Gray Warbler we observed on 9-8-01. Ben Coulter informed me that you would appreciate a write-up on this bird. I wrote the description duplicated below without guide book consultation, on the car ride back to Erie the afternoon of the eighth, within an hour of observing the bird.

Species: Black-throated Gray Warbler **Date:** 09-08-01 **Number:** 1 **Age:** Adult **Sex:** Male

Locality: North side of Pine Tree Trail, near deer enclosure, approximately 150 meters from the west end of the trail. Presque Isle State Park, Erie County, PA

Observers: Rick Fridell, (Project Leader, Utah Wildlife Resources) and Kristen Comella (Naturalist, Snow Canyon State Park)

Time: 1440 hrs, observed for 5-8 mins. **Distance:** Between 10 and 15 meters in good light. **Optics:** Leica 10x42 (RF), Pentax DCF 10x42 (KC)

Description: Head and face boldly patterned with a black crown, white supercilium, black auriculars, white cheeks and black throat and yellow supraloral spots. Back dark gray. Wings dark gray with two prominent white wing bars. Sides white with bold black streaks. Belly and undertail coverts white, underside of tail white with dark outer side edges. (I did not note top of tail characteristics). Legs and bill black.

Warbler was foraging within the canopy (2/3 from ground) of Scotch or Austrian Pines (?), gleaning and hover-gleaning among mostly dead branches. We did not hear any vocalizations from this warbler. The warbler was among a loose flock of Black-capped Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Kristen and I observed the warbler together for approximately 3 minutes. Kristen then went down the trail to attempt to find Ben Coulter and some other birders. I watched the warbler for approximately another 5 minutes until I lost track of it as it moved through the pines to the west. Unfortunately we could not re-locate the warbler when Kristen, Ben and the others returned. Kristen and I were informed of the warbler's presence in the area by Ben Coulter who (with others) had observed it along the Pine Trail earlier on the morning on 9/8/01.

Similar Species considered: This is a very distinct warbler. Pattern is similar to Black-throated Green and Townsends however, these were ruled out by a complete lack of yellow other than small face spots. Black-and-white Warbler was ruled out because of complete black crown (no white medial stripe), and pure white undertail coverts. Breeding male Blackpoll Warbler was ruled out by season, and face pattern and leg color.

Jerry please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information. Also Ted Floyd sends his regards.

Take care,

Rick Fridell

----- Headers -----
 Return-Path: <rfridell@redrock.net>

Subj: **Black-throated Gray description**
Date: 9/10/01 10:29:56 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: aeridia@velocity.net (Ben Coulter)
To: JerryMcW@AOL.COM

While birding on Sept. 8, 2001, Joyce Hoffmann, Dave Wilton, Margie Kern, and I observed what turned out to be a Black-throated Gray Warbler at Presque Isle State Park. The conditions were mostly sunny, temperature at least in the 70s. The optics I was using were Swarovski EL 8.5x42s.

We were birding on the eastern end of the Pine Tree Trail at about 10:30AM. Joyce Hoffmann began pishing under a hundred yards from the trail head, and it brought down some Black-capped Chickadees. I was looking the opposite direction when Joyce called out "Blackpoll." She soon had everyone on the bird, which was in fairly close proximity to a chickadee, on a dead branch on the left side of a pine tree, about 12 feet or so above the ground. It hopped about on the branches during the brief period that we watched it.

The bird was black, white, and gray in color. The bird's crown was jet black. The lores back to the auriculars to the back of the head was also black, and, in combination with the crown, bordered a striking white supercilium. The supraloral had an obvious yellow spot, which Dave Wilton commented on, and we all noticed this. The white malar, surrounded by dark, angled down, and then back upwards. The overall facial pattern was similar to Black-throated Green Warbler, although there was no light marking on the orbital feathers beneath the eye.

The throat of the bird was black, down to the breast, which was white. The sides and flanks of the bird were streaked dark gray or black. The mantle was a dark grayish color, and the remiges were also a grayish, and with white along the median and greater coverts, creating a bright double wingbar. The primaries I think were darker, tending towards black. The vent of the bird was white. The upper side of the tail feathers was also gray, and I believe the underside was white.

Another thing that I noticed that didn't fit Blackpoll was that the legs and feet were black, not a pink like on Blackpoll.

Although no one said anything at the time that it didn't look right for a Blackpoll, my companions later communicated to me that they too had noticed the bird's unusual appearance.

Since nobody spoke up about the peculiarities of our "Blackpoll," perhaps because we didn't want to look dumb, we did not track the whereabouts of the bird, and continued down the trail. Later, while I was eating lunch, I looked up Black-throated Gray Warbler, (whose appearance I was vaguely familiar with) in two field guides, and immediately realized that the bird's appearance fit a male Black-throated Gray. I headed back to Pine Tree Trail at about 12:45 PM, and searched the length of the trail, without relocating the bird. I met another birder who hadn't seen any unusual birds. Later, I met a couple from Utah, (Rick Fridell, from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Kristen Cornell), and I informed them of the bird. Since Utah is within the bird's normal range, they were quite familiar with the species, and said that this was a good habitat for this species.

Later, while I was talking to two birders from Pittsburgh, Kristen ran over from the west end of the trail, and told us that they had the Black-throated Gray in some pines with a few chickadees. By the time we got to Rick's location, (slightly past the enclosure that stops deer from browsing the understory inside it), he had lost track of the bird, which he estimated he had watched for about 5 minutes. They confirmed my ID of the bird as an adult Black-throated Gray Warbler. We searched for the bird, but couldn't relocate it. Rick (rfridell@redrock.net) said he'd also write a description of the bird.

Ben Coulter
3431 Argyle Ave.
Erie, PA 16505
814-838-9773
aeridia@velocity.net

737-01-2001

Rick (rfridell@redrock.net) said he'd also write a description of the bird.

Ben Coulter
3431 Argyle Ave.
Erie, PA 16505
814-838-9773
aeridia@velocity.net

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Ballot - Round Two

Species: Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*)

Date of Sighting: 8 September 2001 to 8 September 2001

Location: PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK

County: ERIE

Observer(s): Ben Coulter, Joyce Hoffman, Dave Wilton, Rick Fridell

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Ben Coulter, Rick Fridell

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No


Recording: Video

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead		X						
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Hess		X						
J. Stanley		X						
E. Witmer		X						
B. Leberman			X					
M. Sharp		X						
TOTALS		5	1	1				
DECISION		X						

Comments:

6/1

Signature (Secretary):



Date:

6/12/03