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Eastern race of Palm Warbler in Erie County

Ed Kwatek.

On Saturday April 15<sup>th</sup> 1995 I was birding along Pine Tree Trail, Presque Isle State Park, with my wife Cheryl, Isaac Fields and a friend of Isaac's when we came across a group of 3 Palm Warblers, Dendroica palmarum, low down in some bayberry bushes. Two of the birds were obviously of the nominate race, D. p. palmarum, with dull brown upperparts, whitish breast & belly streaked brown, yellow throat and yellow undertail coverts. The third bird however was very different and instantly appeared much more brightly colored than the other two. I identified it as an individual of the eastern race D. p. hypochrysea based on the following characters:

The forehead and crown were bright chestnut orange. The nape, mantle and wings were a dark olive brown, a shade darker than the accompanying birds. The rump was olive green and the tail was similar in pattern to that of the nominate race with large white spots towards the tips of the outer two pairs of rectrices. The supercilia were distinctly yellow and the bird had thin black eyestripes that extended well behind the eyes. The ear coverts were brown. The most striking plumage character was the underparts which were uniformly

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bright lemon yellow from the chin right down to the undertail coverts. The breast and belly were fairly heavily marked with reddish brown streaks. The markings were much redder than on the nominate race but not quite as red as on a Yellow Warbler, D. petechia. ~~The~~

The bird was observed at very close range (down to 12 feet) and within 2 feet of the ground for several minutes as it foraged out in the open. Optical equipment used was a x 10 binocular.

This subspecies breeds in Canada east of the Great Lakes. It is ~~very~~ uncommon as a spring and fall migrant in western Pennsylvania. Leberman ( ) states that up to 10% of the Palm Warblers migrating through the Ligonier Valley in the fall are hypochrysea. Bob Mulvihill (pers. comm.) states that the eastern race is banded annually at Powdermill Nature Reserve in the fall and occasionally in the spring. Ron Leberman (pers. comm.) informs me that he bands one hypochrysea <sup>about</sup> every two years on average with more records in the spring than in the fall. However in more than thirty years of combined observation on Presque Isle neither Jerry McWilliams nor I have definitely encountered the eastern race in the field before now. It is hoped that this occurrence will stimulate interest in the racial separation of Palm Warblers throughout Pennsylvania.

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jerry McWilliams, Ron Leberman & Bob Mulvihill for their help in the preparation of this article

## Reference

Leberman R.C. 1976 - ~~The~~ Birds of the Ligonier Valley - CMNH special publication #3 pp 46-48

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of**

Species: **Palm Warbler (Dendroica palmarum hypochrysea)**

Date of Sighting: **15 April 1995 to 15 April 1995**

Location: **PRESQUE ISLE STATE PARK**

County: **ERIE**

Observer(s): **Ed Kwater**

Date of Submission: **1995**

Submitted by: **Ed Kwater**

Written Description: **YES**      Photo: **NO**      Specimen: **NO**

Recording: **NONE**

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas			X					
N. Pulcinella			X					
E. Kwater			X					
R. Ickes			X					
G. McWilliams			X					
P. Schwalbe			X					
S. Feldstein			X					
<b>TOTALS</b>			7					
<b>DECISION</b>			X					

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

*F. Haas*

Date:

*5-1-96*