

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review (to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for). Attach additional pages as necessary. Please print or type. Attach xerox of field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed, mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216.

1. English and Scientific names: *Connecticut Warbler, Oporornis agilis*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): *One male*
3. Locality: Parish: Cameron
Specific Locality: Oak Grove Sanctuary
4. Date(s) when observed: *5 May 2019*
5. Time(s) of day when observed: *1150 CDT*
6. Reporting observer and address: *Robert C. Dobbs, Lafayette, LA*
7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): *None*
8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s): *None*
9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): *Shade of forest understory; bright sunny day, at mid-day, made lighting OK even in shade of understory*
10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): *Swarovski 8x30 binos (good condition), Nikon AF-S 300 mm 1:4 D camera lens (good condition)*
11. Distance to bird(s): *6-10 m*
12. Duration of observation: *1-1.5 min total (4-5 observations, averaging 15-20 sec in duration)*

13. Habitat: Palmetto-dominated understory of tall, chenier forest remnant

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): Perching 1-2 m above the ground during each of four times that I saw the bird well. For the first, third and fourth of those observations, the bird flew up to a perch in the understory, apparently after being flushed from on/near ground by me. For the second observation, it flew to a perch from 10(?) m away following, and seemingly in response to, Connecticut Warbler song playback (I had tentatively identified the bird during the initial observation, but the lighting was so bad that I needed a better photo opp; hence, playback, to which it did not respond again despite 2-3 more attempts). Following the last of the four perched observations, the bird went to the ground, where I was able to follow it visually through the understory, but only as glimpses of movement, except that I did see it walk/run just prior to it making a short flight just above the ground--as if it was a single transition between a walk/run and the flight--after that I never saw the bird again (despite another hour of looking).

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species): A large, chunky warbler with a relatively heavy/long bill (for a warbler), and very long undertail coverts (giving a short-tailed look). Bluish-gray hood, yellow belly and undertail coverts, and greenish back/upperwings. Bluish-gray of hood was rather uniform, but a bit paler on the throat, and becoming slightly darker on the lower breast, bordering the yellow belly. The darker tones on the lower breast were subtle, not forming a bold smudge (e.g., as on male Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers). Bold white eyering of nearly even width, but may pinch in just slightly in a tiny portion of its posterior edge (which is apparently common in Connecticut Warbler, based on field guides and perusal of photos in Macaulay). Maxilla dark; mandible pale (flesh or horn-colored), at least on basal half. Legs pinkish.

16. Voice: Called twice, but not in succession (thus thwarting audio recording attempts). Very similar to Connecticut call notes on the iBird Pro app, which I had on my phone--and checked, and played-back (to no avail)--at the time. Call did not strike me as similar to Mourning Warbler, with which I was once familiar (haven't heard it in 2-3 years...), but had a more nasal quality.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): Except for female Common Yellowthroat (can look "Oporornis"-like with a cursory glimpse) and Nashville Warbler (arguably has a superficially similar hood and eyering, but would only confuse a beginner), Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers are the only *real* candidates for confusion, as both have gray hoods, are greenish above, yellow below, with long bills and relatively long undertail coverts. The bird in question had all of those characters, but had a complete, evenly thick, white eyering. Because the bird in question was probably a

male (based on darker tones in lower breast, and evenly blue-gray hood lacking olive tones on crown), its lack of dark lores eliminates male Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers. A small percentage of Mourning Warblers apparently have complete eyerings (BNA; Jay Pitocchelli pers. comm.), and a female Mourning (or MacGillivray's) Warbler with a complete eyering might look very similar to the bird in question. Eyerings on Mourning Warblers are extremely rare, however, and, when present, are thinner and less bold than on Connecticut (BNA). A female Mourning or MacGillivray's would also lack the darker breast tones of this bird. Additional characters that support Connecticut over Mourning (or MacGillivray's) include call note quality (more nasal than Mourning), (brief) observation of the bird walking/running, exceptionally long undertail coverts, throat paler than rest of head/hood, and positive response to Connecticut song playback.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? Attached?): Yes, photos by me, included below.

19. Previous experience with this species: Virtually no experience with Connecticut--I've seen/heard 2-3 spring migrant males, years ago in Illinois, but I don't recall being able to study any of them. Much experience with Mourning and MacGillivray's warblers.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: I looked at a few photos from Macaulay on my phone, after losing and not being able to refind the bird.

b. after observation: Nat Geo; Sibly; BNA--also solicited opinion from Jay Pitocchelli (author of Connecticut, Mourning and MacGillivray's BNA accounts), who knows variation in Mourning Warbler eye-rings, and who agreed with Connecticut ID (9 May 2019 email).

21. This description is written from: notes made during the observation (____ notes attached?); ____ notes made after the observation (date: ____); ____ memory; images taken during the observation.

22. Are you positive of your identification if not, explain: Yes.

23. Date: 9 May 2019 Time: 1230 CDT

24. May the LBRC have permission to display this report or portions of this report on its website? Yes _____

If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes _____



