

KENTUCKY WARBLER SINGING IN REGINA

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Regina had had about 12 mm of rain early on the morning of 14 July 1989 and when I set out to walk in Wascana Park the sky was heavily overcast though the rain had ceased. As I passed by Willow Island (at about the same place where Fern Lawrence had in spring 1988 found a male Prothonotary Warbler) I heard a strange bird song. I stopped and after a somewhat lengthy pause it was repeated. It consisted of five notes, all on the same pitch, unaccented and rather deliberately given. From its quality I was sure the singer was a wood warbler, but which one I knew not. At intervals the song was repeated three more times, which enabled me to focus on a large Manitoba Maple. But, because of the dense leaf growth, I could detect neither bird nor movement. I put words to the song in my head so that I would remember it better and when I got home about noon I had retained it clearly.

I played the warblers on the Peterson cassette and with the eighth bird on side four, band one, I had it exactly — Kentucky Warbler.³ I then switched to my Borror and Gunn warbler record, which in stereo gives a better rendition than the cassette — there was no doubt about it.¹ Finally, I consulted the sonagram in my Robbins guide, and for Kentucky Warbler I had a precise picture of the song I had heard earlier: six notes on the same

pitch, evenly spaced, somewhat slow for a warbler.⁴ The sonagram represented a bird singing six notes, whereas I could detect five only from my bird.

In the afternoon I went back hoping to see or hear it again but was unsuccessful. I had informed others of its presence but I received no reports.

The only other Kentucky Warbler occurrence in Saskatchewan (sex not given), the one which entitled the species to hypothetical status for the province, was in Moose Jaw on 25 September 1971, by John C. Horton and Robert D. Rafuse.²

¹BORROR, D. J. and W. H. GUNN. Songs of warblers of eastern North America. Vol. IV, Sounds of nature series. Field Orn. Naturalists, Toronto. (record album)

²HOUSTON, C. S. 1972. Northern Great Plains region, the fall migration, 1971. *Amer. Birds* 26:80.

³PETERSON, R. T. (Editor). 1983. A field guide to bird songs of eastern and central North America. Cornell University Ornithology. Second Ed. (two cassette tapes).

⁴ROBBINS, C. S., BERTEL BRUNNEN and H. S. ZIM. 1966. Birds of North America. Golden Press, New York.