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WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER IN OMAHA



On 13 May 1988 Dr. J. J. Baume1 discovered a male Williamson's Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus thyroideus*) lying dead below an elevated, glassed-in walkway between buildings on Creighton University's campus in downtown Omaha, Nebraska.

The bird, beautiful in breeding plumage, was largely black from its awl-shaped bill to its stiff, acuminate central tail feathers. There was a white line beginning at the base of the lower mandible and extending over the face, while another ran back from the eye. The white wing coverts formed a broad white line on the wing. Also, there were white tips on the tertials, while small white dots on five feathers formed four rows on the closed primaries. The rump and upper tail coverts were white. There was a narrow, bright red patch on the chin. While the upper breast was black, the lower breast and belly were yellow. The flanks and under tail coverts were mottled white and black. The bird weighed 51 grams. Its total length was 225 millimeters, its wingspread 413 millimeters, and its wingchord 135 millimeters. Its left testis was 4 x 6 millimeters, while the right was 4 x 4 millimeters.

This western species breeds in dry conifer forests of the Rockies and west. There have been only four previous sightings reported for the states. The two with adequate descriptions were also of males seen during spring migration, one 24 March 1939 at Hastings and one 5 May 1959 near Grand Island (T. E. Bray, B. K. Padelford, and W. R. Silcock, 1985. *The Birds of Nebraska*). Any sighting of Williamson's Sapsucker in Nebraska would be a treat, but the Omaha discovery is especially far east. This specimen, now at the state museum at University of Nebraska at Omaha, is the first collected in Nebraska.

--- Barbara L. Wilson, Rt. 1, Box 41, Hastings, Iowa 51540