Here is yet another vireo, this one sadly considered an “endangered species” by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. What wonderful songs, but there is nothing simple about his performance. He’ll take a given phrase and sing it all alone, then truncate it, or embellish it with another phrase or bit of phrase, sometimes running several phrases together. It’s a lively and emphatic performance, but doesn’t, at least initially, seem to fit neatly into vireo singing categories that I have become accustomed to. I offer you some good listening from the hill country of Texas.

All recordings here are believed to be from the same individual, at Kerr Wildlife Management Area, Hunt, Texas. Let’s have at it!

♫706. For starters, I suggest listening here, just gaining some familiarity with the singing of this individual. Try to pick out a given distinctive song and then listen for it to recur. I chose the song at 0:05, then listened for it throughout these six and a half minutes. There it was again, at 0:19, with five or so other songs in between. I heard more than a dozen examples, but after four minutes it seemed to disappear. Interesting. That pattern suggests he’s a package singer. April 12, 2013. (6:30)

Play-706

♫707. I took a closer look, studying in Raven Lite. I excerpted all renditions of that particular song and put them back to back in this recording. There are 17 examples to 4:13, and then they disappear, never to be found again in the last two and a quarter minutes! Twelve of the 17 renditions are identical to the second song in this series, with the other five examples being truncated or embellished. April 12, 2013. (1:00)

Play-707

♫708. Here is the longer field recording from which the above two excerpts were extracted. (♫706 begins at 3:57 in this recording.). There’s so much more information on this bird here! Mid-recording, at 18:30 I announce the following: “The wind has certainly picked up here a little. I’m on Schumaker Road at Kerr Wildlife Management Area, Texas. I’ve been following this bird around. I walk a little bit if I feel he’s getting out of view, too far distant. Right now he’s quiet.” At the end of the recording: “OK, I’m going to stop this black-capped vireo. Fifty-some minutes is enough . . . I followed this bird around, moved with him, sometimes he was in the top of a tree, sometimes in a bush, foraging while singing. . . ” I’m intrigued by the special section from 32:32 to 34:06, where he’s singing quietly and continuously. Recorded from about 8:50 to 9:45, with sunrise at 7:15 a.m. April 12, 2013. (50:19)

Play-708

♫709. Five days later, here are a few more minutes of singing from the same black-capped vireo. Look, or listen, *there*, at 2:14 is the same special song that we followed in ♫706 and ♫707 above; the seemingly last rendition of this song occurs at 4:55, but then it reappears from 9:49 to 10:51. What a fascinating bird! I wonder what more I could learn about this vireo. Whenever this vireo sings the particular song we have followed, are the other songs with it always the same, too? In other words, is the compositioin of the packages stable over time? And more . . . Recording made from 6:51 a.m. to 7:08 a.m.; sunrise at 7:09 a.m. April 17, 2013. (16:38)

Play-709