

DOCUMENTATION OF LATILONG PARE BIRD SIGHTING
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

44-89-31

Species: Gray-checked Thrush | Catharus minimus
(Vernacular name) | (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 16 September 1989 Time Bird Seen: 15:50 to 16:00

Locality: Fairview Cemetery
La Junta, CO Otero County
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binoculars

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: _____

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: - Plumage: adult

Light conditions: Bright sun; bird in & out of shade & sunlight

Distance from bird, and how measured: 35 feet, estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Bird was first seen flying from lawn to a tree. Then flew back down to lawn. Foraged by short-hopping along the grass. Associated with nearby robins. Flew into trees again, staying low on larger branches. Then moved off high.

Bird was plain & steady; did not flick or droop wings, nor did it wag its tail.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Cemetery. Park-like urban setting with large deciduous trees, a few evergreens and open lawn.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

None

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Med-sized bird, about 7" long; markedly smaller than Am. Robins.
Uppersides plain unmarked gray (flat-colored & drab) with no brownish tones. No wingbars. Tail, same color as back. Face plain, unmottled gray - this color extends onto crown as well. Faint smudgy pale whitish area around eye (especially above & below eye) but not defined into an eye-ring.
Undersides have a white ground color. Flanks washed gray. No tan, brown or yellowish tones underneath. Spottling on breast rather heavy, quite distinct & reminiscent of Wood Thrush it's so heavy. Color of spots gray. Spottling extends all the way down breast but is less distinct near the bottom.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Not heard.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Hermit Thrush most similar but has rusty tail, clearer eye-ring & usually flecks wings.
Swainson's Thrush is browner above. has tan face, tan flanks & breast and more distinct eye-ring.
Veery is browner, much more faintly spotted on breast.
Wood Thrush heavily, distinctly spotted below, rusty above; larger.
Waterthrushes, Ovenbird smaller, tail lobbers.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I've seen all Catharus sp. in Colorado. Many Swainson's & Hermit. A few Veerys (also in Ill & Tex 1979-1984); and Gray-checked in Texas April 23, 84 & one in Colorado May 30 1986

This report was written from notes made during X after observation; from memory .

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Return Form To: CFO Records Committee
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City Park
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