

44-93-85 A

1154 South Vancouver Way
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-3656
303-980-6212 Work: 969-2267

Larry Norris Biogeographer

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH (Catharus m. minimus)

29 May 1993 9:40am Weather: cool, cloudy, calm

Barr Lake State Park, Adams County, Colorado
West side of lake near the Bald Eagle nesting area

DESCRIPTION:

- Head: Dark eye, no eyering visible, side of face (cheek, auricular) gray. Just a black eye in a gray face.
- Back: Gray-brown
- Tail: Gray-brown, no reddish color in tail.
- Flanks: Grayish
- Underparts: Throat white, breast had more spots than a Veery (Catharus fuscescens).

BEHAVIOR:

As I was watching a Swainson's Thrush (Catharus ustulatus), it flew into dense cottonwood fringe cover below the levee trail. When I pursued the bird, making pishing sounds, a silent Gray-cheeked Thrush came out acting quite interested in the sounds. It got above me, onto a willow branch, and cocked its head sideways to me as if to hear better. It was then that I could see the gray cheek and lack of eyering. The bird stayed in view for about 15 seconds as it moved from high left of me to low right of me at a distance of about 30 feet. It then went into dense vegetation, and came out to view again low and close on my right at about 12 feet distant. Then the bird flew back into the cover, not to be seen again, although I looked around for several minutes. Having just seen a buffy member of the Swainson's Thrush (almae, swainsoni) group, the lack of buff, the gray face, and lack of eyering really stood out to me.

OTHER INFORMATION:

I was birding alone, no photos were taken. The report was placed on the bird tape for a brief period. I was using 8x24 binoculars. I have experience with Gray-cheeked Thrush in Newfoundland, Massachusetts, Texas, and Alaska.