

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

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GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH
Catharus minimus

Location: The grove at Lake Henry; Crowley County; Ordway, Colorado

Date: April 27, 1996

Background:

I was birding alone at the grove at the northwest edge of Lake Henry. I found this bird about 1:00 p.m. and observed it for about 5 minutes. It was in heavy growth, mostly tamarisk and brush and stayed low to the ground. It was difficult to observe. I used B & L Elite (10x40) binoculars.

Description:

The bird was an adult Catharus thrush, about 7-8" long, brownish and white, smaller and slimmer than an American Robin. It was dark above and white below with a spotted breast. The most striking feature of this bird was its uniformity. The upperparts were a dull gray-brown with a concolor head, face, back, wings, rump and tail. It did not have an eyering and its face lacked buffy tones. It did not have the redder rump and tail of the Hermit Thrush. The tail was rather short. The face was plain dark gray-brown, showing no contrast with the rest of the head and upperparts. The undersides were whitish with extensive, distinct, smudgy dark gray spots. There was a slight grayish tinge to the sides of the breast and flanks.

Similar Species:

Wood Thrush is larger, richer brown with a distinct eyering and large distinct spots on the breast. The Veery is redder, has a lighter face, contrasting with the crown and has very light, indistinct spotting on the breast. Swainson's Thrush has a buffy face and an eyering. Hermit Thrush has an eyering, a contrasting reddish rump and tail and flicks its wings.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all the Catharus thrushes in Colorado and elsewhere.

This report was prepared from memory.

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