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**Colorado Record No: 2003-87**  
**Colorado Rare Bird Report Documentation Form**

Common Name: **BENDIRE'S THRASHER** (*Toxostoma bendirei*)

Numbers Seen: One

Distance: 50 feet

Light conditions: Sunny, clear. No winds. I was northeast of the bird. Sunlight from east.

Optical Equipment: Swarovski 8X30, Swift Lynx Spotting Scope 20-60X.

Sex and Age: Adult

Location: At the junction of the 3E and 7S, go ½ mile east to an old grove of willow trees and a single tall spruce tree. Understory was honeysuckle. This is a former homestead, where there is no longer a dwelling structure. It is part of the Monte Vista NWR. Bird was feeding, perching and flying amongst this habitat.

County: Rio Grande Date(s) and Time of Observation: May 10<sup>th</sup>, 0700 to 0715 and May 11<sup>th</sup>, 0830 to 0850.

Description of the Bird(s): I spotted the bird at one of our first stops on the International Migratory Bird Count we do each year. In the honeysuckle bushes about 50 feet away, I spied a bird that was perched on low branches about 3 feet off the ground. It was apparently sunning itself in the morning sunlight and gave us long and detailed looks with both binoculars and scopes.

The bird was about the size of a robin. It was grayish brown overall with a long tail. The upper parts were grayish brown. The head was grayish brown with a slightly decurved bill. The upper mandible had curvature while the lower mandible was fairly straight. The bill was dark colored on the upper mandible and on the outer lower mandible. The base of the lower mandible was pale. The bill length was about 3/4 of the thickness of the head width.

The eye was a light yellow color. Chin and throat were lighter than back, being a grayish dusky white. A faint malar stripe of buff color extended from the base of bill. Pale throat. Breast had faint small triangular streaks of grayish brown. Sides, flanks, belly, and undertail were unstreaked grayish brown, somewhat lighter in color than back.

Wings were grayish brown. The wing coverts showed a light edging.

The tail was long and grayish brown. It showed a lighter outer edging when perched. In flight, I observed white spots on the outer tail feathers. Feet were dark colored.

Habitat: Honeysuckle shrubs, Willow and Spruce trees. The bird was obviously in migration and had sought shelter here from the unusually strong winds we had experienced that week.

Behavior: Feeding, perching, singing and flying. It would fly to the ground, feed, and then fly back to a perch.

Vocalizations: The bird sang May 11<sup>th</sup>. It was a thrasher-like call of melodious notes and cadence.

Differentiation from Similar Species. This bird is not a Sage Thrasher. Sage Thrashers are smaller in size, do not have the size and curvature of bill this bird had, and have breast and sides heavily streaked in this, the breeding season. Sage Thrashers also have prominent wing bars in the breeding season.

This bird was not a juvenile Curve-billed Thrasher, which is bigger, has a uniformly dark lower mandible, and lacks the more distinct triangular or arrowhead shaped breast streaks. Curve-billed also have a larger more curved in the adult bird.

Previous Experience with this Species: Have seen this species in southern Arizona.

Others who observed this species: Lisa Rawinski, Lisa Clements, Dan Combs, Kristin Gilbert.

Was the bird Photographed? The attached photos were taken with digital camera through spotting scope by author. Also, some photos taken by Lisa Clements are also included. These were taken with film camera and then scanned into digital format.

Report was made from notes and sketches taken within 2 days after the time of observation.

Observer and Signature: John J. Rawinski Report Written Date: May 19, 2003

Signature: **John J Rawinski....sent 28-Nov-03**

Send to: Tony Leukering, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601



**Bendire's Thrasher at the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge on May 10, 2003. (photographed by John Rawinski)**



This is a digital photo taken by Rawinski (05-10-03) thru a spotting scope. It shows a frontal view of the bird's breast and belly.

