

ACCEPTED 7-0

COLORADO RARE BIRD REPORT

GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH
Catharus minimusLocation: Lake Henry; Ordway; Crowley County, ColoradoDate: May 9 and 12, 1997Setting:

On both days I was birding the grove at Lake Henry with Bob Dickson and Brandon Percival. On the 9th we observed the bird at about 9:30 a.m. for two minutes. On the 12th we observed it for about a minute at 7:40 a.m. On the 9th we saw it in full sun briefly and then in shade. The bird spent time on the ground, on a low stump and on a low branch. On the 12th the bird sat in plain site, in the sun from 20-40 feet distance. We observed it from all angles. It was silent. I observed the bird from as close as 20 feet with B & L 10 x 42 Elite binoculars. Although we did not observe this species at Lake Henry on the 11th, I am presuming that these two sightings, at the same place, three days apart are the same individual, and thus constitute one "record".

Description:

This bird was an adult Catharus thrush – about 7-8" long – with spotted breast, short tail, and stout, straight bill. It was overall dull, cold gray-brown. The tail was barely sandier in tone than the rest of the upperparts. The face was very dark, plain, one-colored all the way through the cheek – the same dark gray-brown color as the upperparts. There was no eyering. The breast was white, clearly and heavily spotted with gray spots. It had a single pale wingbar, formed by pale edges to the primary coverts. The bird gave a sing sweet call note on the 12th.

Similar Species:

Wood Thrush is larger, richer brown with a distinct eyering and heavy, distinct breast spots. The Veery is a brighter, paler brown, has a lighter face, contrasting with the crown, and has very pale, faint spotting on the breast. Swainson's Thrush has a buffy face and an eyering, and warmer brown upperparts. Hermit Thrush has an eyering and a contrasting reddish rump and tail. The color of the upperparts of this bird was grayish-brown, a little grayer and flatter than Swainson's Thrush. Unlike Hermit Thrushes, this bird's tail and rump were clearly not redder than the rest of the upperparts. The face was very plain gray, showing no contrast with the rest of the head and upperparts. There was neither an eyering nor paler lores, nor was there buffy on the face. The undersides were white with clear, dark gray spots, more distinctly spotted than Swainson's Thrush and Veery. I did not observe any buffy tones to the sides of the grayish breast and flanks as Swainson's Thrush would have.

Experience with Species:

I have seen all the Catharus thrushes in Colorado. I have also seen Gray-cheeked Thrushes in spring migration in Texas.

This report was prepared from notes made after observation.

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