

1997-66
ACCEPTED 7-0

SIGHT RECORD FORM

UNUSUAL RECORD

Species: Gray-cheeked Thrush - Catharus minimus

Date: 19 May 1997

Number of birds seen: 1 **Sex:** unknown

Plumage Breeding

rec'd 5-23-97

Locality: Crow Valley Campground, Pawnee National Grasslands **Elevation:** 4500-5000 ft.

Nearest town: Briggsdale **County:** Weld

Time observed: 1230-1245 (approx.)

Duration of observation: approx. 15 minutes

Other observers present when I was there:

Ferd and Jo Dirckx, 240 Jade St., Broomfield CO 80020, 469-0405

Observers who saw the bird independently:

None

Light conditions for first sighting:

Good light conditions; hazy sun, partly cloudy

Optical equipment:

Leica 10x42 binoculars; Zeiss 7x42 binoculars

Distance to bird:

20-50 feet; The distance was close enough for good close-up views with binoculars.

Photography:

None

Behavior:

The bird was actively foraging with a surprising number of Swainson's Thrushes in picnic area in Crow Valley Campground. (We estimated at least 30 Swainson's Thrushes in the campground area.) It was apparently not disturbed by our presence nearby. It moved from ground to low tree branches and back a number of times, allowing views from above, below, and eye level.

Description of bird:

Size: 7-8 inches length; same size as accompanying Swainson's Thrushes

Plumage: Top of head, back, and tail gray-brown; underparts light gray to white. Grayish cheeks without the "spectacled" appearance of the Swainson's Thrushes. Eye ring indistinct and/or incomplete; dark brown spots on gray background on breast, more sharply defined than on the Swainson's Thrushes with which it was associated. It was the lack of a pronounced eye ring which first drew our attention to this bird.

Song and call: not heard; all the thrushes were silent while we were birding in Crow Valley Campground.

Habitat in which bird was observed:

Cottonwood trees and smaller shrubs (willows, etc.) in the area south and east of the picnic area in Crow Valley Campground. Trees and shrubs were still leafing out, so that birds in trees and shrubs were seldom completely obscured by foliage. Viewing conditions were very good.

Elimination of similarly-appearing species:

Wood Thrush is reddish-brown on top of head, back and tail, brightest on top of head. Hermit Thrush has gray-brown head and back, with reddish tail. Spots on Veery's breast are less distinct.

Prior experience with this species:

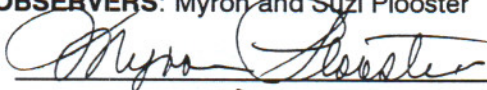
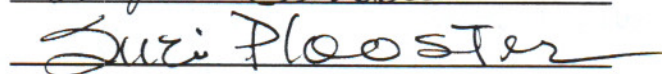
We observed Gray-cheeked Thrushes in High Island TX in April 1997 in the presence of both Wood Thrush and Swainson's Thrush.

Books and references consulted:

Field guides: Field Guide to the Birds of North America, National Geographic Society, first edition (1983) and Field Guide to Western Birds, Roger Tory Peterson (1990) were used in the field. Later, Volume 3 of Master Guide to Birding, The Audubon Society, and Stokes Field Guide to Birds, Western Region, and Birds of North America by Robbins, Bruun, and Zim (Golden Field Guide) were also consulted.

This report is written at 1800 hours on May 20, 1997, the day after the observation of the bird.

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