

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD _____

UNUSUAL RECORD XACCEPT 7-0
Red 1/5/00 wpl**Species:** Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minmus*)**Date:** 8 May 1999**Number seen:** one**Sex:** unknown**Plumage:** Basic**Locality:** Lamar Community College**Elevation:** about 3600'**Nearest town:** Lamar**County:** Prowers**Time observed:** about 08:40-08:45 MDT**Duration of observation:** about 15 seconds in two views

Description: I was birding with two others at Lamar Community College, when I found a Gray-cheeked Thrush near the western edge of the woodland behind the college. The bird was an obvious *Catharus* thrush (it walked, was smaller than an Am. Robin, and had pinkish legs and spotting on breast). I found the bird on the ground and got a short, but unobstructed view of most of the bird for about 12 seconds. It then flew off before either of my compatriots saw it. We dug around some more and I eventually refound it, only to have it almost immediately fly away again, never to be seen again by us. Harry was able to see the bird very briefly, but Doug did not see it either time I found it.

It was a cold-colored *Catharus*, being medium brownish-gray on the upperparts (head to tail tip with no contrast from back to rump and tail). The auriculars were grayer than the crown and there was a very thin, grayish ring (much thinner than those shown by the Swainson's Thrushes we had seen shortly before I saw this bird) around the dark eye. The bill was dark with a pale base, but I did not note the exact color. The throat was white and bordered by strong, blackish malar stripes. The chest was spotted with small, blackish spots, more obviously on the upper chest than on the lower chest. I saw no buffy wash on the chest spotting. The belly was white.

Similar species eliminated by description: Swainson's Thrush (eastern and western races) is eliminated by dorsal coloration and face pattern. Also, most Swainson's Thrushes have malar stripes that are brown and are thus not as strongly contrasting and obvious as those on Gray-cheeked. Those Swainson's with darker malar stripes still do not have black malars and they're usually edged with brown. The bird in question had a highly-contrasting, black malar. Hermit Thrush which does have a black malar, can be ruled out by dorsal coloration and face pattern and by lack of a contrastingly-colored tail. Veery is eliminated by dorsal coloration (eastern races) and by the bird having blackish spotting underneath (all races). Eliminating Bicknell's is more problematic, but the bird's tail and rump were the same color as was its back; Bicknell's has a slightly foxier-colored tail than back.

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): I heard none.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly-appearing species? I have seen in excess of 120 Gray-cheeked Thrushes and 100s to 1000s of the other North American *Catharus*, except for Bicknell's, of which I've seen about 10.

Light conditions: sun above and to my left or in front of me, but obstructed by the trees

Optical equipment used: Zeiss 7x42

Distance, and how estimated: estimated closest distance at 7 meters

Other observers who saw the bird with you: Harry Kahler

Other observers who saw the bird independently: others possibly saw this bird on previous days

If photographed, type of equipment and film: I did not photograph

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: none

b) after observation: none

Reporting observer: Tony Leukering

Signature:



Address: Colorado Bird Observatory, 13401 Picadilly Road, Brighton, CO 80601

Date report was written: This report was written on 11 December 1999 from notes written about 10 hours after the sighting.