

February 22, 2005

Gary & Christine DeWaghe
154 Lowell Ct.
Langhorne PA, 19047

Gary & Christine

At this point the records committee is not accepting records of Bicknell's Thrush without voice recordings. However having your description on file is good since at some point identification criteria for the species may be established. I do not think upperpart coloration nor bill tone are diagnostic for Bicknell's. The Birding articles were a bit confusing since those points were discussed but at best there are only average differences in these features. Better marks seem to be size and build. The most useful fact I took from the birding articles was that Gray-cheeked tend to be longer winged so that the primary extension past the tertials is greater than or equal to the length of the tertials (a ratio greater than or equal to 1) while Bicknell's is shorter winged with a ratio less than or equal to 1. Complicating this are the nominate Gray-cheeked Thrushes nesting in eastern Canada in Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia, I think, which are smaller and redder above, hence more like Bicknell's. While I have not seen one of these individuals knowingly the existence of them makes field identification of migrant Bicknell's uncertain, without sound recordings.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

5/01
G. DeWaghe

654A-03-2001

Bicknells Thrush:

FOUND BY GERRY DEWAGHE SEEN BY CHRISTINE DEWAGHE

My record in Tyler State Park was Sunday morning May 19, 1997 along the Conservation Trail. What follows is an expansion of my brief notes that state:

OBSERVED → 5/19/97 Tyler SP.
ON

Small Gray checked type thrush – olive/brown back with brown tail yellow orange mandible as extensive as GCT ?? not sure what Birding Mag. Means!!.
Bicknells based on size and color??

That morning I found a large number of thrushes along the North-facing side of the ravine, this area is wooded with a very high canopy and very little ground cover, and most of the low vegetation is either mountain laurel or rhododendron. Apart from apparent resident Wood Thrush and Veery, I also flush four (4) or five (5) Swainson's Thrushes and at least three (3) Gray-cheeked Thrushes. The thrushes were all in a very confined area may be 500 feet long and a lot of them were close to each other.

While observing the Gray-cheeked thrushes, it became evident that one of them was much smaller than the two others I also noticed at that time that the overall color of the bird was much warmer than that of the larger birds; I suspected at that point that I might have been looking at a Bicknell's Thrush. I followed the birds for a while and went back home to get my wife, a scope, and check on what field marks I should be looking for since at that time I was not very comfortable at identifying the bird.

One hour later we relocated the bird in the same general area. At that time we had better lighting with the sun higher in the sky. We followed the birds for the better part of 30 minutes with binoculars and scope. And noted the following:

Size: Definitely much smaller than the Gray-cheeked T. (one inch or more) and less chunky of appearance

Mantle color: Warm olive brown, browner than the brownest of the two GCT. (The two other Gray cheeks were not quite the same color, one being nearly as olive as the Swainson's T.)

Tail: Definite tone contrast between the color of the back and that of the tail, well noticeable when sunlit; the tail being warmer (brown) than the back of the bird.

Lower mandible: the base of the lower mandible was a dull deep yellow (pale orange), much more yellow than the GCT, I would call the GCT color more flesh colored than pale yellow. However, it was not evident that the yellow extended further on the Bicknell's than on the GTC. The yellow extended about 2/3 of the length of the lower mandible on both birds.

The bird did not sing nor call.

I called the bird a Bicknell's thrush mainly based on size and color alone.

I am still a bit puzzled by the articles in Birding when referring to the extent of yellow and tone of yellow between Bicknells and Gray-cheeked. Apart for the GC "aliciae" of

the North West , the eastern subspecies do not appear to show such a contrast (my opinion only). Some of the photos showed GCT with mandibles as yellow as that of the bird I am calling Bicknells Thrush. (go figure).

In May 1993, I have a record of a bird that could also have been a Bicknells. It was a single GCT type but the color was atypical??. I have it listed as a Gray-cheeked Thrush. It was also before all the hoopla about Bicknells.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Tabulation Form - Round One

Species: Bicknell's Thrush (Catharus bicknelli)

Date of Sighting: 19 May 1997 to 19 May 1997

Location: TYLER STATE PARK

County: BUCKS

Observer(s): Gerry DeWaghe, Christine DeWaghe

Date of Submission: 2001

Submitted by: Gerry DeWaghe

Written Description: Yes

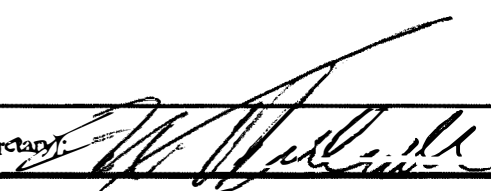
Photo: No

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead					X			
D. Heathcote					X			
P. Hess					X			
J. Stanley				X				
E. Witmer				X				
R. Leberman					X			
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS				3	4			
DECISION					X			

Comments: 0/7

Signature (Secretary): 

Date: 2/10/03