

















VARIED THRUSH (*Ixoreus naevius*)

Caledonia State Park, Franklin County PA / January 29, 2005

by Mike Fialkovich

This bird was present at Caledonia State Park since November 2004 and was seen by many birders since it was discovered.

It was visiting a feeding station at the park office for brief feeding sessions. I observed the bird feeding on the ground where it only stayed for about one minute before flying off into a nearby rhododendron thicket.

I viewed the bird from my car at approximately 20 feet and shot some video. The photographs submitted are taken from the video (video captures).

Description:

Plump, medium size bird with a thin bill. Build very similar to an American Robin but appeared heavier, slightly smaller with a shorter tail, but larger than any of the *Catharus* thrushes.

Head, back, wings and tail dark gray. Long orange supercillium, extending from just above the eye along the side of the head to the nape. The supercillium was lighter orange compared to the throat.

Throat and upper breast deep orange. Lower breast lighter orange, blending and fading to white on the belly. The flanks were patterned with gray and white, with some light orange. The pattern was formed from the gray edges to the feathers, forming whitish spots outlined in gray. Undertail coverts and vent white.

Broad, dark gray breast band, separating the orange throat from the breast.

Wings gray with two orange wingbars, and orange areas near the base of the folded primaries. All wing feathers appeared to be outlined in orange. The orange wing markings were the same hue as the supercillium.

Bill black, long and thin. Legs and feet pinkish/flesh.

As the bird flew, the orange was very obvious forming large patches across the wings.

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

SPECIES Varied Thrush *Ixoreus naevius*
Subspecies monotypic
NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1
SEX(ES) male
AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) 1st winter
DATE & TIME OF OBSERVATION December 19, 2004, 1:30-1:45 pm
present December 11, 2004-January 16, 2005
LOCATION Caledonia State Park, Franklin County, PA
EXACT SITE feeders at the entrance

OBSERVER REPORTING Dr. Nikolas K. Haass (NH)
Address: 4720 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19143
Telephone: 215-476-3714
E-Mail: nhaass@yahoo.com

OTHER OBSERVERS several others
HABITAT hemlocks and rhododendron; bird feeder
DISTANCE TO BIRD approx. 15 m
VIEWING CONDITIONS clear sky, +4 °C, sunlight from the back
OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Leica 12x50 BA; Zeiss Diascope 85*TL 20-60x

DESCRIPTION
Size und Structure: typical thrush
Plumage: brownish-black crown, lores and ear-coverts; bright orange supercilium and throat; wide dark grayish-brown necklace, fading towards the median line; orangey scalloped breast (due to whitish bases of the orange feathers); flanks scalloped whitish-grayish (whitish feathers with dark grayish fringes); white belly and undertail coverts (the latter with a few blackish spots); grayish-black mantle; brownish-black wings with orange wing-bars; buffish-orange tips to tertials, greater and median coverts; brownish tail.
bare parts: iris black; upper mandible black; lower mandible black with flesh base; legs and feet flesh
accompanying birds: Black-capped *Poecile atricapilla* and Carolina Chickadee *P. carolinensis*, Tufted Titmouse *Baeolophus bicolor*, White-breasted Nuthatch *Sitta carolinensis*, Purple Finch *Carpodacus purpureus*, American Goldfinch *Carduelis tristis*, Northern Cardinal *Cardinalis cardinalis*, Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*

BEHAVIOR
feeds on the ground; performs 'leaf-tossing' during foraging

VOCALIZATIONS none heard

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY photographs by Bob Moul

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES
American Robin: broken white eye-ring; no eyebrow; no wing-bars; white throat with black streaks; no necklace; yellow bill
Head and face pattern distinctive for Varied Thrush, broad orange wing-bars separate it from any other thrush with orange underparts.

DISCUSSION

Straightforward species identification. However, Michael Lanzone and Bob Mulvihill identified the bird as a hatching year male, not a female: Typical of the 1st prebasic molt in most thrushes, the bird appears (in the photos posted) to have replaced all of its lesser and median coverts, and 2-3 inner greater coverts (it is difficult to count exactly how many from the photos). The rest of the bird's wing is juvenal. Given that the bird is an immature the brightness of its plumage strongly indicates that it is male (too bright for a HY female).

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES

NH is familiar with Varied Thrush from several observations in CA.

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION?

yes, because all field marks proved the identification

REFERENCES CONSULTED

The bird was easily identified without any literature. For confirmation of its age following references were consulted:

ALSOP, F.J. (2001): Birds of North America. New York. • CLEMENT, P. & R. HATHWAY (2000): Thrushes. - London. • KOLBEINSSON, Y. (2004): The Varied Thrush in Iceland. Birding World 17: 206-208. • NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (4th ed. 2002): Field Guide to the Birds of North America. - Washington D.C. • SIBLEY, D. (2000): The Sibley Guide to Birds. New York.

DATE OF THIS REPORT

December 19, 2004

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER

Nikolas Haass (sent per e-mail)

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Varied Thrush (Ixoreus naevius)

Date of Sighting: 21 December 2004 to 2 April 2005

Location: CALEDONIA STATE PARK

County : FRANKLIN

Observer(s): Multiple observers

Date of Submission: 2004

Submitted by: Mike Fialkovich, Geoff Malosh, Bob Moul, Sharon Pulcinella, Nikolas Haass

Written Description: Yes

Photo: Yes

Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut	X							
D. Heathcote	X							
P. Guris	X							
J. Stanley	X							
E. Witmer	X							
R. Leberman	X							
M. Sharp	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

7/0

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

11/29/05