


BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Curve-billed thrasher (Toxostoma curvirostre) 2. Number 1
 3. Location Solon, IA
 4. Date: 11-17-80 5. Time Bird Seen: 10:50 AM to 10:55 AM
(hide Tom Kent)
 6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
Bird about 11" long, build similar to brown thrasher: plump elongate body, long tail ~~feathers~~ ^{feathers} ~~square-tipped~~ ^{square-tipped with rounded corners}. Bill long, markedly decurved; eye bright yellow. Bill and legs dark. Plumage dull brownish-grey, darker on upper parts and paler on breast + belly. Irregular grey spotting on chest. Trace of white at corners of tail. Two faint pale wingbars.
[Added later, from memory: spots on chest of white tear-drop shape: ]
eye color not typical, according to Peterson, Field Guide to W. Birds and Monson and Phillips, Birds of Arizona.
 7. Description of voice, if heard: —
 8. Description of behavior: eating at bird feeder, perching atop feeder.
 9. Habitat - general: mixed upland/timber / houses.
specific: yard with small trees; adjacent to brushy creek bottom.
 10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
The two other grey, speckle-breasted thrashers, Bendire's and Sage, have smaller, less decurved bills; Sage has much stronger ventral marking and wing-bars, is smaller.
 11. Distance (how measured)?
15' - 45' (est.)
 12. Optical equipment: 8x40 binoculars, 75mm telephoto
 13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Bright sunny day; bird at a 90° angle to line connecting observer and sun.
 14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
Have seen many curve-billed thrashers (AZ, TX); have seen Bendire's once (AZ), Sage once (CO).
 15. Other observers: Tom Kent
 16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
 17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
Mrs. [unclear] identified it but doubted her judgment and called me; TK and I confirmed it.
 18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Robbins + Zim - Birds of N. Am. - did not affect it; consulted after notes taken.
Monson + Phillips: Birds of Arizona ~~was consulted~~: wing bars, tail spots, strong spotting suggest in of the eastern sub-species (T. c. curvirostre: e. AZ, s. N.M., e. TX, n I. c. oberholseri: south TX).
 19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 10 hrs. This account transcribed from notes made immediately after the observation.
- Signature: Mitchell C. Newlon Address: 408 Wales St.
- Date: ~~11-17-80~~ 11-17-80 City, State: Iowa City, IA 52240