

Sage Thrasher

26 Dec 1964

West Des Moines, Polk Co., IA

7 people

to 2 Jan 1965; IBL 35:6, letters (Kennedy, Brooke)

Record Number: 81-BT

Classification: A-D

LETTERS

Joeseeph C. Kennedy to Pete Petersen, 20 May 1981

Margret Brooke to Pete Petersen, 4 May 1981

REFERENCES

Christmas Bird Count: IBL 35:6

VOTE (1981) 2-II, 3-IV, 1-V, 1-VI

IV, no detail, but competent observers.

VI, no details.

IV, almost no details - suggest checking with Margaret Brooke to find out who saw it and get more details (if any exist).

IV, observed by 7 people but the reporter does not describe the bird.

IV, no details of bird given; no mention of who the 7 people were.

REVOTE (by mail 1981, after letters received from Brooke and Kennedy): 3-II, 4-III

II, details quite sufficient.

II, well described (with new notes), many observers.

III, Kennedy's notes are sketchy, but there are sufficient details to be diagnostic. However not classified as II because a full description does not exist.

Brown, W. H. 1965. The 1964 Christmas bird census in Iowa. IBL 35:6.

11. DES MOINES (Greenwood Park, Airport, Clark's, Walnut and Brown's Woods, Flint Acres Access, Margo Frankel Woods, Fairgrounds, Waterworks Park, Glendale and Pinehill Cem., Fisher's Lake, Camp Dodge, Brenton's Slough). Dec. 26; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Temp. 2-20 F.; wind 9 m.p.h. from NW. Clear, no snow on ground, ponds frozen, some open water in rivers. Observers (14) in 4 parties; Mrs. A. J. Binsfeld, Wm. Boller, Margaret Brooke, Woodward H. Brown, Oliver Graves, Lester Haskell, Dave Hurd, Joe Kennedy, J. C. Lamb, Dr. Robt. Norton, Dr. and Mrs. Harold Peasley, Mary Elizabeth Peck, Mary Ellen Warters.

Sage Thrasher was observed by seven people, and on-the-spot comparisons of the field marks with illustration and text description in Peterson's Western Guide were made. The pipit was well observed in the same area by the same group.

JOSEPH C. KENNEDY
13717 CHEF MENTEUR, APT. 203
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70129

504-254-1227

rcd. 5/20/81

81-BT

Dear Pete:

I have records for the song thrasher for 12/26/64, 12/30/64 and 1/2/65. My notes are rather scanty but refer to the fact that I had seen the bird in California a week earlier while I was at school.

Things noted were

- a. thrasher
- b. white tail spots
- c. barely curved bill & short for thrasher
- d. 2 distinct wing bars
- e. much smaller than brown thrasher or catbird
- f. heavy breast streaking

The notes were apparently written on the 2nd visit on the 30th to back up those of the Christmas concert.

Hope the above is of help & if any other records are needed I can probably dig them up

Joe Kennedy

5/10/81

81-BT

Mrs. Dwight Brooke
126 - 51st Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50312

May 4, 1981

Dear Pete: I got the Christmas Census dope on the Sage Thrasher from Eugene Armstrong who now has our records. As you know from the Annotated Checklist the bird was at the same location from December 26 1964 til Jan. 2, 1965. I must not have gone back there to see it after the census as I have nothing in my bird diary to indicate that. The seven persons in the party who were all together at the time it was spotted were: Albert Berkowitz

- Woody Brown
- Margaret Brooke
- Joe Kennedy
- Dick Mooney
- Dr. Robert Norton
- Mary Ellen Warters

The bird was working about in a multiflora hedge according to the article in the Des Moines Register which cited it as the most unusual sighting of the day. The hedge came right up to the road and we all observed the bird at quite close range for quite a while as I remember it. I have no memory of what books we consulted but I presume someone had a western Peterson along. We all had very satisfying looks at the bird and there was evidently no question in our minds as to what he was. It was a life bird for me. I have no idea how many of the others may have had previous experience with it. I know Albert had done considerable western birding.

The competence of Albert and Woody can certainly not be questioned. Bob Norton did his internship and surgical residency here and was a very expert birder. He now is chief of plastic surgery in the public health Indian hospital in Phoenix. Joe Kennedy is a very gungho young birder who had birded starting as a small boy. He has a keen eye. Mary Ellen Warters had ornithology at Oberlin and has a doctorate in entomology. She is a very cautious and fine observer who now lives in California. I hope the undoubted expertise of most of these people will make up for the lack of details after 15 years. If you want any further dope I could write to Joe K. Neither Woody and Mary nor I have heard anything from Bob Norton for a long time. He has had some great tragedies in his life. One son was killed in an auto (struck by a drunk Indian girl) and the other son was also injured a year or so later in a car and has lain in a coma for about two years. I sort of hate to bother Bob on this.

note
Joe K
5/7/81

Let me know if I can help any more on this matter. This should teach me to keep more complete records.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann

P.S. In one envelope.
This one date back to the
Spring Ice melting in D.M.!!

P.S. The location was about a mile west of Rovers' Woods at what we call "Bluebird Lane". It's not exactly a good hunting spot. Perhaps because of the overhanging