

1984 rc

What species? Varied Thrush Adult Male How many? oneLocation? Limecreek Township, Washington Co.; 816 13th St., Wellman, Ia.Type of habitat? ForestWhen? date(s): January 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18 time: 7:05 A.M. to 4:25 PMWho? your name and address: Barbara Henderson 816 13th Street Wellman, Ia.

others with you: _____

others before or after you: Ruth Eash, Rick & Jan Hollis, Roy & Mildred Crossott, Ida Grout, Junelle Peters, Eury Henderson

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

Length, 10"; shape of robin; Crown and back, slate color; wing, dusky with slate gray edgings, the middle coverts with a large terminal spot of tawny, outermost tail feathers with a whitish spot at tip of inner web; Conspicuous stripe of tawny from upper eyelid to nape; lores below eyes and sides of head were slate black; cheeks, chin, throat, and breast uniform tawny, the chest crossed by a band of slate black, resembling a necklace; abdomen, white; under tail-coverts brownish-slate-gray basally, extensively white terminally, the white suffused with tawny; feet, pale orange; bill, brownish-black; iris, brown (aided in the above description by references in the BIRDS OF NO. AMERICA)

I heard no voice from this bird. I noted his arrival and departure times throughout the day. The earliest he appeared to feed was 7:05 AM and the latest departure time was 4:25 PM. He preferred to feed on the ground, we think eating white proso millet. The first day I saw him, he drank from the bird bath, there after he ate snow. He would feed with a horde of E. sparrows. Even though they were very flighty, he most often would remain on the ground eating. He showed some aggressive action toward a sparrow who got too close while eating. He ate very rapidly, staying about 5 minutes each time, then flying to a branch in a large sycamore to sit a few minutes then fly to the south. His evening feedings were more than five minutes. Most times he came at intervals of an hour. He followed very closely this routine until the last sighting on the early evening of the 18th when he flew to the north instead of the usual southern flight. I never was able to determine his night time roost nor where he spent the days when he was away from our house. During a feeding when the food must have been sparse, he dug around with his bill, much as a robin seeking a worm; he also scratched with his feet once.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Viewed in sunlight; snow flurries from a distance of 22 feet as measured with a tape. Some observers used binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: NoneReferences and persons consulted before writing description: Rick Hollis and
BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA* How long before field notes made? 2 days after this form completed? January 20, 1984
~~birds departure~~

MAIL TO: T. H. Kent, Field Reports Editor, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City IA 52240

* Kept daily log from the first sighting.

Glancing out of our north kitchen window on the cold tenth day of January 1984, I was very surprised to see an adult male varied thrush. At first my thought was--"What is the matter with that robin?" No, it couldn't be a robin even though its actions were much the same as a robin. Out came the bird book and there it was--a varied thrush. I knew we had something "special" I consulted Gladys Black and she suggested that I call some members of the IOU who live in Iowa City, which I did. I then called my friend, Ruth Eash to come and share with me. We watched it feed and drink from the bird bath. The first time it was seen was 8:55 AM and seemed to be eating the white proso millet which was on the cement driveway. He was observed there by Eury Henderson also as we ate lunch about 11:30. We did not see it again that day after the noon hour.

On Jan. 11 and 12, I kept watch where he had been seen, but no sight of him. Friday morning, January 13, I was pleased to discover him eating on the east side of our house, a distance of 22 feet away. That was at 10:15 A.M. He appeared again at 11:35 and 4:30. At the late afternoon he ate furiously then flew to a branch in a large sycamore and ate the fluffy snow which had fallen the previous night. He cleaned his bill then flew to the southeast--perhaps to a stand of large evergreens about a block away.

Saturday morning, Jan. 14 he was first sighted at 8:55 again at 10:35, 3:50 and final feeding at 4:15. This time he flew straight south as he left.

Sunday, Jan. 15, Eury spotted him at 7:35. He was seen again at 9:55; 10:35; 11:25; 12:30 & 3:14. This day he was observed by Jan and Rick Hollis of Iowa City and Roy Crossett of Wellman. He flew south as he departed.

Mon, Jan. 16 He was observed at the following times: 7:36; 8:55; 10:30; 12:30; 2:50; 3:14. Mildred Crossett observed him this date. June Goschke of the WELLMAN ADVANCE came and tried to take a picture of him but was unsuccessful as he didn't appear during the time she was here. As he left for evening he again flew south.

Tues., Jan 17 he appeared at 7:14; 8:38; 10:30; 3:00 and 4:15. This day after the 3:14 feeding he flew to the neighbor's roof and ate snow, flew back to tree sat a few minutes and flew south.

Wed. Jan. 18, he appeared just as the juncos, tree sparrows and cardinals were arriving at 7:05--other times were: 8:15; 1:26; 2:16; 2:58-4:05 to 4:21. At the last feeding he ate with fervor--alternately feeding of the ground then flying to various limbs to perch. As he left this day, he flew to the north. This day he was observed by Ida Grout, Riverside and Junelle Peters, Monticello. Kathy Cuddeback, Washington Co. naturalist/environmental Educ. Coordinator came, but was not successful in seeing the bird.

Thurs. Jan. 19 and Friday Jan., 20th he was not seen.

I was never able to ascertain where he roosted at night nor during the day between feedings. He ate comfortably with dozens of sparrows, remaining calm and continuing to feed even though the sparrows would take flight at the slightest bit of noise or movement. Once when the food must have been sparse he used his bill and looked like a robin going after a worm. I also saw him scratch with his feet. He stood his ground with the sparrows and would chase them if they got too aggressive.

I became very fond of this bird and missed him terribly when he left. I hope he will find his way back to the Pacific northwest. He made the cold days of Jan. much more interesting.