

Sage Thrasher

23 Sep 1985

Waterloo, Black Hawk Co., IA

*Moore*****

to 10/13, P-187 Petersen; IBL 55:128; 56:44, Moore 1986

Record Number: 85-21
Classification: A-P

DOCUMENTATIONS

Francis L. Moore, 23 Sep

Thomas H. Kent, 24 Sep

Thomas J. Staudt, 24 Sep

Jim Fuller, 24 Sep

Steve Dinsmore, 24 Sep

Carl J. Bendorf, 25 Sep

Mark Proescholdt, 28 Sep

Beth Proescholdt, 28 Sep

Robert K. Myers, 28 Sep

PHOTOGRAPH

P. C. Petersen, P-0187 (IBL 56(1) cover)

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 55:128

Moore, F. L. 1986. Sage Thrasher in Waterloo. IBL 56:28-29.

Photograph: IBL 56(1) cover (P-0187)

Records Committee: IBL 56:44

VOTE: 3-I-P, 4-II

II, good description

I-P, One in Minn. in May possibly indicates some sort of movement of this species this year. This was a good find as it would have been very easy to overlook.

I-P, Photo enclosed for file.

I, Good descriptions.

II, Well documented sighting (I-P with photos, I assume).



I received a call about a Sage Thrasher in Waterloo at 5:10 p.m. on 23 September 1985. Russell Hays was calling from the Boating Center at Cedar River Park close to the Iowa Public Service power plant near downtown Waterloo. I grabbed my binoculars, telescope, and camera and hurried out the door in order to get a look at the bird before dark.

Tom Stone Jr. had been walking along the flood control dike on the north side of the Cedar River that goes from the power plant to Cedar River Park, when he flushed a bird at the edge of the rip-trap at the east end of the park. He followed it to the Boating Center and got a good look at it. He identified it as a Sage Thrasher and went to get his dad, Tom Stone Sr., and Russell Hays. I arrived within 15 minutes of Russell's call, in time to see the bird before dark.

The bird (see Front Cover) was similar in color to a Water Pipit with medium-dark gray back, streaked breast, and buffy flanks. The wings and tail were a little more brownish-gray than the back and top of the head. The face was lighter with an eye ring broken at the rear and with a darker auricular area below and behind the eye. The bill and feet were black. The upper tail coverts were the same color as the back. The throat was white with a distinct malar streak on each side. The breast was white with heavy black streaks. The streaks were heaviest on the upper breast, fading to smaller streaks on the lower belly. The white breast faded to buff on the belly and flanks. The undertail coverts were buffy with some dark streaks. The feather edging of the greater and median wing coverts was pale gray. The last three or four rectrices were tipped with white, a feature only noticeable in flight. The light yellow iris did not show up well in subdued light, but was seen well later in bright light. This bird appeared to be in adult plumage with some feather wear.

The bird was wary and usually difficult to approach. It often remained hidden in trees near the Boating Center, but also was seen feeding around the parking lot and lawn near the building. At first the bird did not have use of its right leg; later it recovered. The bird was seen by many birders over the next three weeks, last on 13 October.

Sage Thrashers breed in arid areas of western United States, where they are said to be common. They occur in dry sagebrush, rabbit-brush, and scrub of the open plains, and in rocky canyons of the foothills west of the Great Plains. In winter they inhabit dense thickets, lowland scrub, and deserts of southwestern United States and Mexico.

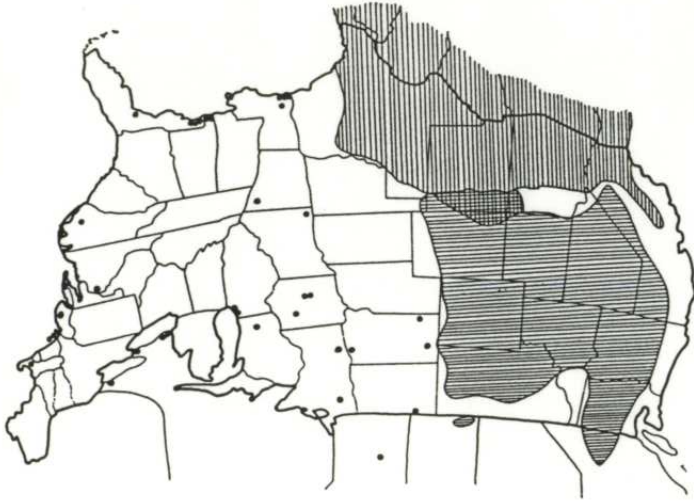
Sage Thrashers feed mainly on insects, but also eat small fruits, and sometimes vegetables. On breeding grounds, they are said to be wary, but are tamer when visiting gardens and city parks during migration.

The normal range and location of eastern vagrant records of the Sage Thrasher are shown on the map. (The ranges are a composite from several texts. The vagrant records are from bold-faced entries in *Audubon Field Notes and American Birds*, 1950 to 1984, and from books on regional and state birds.)

Records from the western parts of the Great Plains states (North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma) are close to the eastern edge of the species normal range. Vagrant records are distributed east from the northern part of the breeding range and along the Great Lakes, East Coast, and Gulf Coast. This pattern suggests that vagrants pass through Iowa without stopping, probably due to the lack

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Summer and winter ranges of Sage Thrasher and eastward vagrant records.



of vagrant traps. There have been only two previous Iowa Records, both in Des Moines in December (Dinsmore et al. 1984). Based on all the eastern vagrant records, future sightings of this species in Iowa would be most likely to occur from October to January. Other western vagrants, such as the Black-headed Grosbeak, show a similar pattern of fall vagrancy. Another vagrant thrasher in Iowa is the Curve-billed Thrasher, a species that has also been reported three times in the state (Newton 1981). The Curve-billed Thrasher, rarely has been found east of Iowa. The day before the bird was found there was a strong front with high winds of 50-60 mph from the west and northwest. It seems likely that the bird was blown in by this front. It was a matter of luck that a capable birder happened to be in the right spot to find it, and this raises a most interesting question: how many undiscovered vagrants occur in Iowa?

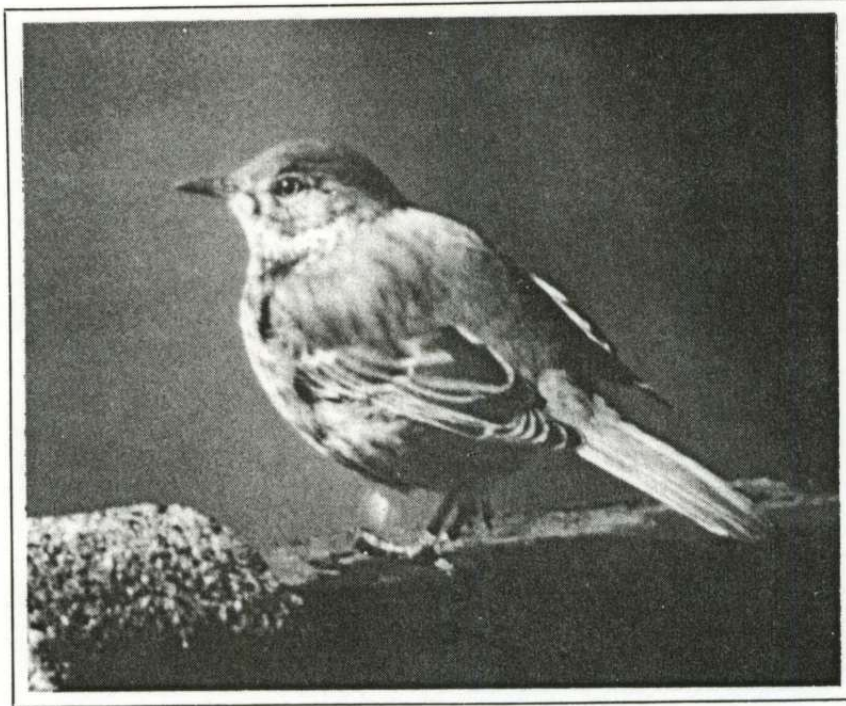
LITERATURE CITED

- Dinsmore, J. J. et al. 1984. Iowa Birds. Iowa State University Press.
 Newton, M. C. 1981. Curve-billed Thrashers in Iowa. Iowa Bird Life, 51:23.
 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703

56-21

IOWA BIRD LIFE

Winter 1986 Volume 56 Number 1



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

What species? Sage Thrasher (Oreoscoptes montanus) How many? 1 AdultLocation? East end of Cedar River Park, at The Boating Center, Waterloo, IAType of habitat? Spends most of its time in a Hawthorne tree and near the building at The Boating CenterWhen? date(s): September 23, 1985 time: 5:25 pm to 6:05 pmWho? your name and address: Francis L. Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, IA 50703
First sighting timeothers with you: Russell Hays, Tom Stone, Tom Stone, Jr.others before or after you: Tom Kent, Tom Staudt, Cal & Bernie Knight next morning

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.

I received a call from Russell Hays and immediately went to check the bird out. Tom Stone, Jr. had been walking a flood control dike along the Cedar River near downtown Waterloo when he had flushed a strange looking bird; he finally got a good look at it and decided that it most likely was a Sage Thrasher. He then got ahold of his dad and Russell Hays who called me to verify the sighting. It did not take very long to locate the bird and we got very good looks at it through my telescope. The bird was very shy and would not allow a very close approach at first. From a distance of approx. 40 feet I noticed the following:

The bird had color suggesting the color of a Water Pipit with the back being a medium dark gray color and the breast being streaked with black and the flanks having a buffy flush to them. Upon closer examination with the 20X scope I noticed: The bird was a medium to medium dark gray on the upper parts, including the wings, tail, back and top of the head. The wings and tail were maybe a little more brownish-gray than the back and top of the head. The face was a lighter color and showed an almost complete eyering, broken only at the rear of the eye. There was also a darker auricular area below and behind the eye. The bill and feet were black. The upper tail coverts were the same color as the back. The throat was white with a fairly distinct malar streak on each side of the throat. The breast was whitish with a lot of heavy blackish streaking on it. The streaking being heaviest on the upper breast and fading to smaller streaks down to the belly where there were not very many streaks near the vent area. The whitish color of the breast also took on a buffy color as it approached the belly and on the flanks. The undertail coverts were buffy with some dark streaking in them. The feather edging of the greater and median wing coverts were a pale gray to whitish

Similar species and how eliminated: No other species is of this size and coloration to confuse with this species.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: N/A

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: Bright overcast. Seen from approx. 40 feet at closest sighting using 10X40 Leitz binoculars and 20X60 Bushnell stock mounted telescope. Several days later seen from approx. 25 feet using Celestron C90 Telescope with 33X eyepiece.

Previous experience with species and similar ones: Have lots of experience with Northern Mockingbird im., Brown Thrasher and have seen one Curve-billed Thrasher

References and persons consulted before writing description: None

How long before field notes made? On the spot this form completed? 24 hours

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

color, not really becoming a wing bar but a very distinct and highly noticeable feather edging. The tail had about the last three or four of the retrices tipped in white which was noticeable only when the bird was in flight, as far as I could see. The bird was very flighty when approached and would fly from quite a distance if approached without the advantage of some type of cover. When it flew the white edging of the tail was suggestive of Lark Sparrow. The bird had a characteristic thrasher-like flight and flew like the Brown Thrashers of which I am familiar. Its feeding habits were thrasher-like; darting out from the cover from time-to-time to pick at something on the ground or in the grass. The bird was smaller than a Robin that was close by at one time, but not by more than an inch or inch and a half at most. The pupil of the eye was black with a light yellow iris which did not show up very good in subdued light. In bright light you could see the yellow iris very well. The bird had a habit of staying near the Boating Center building, and seemed to make a Hawthorne tree its base of operation. It was also seen in an Ash tree on the East end of the building and a Juniper, also located on the East end of the building. It frequented the parking lot at times and the lawn around the building at times.

The bird had some type of injury that made the use of its right leg almost useless. It would not put all of its weight on the right leg and would hold it up in the air when it was hopping around or perched in one of the trees around the building. It did seem to be finding enough food to keep it in good shape. This last paragraph was added on October 2, 1985 after watching it for some time. It seemed to be in good health and doing very well at this time.

The last day that the bird was seen was on October 13, 1985.

DOCUMENTATION OF EXTRAORDINARY BIRD SIGHTING

Sage Thrasher, 24 Sept. 1985, Waterloo, IA

Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52240

Other observers: Francis Moore, Tom Staudt, Tom Stone Jr., Bernie and Cal Knight at time, many others later.

Time: 7:15 to 7:50 AM

Habitat: Along Cedar River at Boating Center, Park, and baseball field.

Description: "About size of catbird. Overall gray thrasher with short thin gray bill slightly drooped at tip. Bill about same length as loral distance. Center of eye dark (I didn't make note of iris color). Top of head and back medium gray. Slight, faint eye ring. Chin clear light gray-white. Underparts gray-white with heavy streaks on breast and flanks. Lower belly and undertail coverts unstreaked. One thin wing bar. Some other indistinct markings on wing with light edging to feathers. Tail long and darker gray than rest of bird. Outer tips of tail white from beneath. In flight, tail rounded with prominent white outer tips. Slight buff color to flanks. Breast streaks gray brown--brownier than rest of bird."

Song: Not heard.

Behavior: Found roosting near building and then viewed in tree for some time. Later bird seen on fence and in parking lot. Not particularly secretive. Would flush when approached too closely.

Conditions: as close as 20 feet, heavy overcast in early AM, 10x binoculars.

Similar species: size, small bill, and gray color eliminate other thrashers; size and lack of large white wing patches eliminate mockingbird.

Agreement: yes

Previous experience: life bird

References/time used: used National Geographic Guide before, during and after sighting.

Time of notes/typed: Notes taken during observation period as quoted. Typed 10/3/85.

Photos: most were moved, but a few are identifiable.

What species? SAGE Thrasher How many? 1Location? WaterlooType of habitat? developed riverside park & boat dock open areaWhen? date(s): Tuesday September 24, 1985 time: 7:30 to 8:00Who? your name and address: Thomas J. Staudtothers with you: Tom Kent, Cal & Bernie Knight,others before or after you: Tom Stank, Francis Martz

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.

In profile the bird had the appearance and posture of a Thrush with a long tail. The bird had a short fairly straight dark bill, dark brownish-gray head with buffy cheeks surrounding a darker auricular area. The eye-color was dark. The upper parts were an even gray-brown over the back with a darker gray rump and tail. Two thin inconspicuous chalky white wing bars were observed. The tips of the tail feathers were white. This was more easily seen in flight.

Underparts were white, heavily spotted in breast area, with longer, thinner spaced streaks on flanks and belly. Under tail coverts had no streaks. The sides of the breast and the flanks were ~~buffy~~ buffy.

The bird appeared to have an injured right leg.

The flight was similar to a Brown Thrasher with the tail swinging up and down.

Similar species and how eliminated:

wing bars eliminate all Thrush. A young mockingbird would have large wing patches. Small bill eliminates other Thrashers.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

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

cloudy to overcast light rain 10-80 yds following the wire from location to location 8X6 binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: none with Sage Thrasher

References and persons consulted before writing description:

How long before field notes made? after observation this form completed? 2 hrs

What species? SAGE THRASHER How many? 1Location? BOATING CENTER AND JOE STRAUB FIELD - WATERLOOType of habitat? RIVERFRONT AND BASEBALL PLAYING FIELDSWhen? date(s): TUES SEPT. 24 time: 4:30 to 5:30 PMWho? your name and address: JIM FULLER, 6 LONGVIEW KNOLL, IOWA CITYothers with you: JOHN HOOPERHEIDE (DES MOINES) - PHOTOGRAPHED BIRD

others before or after you: _____

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.

GENERAL SIZE - A LITTLE SMALLER AND NOT QUITE AS PLUMP AS A ROBIN. TOP OF HEAD AND BACK - UNSTREAKED GRAY. TWO LIGHT WINGBARS. LIGHT EYE RING AND LIGHT TAN EYE STRIPE WITH A BROWN CHEEK PATCH. MOST OF BREAST WAS HEAVILY STREAKED BLACK-BROWN COLOR OVER PURPLISH OR TAN COLOR. (DEPENDING ON LIGHT CONDITIONS) STREAKING NOT APPARENT ON THROAT OR UNDER TAIL. TAIL WAS SHORT FOR A THRASHER AND WHEN BIRD FLEW WHITE AREAS WERE EVIDENT AT ITS CORNERS. BILL WAS DARK, SHORT FOR A THRASHER AND SLIGHTLY CURVED (LENGTH ABOUT 3/4"). LEGS WERE DARK AND BIRD NEVER STOOD ON THE RIGHT LEG, RATHER HELD IT UP AS IF IT WAS INJURED. ITS FLIGHT WAS ALWAYS LOW TO THE GROUND AND THEN UP TO A PERCH. IT WAS ALSO JERKY AND UP-AND-DOWN SLIGHTLY. IT SPENT MOST OF TIME PERCHING ON A CHAIN LINK FENCE AND WOULD NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO APPROACH CLOSER THAN 10-15 YARDS. NO SOUND WAS HEARD ON 10/4/85 A RUSTY BROWN NOTICED UNDER TAIL.

Similar species and how eliminated: MOLKINGBIRD - LARGER SIZE & UNSTREAKED BROWN THRASHER - GENERAL COLOR, RED EYE, AND GREATER - BREAST TAIL AND BILL LENGTH.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment: SUNNY - VIEWED FROM VARIOUS DIRECTIONS IN REGARD TO THE SUN AT 10-30 YARDS WITH 9X36 BINOCULARS

Previous experience with species and similar ones: SAW THIS PAST SUMMER IN UTAH AND COLORADO

References and persons consulted before writing description: PETERSON - WESTERN AND NATL GEOGRAPHIC

How long before field notes made? IMMEDIATE this form completed? 3 HOURS

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

85-21

What species? Sage Thrasher How many? 1Location? Cedar River Park, Waterloo, Black Hawk CountyType of habitat? gravel parking lot with a few scattered trees along riverWhen? date(s): 24 Sep. 1985 time: 6:00 PM to 6:10 PMWho? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore 4024 Arkansas Dr. Ames IA 50010others with you: Francis Moore, Waterlooothers before or after you: m. ob.

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.

Bird slightly smaller than American Robin.

The back, head, wings and tail were a sooty gray color, except for a light stripe through the eye, a faint white wing patch, and white corners on the tail.

The underparts were white with lots of dark, heavy streaking.

The legs were seen poorly, but were thought to be dark.

The bill was dark, rather short, and slightly curved.

Similar species and how eliminated:

All other thrashers eliminated by size, white wing bars, and white-cornered tail.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain: —

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

Light was o.k. with sun behind me on a clear day. Estimated viewing distance was 40-50 ft. I used Nikon 8x23 binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

This is the first Sage Thrasher I have ever seen.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

NCS Field Guide to Birds of North America

How long before field notes made? — this form completed? 3 hours

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

BIRD DOCUMENTATION FORM

CARL J. BENDORF
825 7TH AVENUE
IOWA CITY IA 52240

SPECIES: SAGE THRASHER NUMBER: 1
LOCATION: Waterloo (Cedar River Park) COUNTY: Blackhawk
DATE: 25 September 1985 TIME: 10:30 AM TO 10:40 AM

HABITAT: Seen in Crabapple tree next to Boating Center Building.

DESCRIPTION: Approximately the size and shape of a Gray Catbird, perhaps a bit plumper. The top of the head, neck and back were a uniform brownish-gray. The tail was a little darker with some white on the tip. The end of the tail was quite ragged, but was generally squarish or even slightly notched.. The folded wings were also darker than the basic back color and the wing feathers had narrow pale edgings. The iris of the eye was yellow-orange with a dark pupil and there was a very narrow circle of light skin around the eye. The bill was dark and straight and was about the same length as the loreal distance. The base color of the underparts was a light buff. There were distinct and large brown streaks on the breast—the size of the streaks got larger further down the breast. The throat was relatively free from streaking. The cheek area was lighter than the rest of the head. The lower belly and undertail coverts were mainly unstreaked but there was brighter buff color here. The legs were dark and the right leg appeared to be injured.

It was a cool rainy day and the bird first flushed from a small pine tree and flew into the crabapple tree and sat very quietly allowing close approach. The bird was fluffed up against the cold and looked a bit bedraggled and not entirely healthy. I observed the bird for perhaps ten minutes and then left.

DISCUSSION: The clearly streaked breast identifies this bird as a thrasher (except for juvenile N. Mockingbird which would have shown the white wing patches in flight) and the short and straight bill narrows it down to two species. The Bendire's Thrasher is normally lightly streaked on the upper breast and is mainly off white below. This bird was heavily streaked down to the lower belly and had a distinctly buff color to the underparts. The white on the tail tip should also help to eliminate Bendire's Thrasher.

Most of the field guides mention white wing bars for Sage Thrasher, but these were either absent or not very apparent. Despite being mentioned in the text in the NGS guide, for example, the illustration in that same guide shows only a fairly narrow light edge to the greater and median wing coverts, and not really much of a wing bar. The lack of streaking on the back of this bird would seem to indicate an adult and not a juvenile bird.

AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT OF OTHERS: Seen by many before and after.

LIGHT CONDITIONS: Overcast and light rain.

DISTANCE: 10 yards (Estimated) EQUIPMENT: 7X binos

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND SIMILAR SPECIES: First for this species. Saw Bendire's Thrasher in 1981

REFERENCES, PERSONS CONSULTED BEFORE WRITING DESCRIPTION: None

FIELD NOTES MADE? Immediately after sighting.

THIS FORM DONE? 2 days

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Sage Thrasher How many? 1Location? Cedar River Park - WaterlooType of habitat? Trees beside small building, parking lots, along Cedar RiverWhen? date(s): Sept. 28, 1985 time: 7:00 a.m. to 7:40 a.m.Who? your name and address: Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Francis Moore, Bob Meyers, Beth Proescholdtothers before or after you: Cal and Bernie Knight (before), Hank Zaletel (after)
Eugene and Eloise Armstrong (before)

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.

This bird had a grayish back, a heavily streaked breast, and a whitish wing streak but not wing bars. It had a light, whitish line through the eye, a white eye ring, and a dark brownish patch under the eyes. It showed a distinctive white throat and displayed white edges in its tail when it flew like a lark sparrow's tail feathers. It was somewhat buffy on its sides and looked thrush-like at times. We first saw this bird 20-25 feet away on the asphalt parking lot where it hopped one-legged. Later we saw it about 10 feet away from our van "blind" and then later in front of us on a park bench. It was smaller than some starlings it was beside at one time. Our last look of this bird was of the bird perched in a small juniper for a long time and some rays of sunlight were hitting it for a while.

Similar species and how eliminated: Thrushes are not so heavily streaked and do not have whitish wing bars or wing streaks. A Brown Thrasher is much larger and browner.

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
Partly sunny at dawn with good visibility. Distances estimated.7x35 Binoculars.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

My first Sage Thrasher. Very familiar with Brown Thrashers and thrushes.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Natl. Geographic's Birds of N. America, Robbins' Birds of N. America.How long before field notes made? Made while viewing this form completed? Oct, 9, 1985

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? Sage Thrasher How many? 1Location? Waterloo, Iowa - Cedar River ParkType of habitat? Red cedar & Hawthorn by boathouse, edging parking lotWhen? date(s): September 28, 1985 time: 7:00 AM to 7:40 AMWho? your name and address: Beth Proescholdt, Liscomb, Iowaothers with you: Mark Proescholdt, Bob Myers, Francis Mooreothers before or after you: many -

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.

My first sighting of the bird was as it came hopping along the edge of the parking lot toward the van where we were waiting. Coming within approximately 12 feet of us this small thrasher showed gray-brown upper parts, head, back, wings & tail - & heavy streaks of the same color on a white breast & belly, with some buffy color on its flanks. (Breast more heavily streaked than belly.)

When still, it stood on only its left leg. Flying back to the red cedar, & flying like a thrasher, white tail spots showed on the corners of its tail, reminiscent of a Lark Sparrow's.

At 7:20 it appeared again & was within view for 20 minutes until we left, flying to park benches, to parking lot & within 8' or 10', & then to the cedar 30' away where it perched in plain view. There we observed the white throat, dark malar stripes, slight eye ring & a slight wing bar.

Similar species and how eliminated: Brown Thrasher - but the Brown Thrasher is too big, too reddish, too long curved bill, & too buffy on underparts -

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

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

partly cloudy, to sun shining on bird for some of the time, 30' to 8' or 10' - binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen one Sage Thrasher in WyomingReferences and persons consulted before writing description: Nat'l Geog field guide, Robbins' guide,How long before field notes made? Made at once this form completed? Oct. 1st

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

85-21

1. Species Sage Thrasher (Oreoscoptes montanus) 2. Number 1
3. Location Waterloo, Iowa
4. Date: Sept. 28, 1985 5. Time Bird Seen: 6:45 A.M. to 8:00 AM off and on
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):

Size = approx. of starling. Overall shape was a lot like a mini-Brown Thrasher with a smaller bill that wasn't quite so decurved. Head, back, tail (dorsal), wings were dark brownish gray. Breast was whitish with heavy brown streaking. Flanks were streaked and buffy.. Thin white wing bar was noted. Eye = light yellow (hard to see). Dark malar stripes present with clear whitish throat. Extreme corners of tail were white- seen well in flight and resembling Lark Sparrow but not quite so much white. A light whitish eyering was also seen. Bird showed brownish cheek patch. Bill was dark. Right foot or leg seemed injured on this bird. In proportion the tail length was not as long as Brown Thrasher.

7. Description of voice, if heard: None

8. Description of behavior: Feeding on ground , flying about and perching in Cedar tree.

9. Habitat - general: Parking lot along Cedar River.

specific:

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: Somewhat suggests a water pipit but tail too long.

11. Distance (how measured)?

12. Optical equipment:

less than 17 ft. (that is min. focus of binocs) 10x40 binocs , 20x scope

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

We had everything from cloudy skies to sunlight. Excellent viewing

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

No experience with this sp.

15. Other observers: Francis Moore, Beth and Mark Proescholdt

16. Did the others agree with your identification? Yes

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Many

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

National Geographic Guide - no influence

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

6 hrs.

Signature: Robert K. Myers Address: R.R. 2, Box 153

Date: Sept. 28, 1985 City, State: Perry, Iowa 50220