

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Louisiana Waterthrush 2. Number: 1  
3. Location Brookside Park, Ames, Iowa; Story County, Washington Twp, Sect. 3

4. Date: April 4, 1981 (and April 5) 5. Time Bird seen: 8:40 AM to 9:00 AM  
(ave. 20 minutes each day)

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): Warbler-like in shape, this bird was gray brown on the upperparts and had distinct dark streakings on the breast and belly; the breast and belly were otherwise white and the flanks had a slight tinge of olive coloration. Wing bars were absent. Eyestripe was white and the white throat showed no streakings. Legs were of a light pink coloration. Bill was slender, straight, small and pointed. Size was approximately 5 to 5 1/2 inches.

7. Description of voice, if heard: No song heard. Call consisted of 1-2 dry "chips" which were not as emphatic as the loud, sharp chip of the Northern Waterthrush.

8. Description of behavior: The bird walked along the stream bank with a constant bobbing motion. It turned up leaves and other debris while feeding and often walked along logs, stones, or mudflats which projected out of the water.

9. Habitat - general: Small deciduous woodland bordering a medium sized stream.  
specific: a medium sized stream bordered by overhanging deciduous trees and shrubs and containing many exposed mudflats, rocks and logs.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Ovenbirds have a median crown stripe and an eyering and do not walk with bobbing motions.

Spotted Sandpipers -- are larger and have longer bills.  
Thrushes (Turdidae) -- lack an eyestripe  
Northern Waterthrush -- has a streaked throat, smaller bill, buffy cream eyestripe and more yellow on underparts.

11. Distance (how measured)? 20 yards estimated by eyesight

12. Optical equipment:  
Pentax 10x50 Binoculars and  
Bushnell Spacemaster Telescope with 20x eyepiece

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
Cloudy on April 4th. Lighting conditions on April 5 & 6 were excellent; sun did not hinder observations.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: I have seen this species and the species mentioned in #10 above on numerous occasions in previous years. I have also identified Northern Waterthrushes caught in a mist net in 1979.

15. Other observers:  
Audrey Moore (Ames, Iowa)

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes.

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: Linda Zaletel, Hank Zaletel, Bill Robbins

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Golden Field Guide by C.S. Robbins  
1980 Edition of Peterson's Field Guide by Roger T Peterson  
Warblers of America by L. Griscom and A. Sprunt, Jr.  
All three references reinforced my initial description given in #6 above.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 6 hours  
P.O. Box 1015 Welch Ave. Station

Signature: John C. Robinson Address: ~~Ames~~

Date: April 14, 1981 City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010