

DOCUMENTATION

Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*)

Observed in Sioux Center on June 2 -- equaling the late-day record reported in Kent & Dinsmore *Birds in Iowa* (1996).

My living room window and several bedroom windows look out over a shrubby area under a row of tall box elders. Woodbine, vinca, and violets grow here in the shade, but there are open leaf-littered spots. On June 1 I observed a Gray-cheeked Thrush and a Swainson's Thrush together in this area. So they offered an excellent comparison: Both with clear spotting on the breast and olive-brownish upperparts, but the Gray-cheek lacked the conspicuous eye-ring and buffish hue around the face of the Swainson's.

The next morning I spotted the Gray-cheek once again. I said to myself: "Wow! This equals the late dates recorded in Jim and Tom's book!" I spent considerable time studying the bird.

I rule out the following possibilities:

- Swainson's Thrush: The bird lacked the eye-ring, and the cheeks were indeed gray.
- Veery: The heavy spotting on the breast and the lack of any kind of tan or reddish color rules out this bird.
- Wood Thrush: No eye-ring and lack of rufous on head and upper back rule out this bird.
- Hermit Thrush: No reddish tail nor any sign of the typical tail-wagging habit of the Hermit Thrush.

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