

25-1990

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VERIFICATION OF UNUSUAL SIGHT RECORD FOR UTAH

Common Name: LeConte's Thrasher

Scientific Name: *Toxostoma lecontei*

Date: March 6, 1990 Time: 7:30 am

Length of time observed: on & off for 1/2 hour

Number: 1 Age: Adult

Sex: Male

Location: Lower south slope of Beaver Dam Mountains, 2 miles north of Arizona border, 1 mile south of "Zella" watering Tank on Wellbore Springs pipeline road.

Latilong: 19

Elevation (if known): ~ 2500'

Distance to bird: 50 ft at closest

Light conditions: Direct and diffuse sunlight

Optical equipment: Bushnell 9x36 binoculars

Weather: partly cloudy, wind 10-15 mph, 40-45°

Description: (Write a detailed description of the bird's appearance, including size, shape, plumage pattern, color, and any unique features.)

This robin-sized bird was pale grayish-brown (sandy) in color on the head, back and breast. The color graded to buff on the lower belly and under-tail coverts. The tail was long and somewhat darker than the rest of the bird. The eye was black (very visible against the light face) and the long, deeply curved bill was nearly black. The bill was nearly as long as the head was wide.

Voice or call notes and method of delivery: The bird sang from the top of several Joshua trees. The notes were thrasher-like, but slower than most other thrashers with almost no repetition.

Behavior:

The bird was seen sitting on top of Joshua trees singing. When approached or startled, it would drop immediately to the ground. It would then reappear on top of another Joshua tree a few moments later singing. (It probably ran between singing posts). The bird probably sang in response to a recording of Leconte's thrasher.

Habitat:

Open desert with primarily Joshua trees and Creosote bush as vegetation.

What similar species might it have been and how were these eliminated:

Three other thrasher species occur in this region: Sage, Bendire's and crissal.

The long, curved bill and uniform upper color (no breast streaking or spots) eliminated Sage & Bendire's thrashers. The pale overall color and buffy, not reddish underparts and lower belly coloration eliminated crissal thrasher. In addition, the song was nearly identical in quality and cadence to a taped Leconte's thrasher, and was unlike the faster paced, more repetitious quality of the crissal thrasher.

What experience have you had with this and similar species:

This was my first observation of this species. I have observed numerous Crissal thrashers and Sage thrashers as well as 2 Bendire's thrashers.

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

Nat. Geographic Society field guide was consulted to verify field marks at time of observation.

Significance of record in this area or the state: First record since 1985 (?) in Utah.

Additional material: (attach drawing, photograph, tape recording if available)

Description from notes taken at time of sighting X notes made later from memory

Observer: Ron Rye

Signature: Ronald J. Rye

Address: 825 N. 600 E.
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Other observers who independently identified this bird:

Larry Rye

Date prepared: March 6, 1990

Return this form to: Ella Sorensen
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