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A NEW BIRD FOR OKLAHOMA: VARIED THRUSH

BY JOHN S. TOMER

On 11 December 1977, E. Eugene Balsley of Morgan Hill, California, visited Mohawk Park, an extensive tract of Bird Creek bottomland in east-central Tulsa County, northeastern Oklahoma, hoping to come upon certain mid-western birds that he had never seen. Much of this park has been converted to grassy open spaces, but scattered large oak and hickory trees have been left standing and some areas of uncleared woodland remain.

To Mr. Balsley's surprise, he found in the park a familiar Pacific coastal bird, a Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*). Aware of the species' extralimital status in Oklahoma, he telephoned members of the Tulsa Audubon Society, requesting that they verify his find. Kenneth Hayes and his wife Elizabeth saw the bird the following morning. On 13 December I saw it twice — in the morning



VARIED THRUSH

Photographed by John S. Shackford in Mohawk Park, east-central Tulsa County, Oklahoma on 6 January 1978.

with Fred F. Pianalto of Tulsa, in the afternoon with John S. Shackford of Oklahoma City and Deloris Isted of Cushing, Oklahoma.

During the rest of December and in early January, the thrush was seen repeatedly in the same general area of the park not only by Tulsa observers but by bird students from several parts of Oklahoma (1977, Amer. Birds, 32: 371). Herbert L. Keating and his wife Pauline saw it on 17 December, the day of the Christmas Count (1977, Amer. Birds, 32: 437, 761). As a rule it was found feeding in grassy cleared areas, but when disturbed it would retreat to heavy woods. Several good color photographs were taken, two of which (by John Shackford) are on file at the University of Oklahoma Bird Range. One of these is reproduced here.

So far as anyone knows, the thrush was last seen on 10 January 1978. Its observers that day were Elizabeth Hayes and Hazel Ekholm. It was not far from the spot at which it had first been seen. On 11 January a storm covered the ground with several inches of snow. On 15 January, after the snow had started to melt, Richard L. Reeder and I spent three hours looking for the bird. We failed to find it.

On 12 February 1978, Elizabeth and Kenneth Hayes found what they felt sure was a second Varied Thrush in Mohawk Park, this one in an area about half a mile northeast of the spot at which the first bird had been seen. This second bird was described as being paler over-all, and less boldly marked, than the first bird. No one else saw this second bird.

Ixoreus naevius breeds from "Alaska, central Yukon, and northwestern Mackenzie south to northwestern California, northern Idaho, and northwestern Montana," wintering "south to northern Baja California" (1957, AOU Checklist, p. 434). It has not heretofore been reported from Oklahoma, nor has the possibility of its being found here been mentioned in literature dealing with the birdlife of the state.

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DISPERSAL OF COMMON GRACKLES BANDED IN SOUTH-CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

BY J. E. WATSON AND W. C. ROYALL, JR.

Investigations of bird damage to windrowed peanuts in south-central Oklahoma from 1969 through 1971 showed that losses were caused mainly by Common Grackles (*Quiscalus quiscula*). As many as 3.5 million grackles migrate into the area of the Washita River Arm of Lake Texoma and roost there in early November (Mott, D. F., J. F. Besser, R. R. West, and J. W. De Grazio, 1972. Bird damage to peanuts and methods for alleviating the problem, Proc. Vert. Pest Control Conf., 5:118-120). During November 1969-71, 2,075 grackles were banded in peanut-growing areas north and east of Lake Texoma in Johnston, Atoka, and Bryan counties, Oklahoma, to determine their breeding and wintering areas.

Forty-six banded grackles were recovered from late 1969 through 1976