

NOTES

THE WOOD THRUSH IN CALIFORNIA

On 18 November 1967 a party of us, including Pierre Devillers, Alan Craig, and Cliff Lyons, were spending the afternoon checking for birds in the Tijuana River Valley to the south of Imperial Beach, San Diego County, California. At Windover Ranch, a small but well-watered avocado orchard situated just north of the Mexican border, I discovered a Wood Thrush *Hylocichla mustelina*. When first noted, the bird was feeding on the ground under a tree with Robins *Turdus migratorius* and Hermit Thrushes *Hylocichla guttata*. It was clearly larger than the Hermit Thrushes, being nearly the size of the Robins, and was acting very much like a Robin. The following description was taken:

Upperparts: forehead and crown, dark chestnut; nape, bright buffy-rufous; upper back, bright rufous, only slightly darker than the nape; rump and tail, olive-gray contrasting sharply with the back. Wings: upper wing coverts, brown, the lesser wing coverts edged with rufous; primaries and secondaries, dark brown. Face: ear coverts, dark brownish-gray contrasting



FIGURE 1. A Wood Thrush captured near Imperial Beach, California, on 18 November 1967.

Photo by Alan M. Craig

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sharply with the nape; eye-ring, pale buffy-white. Underparts: entire underparts, white with slight buffy wash across breast; throat streaked, breast and flanks boldly spotted with black.

After about half an hour we erected a mist-net and promptly captured the bird. It was studied in the hand and thought to be in an emaciated condition, but was photographed (fig. 1) and released. One free, it was clear the bird was too weak to fly, so it was recaptured and retained as a specimen (San Diego Natural History Museum #36355). It proved to be a male with skull fully ossified and having testes measuring 1.5 mm; the bird weighed 51.3 grams.

Another Wood Thrush appeared in a Verdugo Hills yard located in the northern part of Glendale, Los Angeles County, California, on about 1 August 1968, and was killed there by a cat ten days later (G. S. Suffel, pers. comm.). The specimen was retrieved, and is now deposited in the Los Angeles County Museum (#77806). It was found to be an adult male, skull fully ossified, having very small testes, no fat, and exhibiting distinct body molt.

The Wood Thrush breeds in the eastern half of the United States (A.O.U., 1957), reaching Canada only in extreme southern Ontario and Quebec (Godfrey, 1966). It winters to the south of the United States in Mexico and Central America. West of its normal range it is casual in both spring and fall in eastern Colorado (Bailey and Niedrach, 1965); there are two fall records for New Mexico (Hubbard, 1970), and the same number of fall records for Arizona (Monson, 1968 and Snider, 1968). The two records presented above are the only occurrences for California.

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