

## Varied Thrush – Tucker Co.

Unanimously accepted – Vote 7-0

### Committee Members Comments:

CM1: Although it would have been nice to have a photograph, the description is well-written, thorough, and contains all the field marks for Varied Thrush. The observer also seemed to have good views not once but twice within a short period. It helps that an experienced birder, although he did not see the bird himself, agreed with the identification based on the information the observer conveyed to him and actually thought it could be Varied Thrush. Furthermore, Varied Thrush is a species that is prone to vagrancy and occasionally shows up all over the continent, including the east.

CM2: In the first vote, I wrote: “Although this birder isn’t experienced with Varied Thrush, the description is excellent and captures the salient field marks for this species. There really aren’t other species that match this description. Varied Thrush does appear in the east during early March and there were two records from surrounding/nearby states in early March 2021: one near Raleigh, NC (also a March 7 record) and one in Pennsylvania (March 5, near Youngstown, OH). So, the timing is appropriate. Varied Thrush also has a habit of feeding low in areas with small trees and bushes, which was the habit for this bird. As I recall, the bird was not relocated or confirmed by anyone else, which is unfortunate. The two previous WV records were September 29 and December 27, but there are several spring records for the east.” I support the record based on this logic. While it would have enhanced the record to have a photograph or someone else experienced with the species see the bird, the record clearly describes a Varied Thrush. This isn’t the first sighting of a Varied Thrush in WV, which allows for a clear description of the species, appropriate behavior, habitat, etc. by a single observer to be sufficient for acceptance.

CM3: I was the only dissenting opinion on the original vote. After reviewing the orientation document, I see that “subsequent reports do not require three or more observers even if there is no physical evidence, such as photographs.” I didn’t realize that this was the case. The description is consistent with a Varied Thrush and thus it falls into the approve category.

CM4: Description was concise and clearly describes a Varied Thrush to me. Location is a good one for a vagrant/migrant moving through. This is also a good time of year when other reports of this species east of the Mississippi are in eBird. This would represent the third record for the state. Experienced birder.

CM5: This observation contained a sufficiently detailed description of the bird to eliminate other species that it might have been confused with by an observer. The most likely candidate for confusion probably would be an immature American Robin. They are roughly similar in size and overall coloration, but the orange wing bars and orange line extending behind the eye rule out the AMRO.

Further, the black necklace on the breast helps to eliminate almost any other species. The black necklace is found in some other birds, such as Canada Warblers, but the body coloration is all wrong. American Redstarts share some superficial similarities in pattern and coloration with the bird described in this report, but again, the orange line in the plumage behind the eye eliminates AMRE, as does the size of the reported bird. The orange line posterior to the eye also eliminates

the only other possible birds that share the general pattern of coloration of the described bird. These are the Baltimore Oriole and the Orchard Oriole.

Since this species is already on the review list, photographic evidence or multiple observers are not required to accept this report; and given the rather striking and unique field marks for the species, described by the observer in the WVBRC application, I believe the record meets the requirements for acceptance.

CM6: Field marks provided are diagnostic, particularly orange eyebrow. Behavior consistent with many observations of VATH I made while living in Olympia, WA. Timing of report is consistent with other eastern U.S. late winter-early spring eBird records for CY2022 (nearest is in NE OH).

CM7: In this case I am going to vote for the record because it meets the requirements for inclusion under the by-laws. The description of the bird meets the description of the unique Varied Thrush and the timing was when such an odd migrant would be likely to show up. The habitat was also typical for a Varied Thrush in the western regions of North America, but located in Appalachia. According to the by-laws, adding a new species to the Review List requires either photographic evidence, a specimen (e.g., dead bird) or three persons with previous experience with the species must have seen the bird, but for subsequent records this threshold is reduced to what the Records Committee deems acceptable. In this case, there are two previously-approved records of Varied Thrush on the State List from 1993 and 2001. Therefore, the criteria for adding a new species to the Review List does not apply. Based on the location, description and timing I vote for accepting this record as the third official record of Varied Thrush for the state.