

WV BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE REPORT FORM

Please Type or Print Legibly

Species: Number: (leave blank)
Location: Date: Time:
Bird Seen: To: Age/Sex:

Description: In lieu of physical material substantiating a record (e.g., specimen, diagnostic photograph, vocal recordings) a complete written description can serve as verification for the biological record. Please be as thorough as your field notes allow. Do not feel constrained by the space provided. Additional supporting descriptions/illustrations may be attached. Note that photographs or recordings WILL NOT BE RETURNED but become part of the permanent record for the observation.

Structure: (Overall size and shape plus details on the head, feet, tail, etc.)

Blackbird shape, smaller than red-winged black birds. Black feet and legs. Short tail. Yellow/white eye.

Plumage: (e.g. markings, coloration, molt)

Black overall, no eyebrow or rusty coloration. Due to being in the shade, no iridescent coloration could be made out.

Description of any vocalizations, if heard:

none

Description of behavior:

The bird was picking at mud near the edge of the "goose ponds" at Robert C. Byrd Locks and Dam, and then moved to the water to drink. He stayed in this shaded area about 20 minutes.

Habitat: (General and Specific)

The area has a mix of grass areas, a few trees, and wetland areas along the edges of the ponds. The bird was located at the edge of a pond in an area that is wetland-like.

Circumstances of observation: (Include details of distance to bird, optics employed, lighting in relation to observer and the bird)

I was about 200 feet from the bird on the opposite bank, initially observing shorebirds further along the bank. I observed this bird through a Kowa TSN-553 15-45x55 PROMINAR Spotting Scope, which I also used to take photos by digiscoping. Given the time (11am), the sun was high above. The bird was shaded by bushes along the edge of the pond.

Previous experience with this species:

I have observed brewer's blackbirds twice before. The first time was at Rattlesnake Springs in New Mexico, and the second time was also in Mason County, near a farm on Johns Kay Lane, Southside, WV.

Experiences with similarly appearing species which are eliminated by your description: (Please be specific)

I have observed rusty blackbirds 9 times, including 3 times in WV during November. Male rusty blackbirds would show rusty coloration by this point in their moult cycle.

Other observers: (Names, Addresses, E-mail please)

If the others agree with your identification they can sign this form here. If they care to provide additional details they can submit their own report.

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

Additional observer signature:

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

I consulted both the Audubon and Merlin apps while in the field. I also messaged a Huntington-area birders group text for feedback on pictures. I also messaged Derek Courtney for feedback on the pictures. To address the possible misidentification of rusty blackbird, I consulted "Rusty Blackbirds: Moulting and Ageing" by Pamela Sinclair, available from the Rusty Blackbird International Working Group. RUBL complete their moult by Sept. See their website:
<https://rustyblackbird.org/wp-content/uploads/Sinclair-Rusty-Blackbird-Moult-and-Aging.pdf>

How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?

53 days

Name:

David L. Johnston

Address:

[REDACTED]

Date:

December 26, 2023

Signature:

[REDACTED]

Mail to: WV Bird Records Committee
Attn: Wil Hershberger
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Or E-mail to:
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Please use the space below to add any appropriate details you feel were missing from the above form or to expand on any answers whose allotted space was insufficient for a complete response:





