

VARIED THRUSH (*IXOREIUS NAEVIUS*) FIRST FOR ALABAMA

Ann L. Miller



Figure 1. Varied Thrush at feeder in Birmingham. (Photo by Ann L. Miller)

On 21 February 1992 I received a call from John Bruce, a resident of the Red Mountain area of Birmingham, who reported that a Varied Thrush (*Ixoreius naevius*) was visiting his feeding station. Knowing this bird's strong inclination to wander from its normal range in western North America, I immediately raced over to the Bruce's with eager anticipation.

John and I settled down in his breakfast room with our eyes glued to an area where he had scattered cracked corn, which was where he had first seen the bird the day before. After about 30 minutes, the bird appeared and indeed was a Varied Thrush (Figure 1). It was slightly smaller than an American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) and brownish-gray above, including the wings and tail. The throat, breast, wing bars, and superciliary line were orange. Across the breast was a rather wide but incomplete grayish breast band, indicating a young bird. The rest of the underparts were white with grayish edges, creating a somewhat scaly appearance. The bill was dark brown, and the legs and feet pink. According to banding information, it would be difficult to determine if the bird was a young male or a female unless in-hand measurements could be taken. An adult male would have a grayish-blue nape and back and a very distinct dark breast band.

In the western part of the United States, Canada, and Alaska, where the species breeds, it inhabits dense coniferous forests and winters in a variety of moist thickets and woodland

ALABAMA BIRDLIFE

canyons. The Varied Thrush is known for its distinctive song, a series of five or six long haunting, vibrating whistling notes of several different tones. It also has a weak *tschook* call note. Most vagrants, however, tend to be silent away from their normal range.

Nearly every year a few strays are found as far east as New England and farther south. For the last two years, one has been observed near Chattanooga, Tennessee. The habitat in Chattanooga and Red Mountain in Birmingham is reminiscent of the ravines it winters in on the west coast.

This rare visitor remained until 7 April, and thanks to the generosity and hospitality of John and Helen Bruce, over 100 birders were fortunate enough to see it. – **Ann L. Miller**, 530 Yorkshire Drive, Birmingham, AL 35209.

FIRST RECORD FOR THE ALLEN'S HUMMINGBIRD (*SELASPHORUS SASIN*) IN ALABAMA

Robert R. Sargent and Martha B. Sargent



Figure 1. Allen's Hummingbird banded by the Sargents in Mobile. Note the narrow outer rectrix. The width of this tail feather is critical in the identification of this species. (Photo by Martha B. Sargent)

On 30 November 1991 my wife, Martha, and I received a call from Mary LeGault of Mobile notifying us of a very small hummingbird coming to her feeder. After questioning her in detail on the telephone, we were convinced the bird was in the *Selasphorus* genus. In the