

the sanctuary its winter home, probably due to the copious amounts of seed put out by birders hoping to see this rarity. Many of them did get the chance. They also heard the bird singing beginning in April. The last person to see the bird at the sanctuary was Kanae Hirabashi, who reported it gone in early to middle May.

## Literature Cited

Bohlen, H.D. 1989. *The Birds of Illinois*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, IN.

—Robert Hughes,  
696 W. Irving Park Rd.,  
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## Varied Thrush Winters in Lake County

Early on 23 November 1996, I spotted a bird at my feeder that at first glance I thought was a robin and at second glance I didn't have a clue. I ran to wake my sleeping kids excitedly yelling, "There is a bird at our feeder and I don't know what it is!"

Within seconds, three of us were jockeying for position with binoculars and bird books. The verdict was a Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*). After some discussion we decided to report "our" thrush to the Chicago Audubon hotline and open up our house to area birders who would like to look at this beautiful bird. I was amazed at how fast the word got out and how many people came. My guess is that some 200 people stopped by our home in Waukegan, Lake County, for two months to see the bird. One of them, Sheryl De Vore, took photographs which are on file with the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. It was a wonderful, positive experience for the family.

The Varied Thrush is similar to the American Robin in color and shape. The male has a dark breast band which looks like a heavy black necklace. It has orange wing

bands and an orange stripe above the eye. The female is duller and sometimes lacks the breast band. This species is common in the moist coniferous woods of the northwest, from Alaska down to central California. Winter wanderers may rarely be seen as far east as New England.

Most Illinois records are from the northern portion between 21 November and 1 May (Bohlen 1989).

This ground-feeding bird typically eats insects, worms, snails, weed seeds, acorns, and wild berries. At my feeders, the thrush dined on whole corn. As of 27 January 1997, we thought the bird was gone. But it reappeared on 15 February 1997 and was still seen occasionally through at least 23 February 1997.

## Literature Cited

Bohlen, H.D. 1989. *The Birds of Illinois*. Indiana University Press

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## Two Wintering Clay-Colored Sparrows in Chicago

After birding the Chicago lakefront on 23 November 1996, Denis Bohm and I were returning to where Bohm had parked his car along Pearson and DeWitt Streets in Chicago, Cook County, about two blocks east of Water Tower Place near Michigan Ave. While walking, we noticed numerous White-throated Sparrows along the north side of Lake Shore Park near Pearson Street. At the north end of a tennis court, I noticed a smaller sparrow on the ground. This was a *Spizella* sparrow because it was smaller in size than the nearby House and White-throated Sparrows and had a rather sleek look and long tail.

The bird had a conspicuous median buffy crown stripe through the brown crown, buffy lores and supercilium, with a darkish eyeline below the supercilium that

did not extend in front of the eye. The auriculars were bordered by darker edgings contrasting with a whitish moustachial stripe. The bird also had a conspicuous gray nape. The sparrow was unstreaked below with a buffy upperbreast and otherwise white underparts. There were two slight buffy wing-bars on the light brownish wings. Dorsally, the bird had a long, thin, dark, blackish, forked tail. The bird's bill and legs were pink. The wings concealed the rump.

Bohm agreed this was a Clay-colored Sparrow. I thought late November was rather late for this sighting and I videotaped the bird as it hopped on the ground and foraged with House, Swamp, and White-throated Sparrows for bird seed under some ornamental crabapple trees and cement tables.