

BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee

Unusual Record Report Form

This form is intended to aid observers in the preparation of a submission for a major rarity in Australia. (It is not a mandatory requirement) Please complete all sections ensuring that you attach all relevant information including any digital images (email to tonyp@bigpond.net.au or andrew.silcocks@birdlife.org.au). Submissions to BARC should be submitted electronically wherever possible.

Full Name: Jennifer Spry	Office Use
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Address: P.O. Box 292 Carlton North Melbourne 3054	
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Species Name:	Scientific Name:
Date(s) and time(s) of observation:	11 th January 2018
How long did you watch the bird(s)?	10 seconds +/-
First and last date of occurrence:	11 th January 2018
Distance to bird:	10 metre

Site Location Vegetable gardens near chicken pens on Home Island, Cocos Keeling Is. 12° 07' 10.10" 96° 54' 05.73"
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Habitat (describe habitat in which the bird was seen): Flying over dense fruit trees and coconut palms
Sighting conditions (weather, visibility, light conditions etc.): The weather was terrible. Heavy rain with brief periods of no rain between squalls. The bird did a single fly-past.

To your knowledge, is the species seen frequently at this site? There are previous reports from Cocos Keeling Islands in 2014 (BARC 1026) and 2015 (BARC 1027)
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Were other observers present Do any of the other observers disagree with your identification, if so, who? (please give names, addresses and phone numbers)? Paul Newman PNewman@steritech.com.au Richard Baxter
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How confident are you of your identification? , e.g. 70%, 100%. If not 100%, why not? 100%
Please confirm that you are willing for BARC to display your images (fully credited with your name) electronically YES

Other details: e.g. Do you have historical and or anecdotal information/comments relating to the prior occurrence/status of the species within or near this location?

Birds have been reported on Cocos Keeling in the past, on Home Island, West Island and North Keeling Islands. See BARC 2016 and 2017

Physical Description of Bird - Please describe only what you saw: (1) No. of individuals present (living or dead); (2) age (adult, juvenile, immature) and sex; (3) size and shape; (4) plumage colour and pattern (including any details of moult); (5) colour of bill, eyes and legs/feet; (6) calls; (7) behaviour, movements, flight pattern, and anything else that might help to identify the bird e.g. feeding, interactions with other birds, describe where the bird was – on ground, in canopy, flying etc. Were comparisons made with other species?

The bird flew over from east to west during a lull in tropical rain squalls. There was only a brief opportunity to observe the bird and identification was made after looking at three of 7 photos taken.

The buff-orange on the chest can be seen as well as the white belly. The long, white supercilium can be seen as can the submoustachial white streak. The yellow base to the bill also shows.

The bird was presumed to have been seen briefly on subsequent days in the same location but it was very shy, the weather was terrible and no 100% confirmation could be gained for these sightings.

Please indicate other species with which you think it might be confused and how these were eliminated?

See below. Due to time restrictions for me to fill out this BARC report I have copied text from BARC 1026. I apologize for this liberty but I will be away for 3 months and wanted to get this report in while reports 1026 and 1027 are being considered.

Was the description written from memory? No, from photos.

Were photographs taken? (please include where possible)

Yes, attached. These are the only photos taken, other observers did not have time to take photos.

What experience have you had with the species in question? (Did you know it was a Rare bird when you first saw it?)

None but the plumage of the bird is distinctive. Please see below.

Name: Jennifer Spry

Email Address: _malurus.jenny@gmail.com

IDENTIFICATION:

Copy of text from BARC 10126:

To an experienced observer the subject bird is obviously a thrush (Turdidae). Among thrushes, the combination of the complex facial pattern and the orange-buff, unstreaked flanks is diagnostic (Cramp 1989; MacKinnon & Phillips 1993; Beaman & Madge 1998; Dunn *et al.* 1999; Mullarney *et al.* 1999; Robson 2000; Rasmussen & Anderton 2005; Wells 2007; Brazil 2009; Menkhorst *et al.* 2017). The subloral – subocular Stripe is particularly distinctive.

Within Australia the only vaguely similar species recorded is the Island Thrush *Turdus poliocephalus*, of which ssp. *natalis* occurs on the relatively close (~980 km distant) Christmas Island. *T. p. natalis* was even introduced to the CKI shortly before 1900, and though now extinct there, there was an estimated population of about 500 birds on Horsburgh in 1941 (Woinarski *et al.* 2014). Island Thrush has similar body plumage to Eyebrowed Thrush, but lacks the complex facial pattern and bicoloured bill.

Farther afield, Redwing *T. iliacus* has a vaguely similar head pattern but has heavily streaked underparts in all plumages. Grey-backed Thrush *T. hortulorum* has similar body plumage but lacks the complex facial pattern. American Robin *T. migratorius* has a darker head (hooded appearance) and a different pattern of white in the face. Everett's Thrush *Zoothera everetti* is darker with a streaked facial pattern and an all-dark bill. Grey-sided Thrush *T. faeae* has a similar head pattern but lacks the buff flanks. The closely related Pale Thrush *T. pallidus* and Brown-headed (Red-bellied) Thrush *T. chrysolaus* lack the complex head pattern.

The extensive pale throat and the vague submoustacial and malar stipes, and the low contrast between the top of the head and the mantle suggest either a female or immature (first winter bird). The pale tips to the greater secondary coverts indicate a first cycle bird with retained juvenile wing feathers. It appears to be a first cycle female, but the photographic resolution may be too low to confirm the sex.

T. obscurus is monotypic with no significant geographical variation (Cramp 1989; Birdlife International 2018; Gill & Donsker 2018).

EXIF data for photos:

Canon EOS 7D Mark II AWB JPEG
Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6...

ISO 2500 | 400mm | 2.33 ev | *f*/9 | 1/1000

EXIF Info

Version Name: OK0A7416
Date: 11/1/18, 7:45:31 am AEDT
Camera Make: Canon
Camera Model: Canon EOS 7D Mark II
Serial Number:
Lens: Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS USM
ISO: ISO 2500
Focal Length: 400mm
Focal Length (35mm):
Exposure Bias: 2.33 ev
Aperture: *f*/9
Shutter Speed: 1/1000
Flash: Flash did not fire
Flash Exposure Com...: 0 ev
White Balance: Auto White Balance
Exposure Program: Aperture Priority
Shooting Mode:
Metering Mode: Pattern
Exposure Mode: Auto Exposure



The photos were “snapped” very quickly, almost “from the hip” There was a sequence of 7 photos taken over 4 seconds and these are the best three. Field marks of bill colour, breast and chest colour and white eye-brow and cheek marks can be seen.



Face markings and under-wing colour can be seen in this photo.