

**Spotted Towhee:**

Ken Burrell

1 adult male

May 4, 2005.

Long Point Bird Observatory, 1.5 km north of Breakwater field station on Courtright Ridge

Seen at 13:30-14:15

The bird was amongst a mixed flock of birds predominantly White-throated Sparrows and Hermit Thrushes.

Habitat: located on old beach ridge, mature Carolinian forest with predominately White Oak and Sassafras, as well an extensive leaf cover on ground was present.

Weather: SW winds, strength 2 on Beaufort wind scale, cloud cover 3/10, temperature 8 degrees Celcius.

Distance: as close as 25 feet

Optics: Bausch and Lomb Discoverer 10X42.

Circumstances: Matt Hindle, Benoit Genreau and myself were walking along Courtright Ridge, when Matt spotted a towhee with substantial white markings on the back and upperparts. Our immediate reaction was a Spotted Towhee.

Description:

- same size as Eastern Towhee, about 1/4 the size larger than White-throated Sparrow
- eye bright red
- bill dark black
- legs were a light fleshy colouring
- head and upper half of breast jet black

- rich chestnut side streaking on flanks bordered by a creamy white colouring below the chestnut flanks
- wings jet black, with white speckling on the medium, and greater coverts. The tertials were almost completely white, covering about 90-95% of the tertials. The base of the primary feathers were also white and the white colouring extended half way down the outer primary feather.
- back black also with extensive white markings on the mantle and farther down back
- rump was same black colouring
- the tail was jet black with extensive white outer tail markings
- the vent was also a much more washed out chestnut colouring
- call: thin metallic "tsee-su", identical to other Spotted Towhees I have had experience with in the field

Experience with species: One individual seen in Ontario on several dates, December 17, 2002-early April 2003. in Blair. (Accepted by OBRC).

Date report written: July 16, 2005. made from field notes taken at site of observation.

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