

LBRC Report Form

1. English and Scientific names: Spotted x Eastern Towhee (hybrid); *Pipilo maculatus* x *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*
2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage):
One individual; male
3. Parish:
Bossier
4. Specific Locality:
Red River NWR- Headquarters Unit
5. Date(s) when observed: 4/30/24
6. Time(s) of day when observed: 10:18 AM
7. Reporting observer: Pam Vercellone-Smith
8. Other observers accompanying reporter who also identified the bird(s):
9. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):
10. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light): The Towhee was in the shaded understory of the woodlands, but there was enough diffuse light to see the bird clearly and get a photo.
11. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): Zeiss Conquest HD 8 x 42 binoculars; excellent condition
12. Distance to bird(s): approx. 11'
13. Duration of observation: Approx. 1 minute. I briefly spotted it in the understory of the woodlands, viewed it with my binoculars, then got a quick photo before it flew deeper into the woodlands. I was unable to relocate it after that.
14. Habitat: It was observed in an area of the woodlands with densely tangled vines and low-lying vegetation (see photos).

15. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation): The Towhee was foraging on the ground when I spotted it from the River Trail. I stopped to observe it. The Towhee then briefly popped up and perched on low-lying limb for before flying deeper into the woodlands.

16. Description (include only what was actually seen, not what "should" have been seen; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species, body bulk, shape, proportions, bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species):

The bird had the key field marks of an Eastern Towhee (black head, back & wings; rufous sides; white belly; white wing patch) but, unlike an Eastern Towhee, it also had spots on the wings. It lacked streaking on the back, which is why I believe this may be a Spotted x Eastern Towhee hybrid.

17. Voice: No vocalizations heard.

18. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation):

The bird had the key field marks of an Eastern Towhee (black head, back & wings; rufous sides; white belly; white wing patch) but, unlike an Eastern Towhee, it also had spots on the wings. While the spots on the wings suggested Spotted Towhee, it lacked the streaking on the back that a Spotted Towhee would have. Therefore, I believe this may be a Spotted x Eastern Towhee hybrid.

19. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?):

I attached two photos that I took with my Sony RX10iv camera. I have attached the unprocessed photos, as well as copies of these same photos that were cropped and lightened to improve clarity.

20. Previous experience with this species: I have considerable experience with Eastern Towhees. I have seen Spotted Towhees occasionally on western birding trips.

21. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

Sibley's Field Guide; Cornell's 'Birds of the World' online resource

22. Identification aids used when?

After observation

23. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain:

I am positive that this is a Towhee, but the field marks are not fully consistent with an Eastern Towhee because of the spotted wings. The bird I observed matches Sibley's field mark description for a Hybrid Spotted x Eastern Towhee. Sibley's also notes that "these two species regularly hybridize where ranges overlap". I welcome expert feedback on whether this is a Spotted x Eastern Towhee hybrid.

24. Date report completed:

5/1/24

25. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page?

Yes

26. If yes, may we include your name with the report?

Yes



