

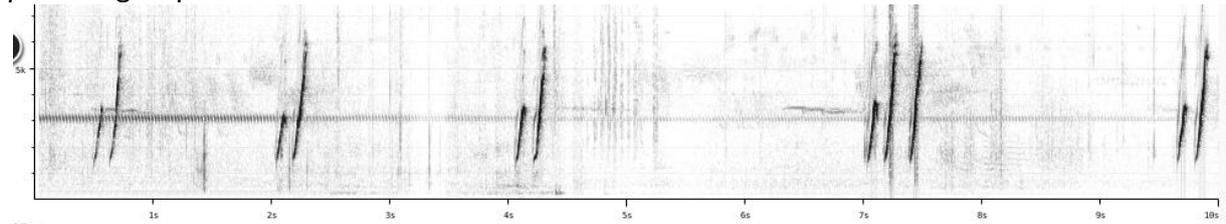
Notes on the vocalizations of Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*)

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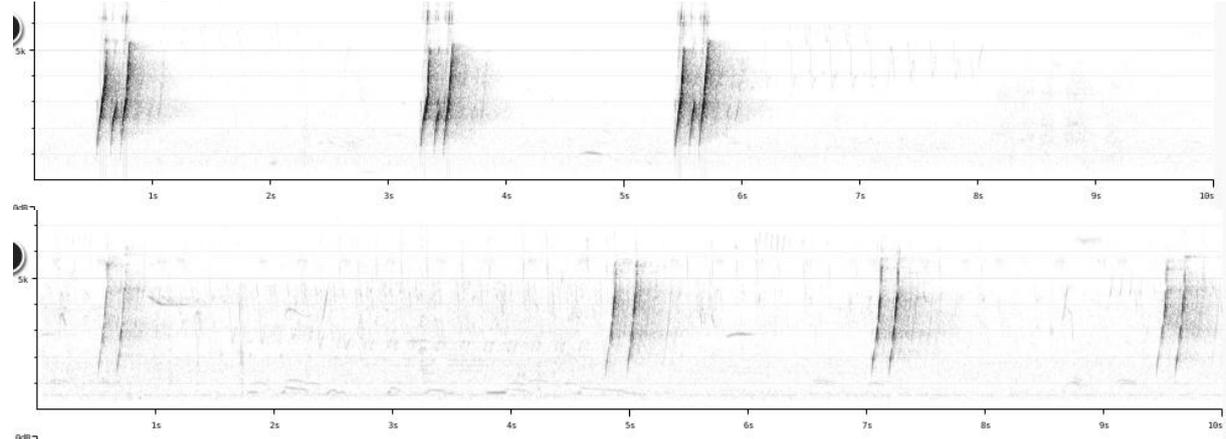
In the following we briefly analyze and compare voice of the different races of Curve-billed Thrasher (*Toxostoma curvirostre*). We also try to quantify the extent of any vocal differences using the criteria proposed by Tobias *et al.* (2010), as a support for taxonomic review. We have made use of sound recordings available on-line from Xeno Canto (XC).

The taxonomic situation of two groups (Eastern “n nominate group” and less distinctly marked Western “*palmeri* group”) has been discussed quite a bit in North-America. Related to voice, there has been a comparison of call notes, indicating a clear difference (Pieplow 2010, <http://earbirding.com/blog/archives/2480>):

palmeri group: call can be transcribed as "wi-weet" or "wi-weet-weet"



curvirostre group: call can be transcribed as "weet-a-weet" or "weet-weet"



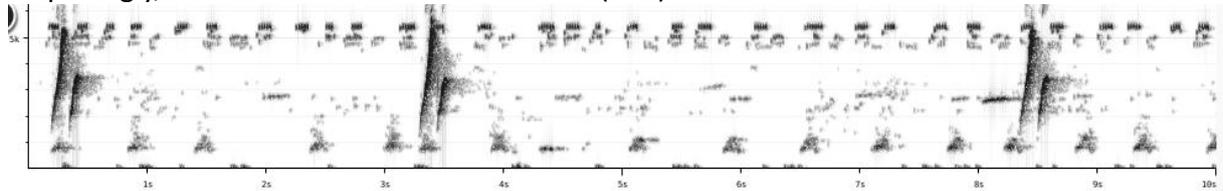
This difference can also be confirmed in Mexico, with birds of NW Mexico (S to Sinaloa) uttering the 'wi-weet' call.

A comparison of song would be much more complex, given the large variation of notes and phrases (and it is already far from straightforward to formulate objective and measurable distinguishing features from other members of the genus e.g. Bendire's Thrasher *T. bendirei*). It is said that eastern group mimics other species, while this has not been documented for the western group (Cody 2016).

If we would score vocal difference purely based on this call note, there would thus be a measurable difference in e.g. freq. range of the first note (being smallest in the *palmeri* group, score 3). It should be noted however that this is a score for a vocalization other than the territorial song.

As a final remark, it is interesting to note that the Oaxaca population (presently not considered a distinct taxon, and included in race *curvirostre*) is genetically distinct but closest to the eastern group (Rojas-Soto *et al.* 2007).

Surprisingly, the call seems to be also distinct (n=1):



with the last note in the call having the smallest frequency range, unlike both other groups.

This note was finalized on 18th April 2016, using sound recordings available on-line at that moment. We would like to thank in particular the many sound recordists who placed their recordings for this species on XC.

References

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Recommended citation

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