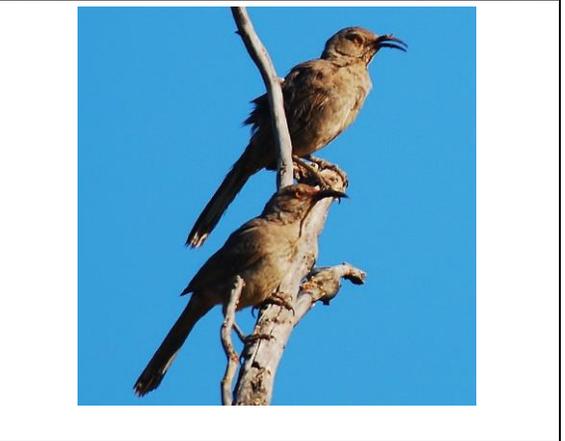


**THRASHER IDENTIFICATION CHART**

**Bendire's Thrasher**  
**BETH**



**Curve-billed Thrasher**  
**CBTH**



**Crissal Thrasher**  
**CRTH**



**LeConte's Thrasher**  
**LCTH**



**Sage Thrasher**  
**SATH**



# THRASHER IDENTIFICATION COMPARISON PHOTOGRAPHS

Bendire's Thrasher	Curve-billed Thrasher
	



## Thrasher Identification Chart

Species	Call	Bill	Iris	Plumage	Behaviors
Bendire's Thrasher BETH	Song is a mixed warbled mumbled; quietly sung at the beginning of the season, nesting, moving through, or the presence of a CBTH.  Call is short repeated Tir-up.  When with young, the female will give a quick chur-up calling them in.	Slight decurved bill; straight lower mandible; pale base on lower mandible < 5mm from head; length is up to 21 mm nare to tip; length varies 6-11 mm shorter than CBTH (has been found to vary).	The adult iris has a yellow-orange (yellow-light orange as they age).  Juvi has a medium to light grey iris as the bird ages, before turning pale-yellow to yellow-dark orange.	Overall plumage tends to be lighter beige grey than an adult CBTH; triangle spotting on breast (can be indistinct and diffused); flanks washed buffy/brown. Recently observed and noted that rural residents most often darker and spots tend to be more diffused than migratory birds.	When singing, tends to perch off to the side of the tree or structure; during vocalization playback will often pop up a minimum of 30-50 meters away; when moving flies down into the center of the tree and flies low going from bush to bush.  Note: There are migrating populations and residential that stick to rural areas. Rural will most often breed earlier than migrating.
Curve-billed Thrasher CBTH	Song is a strong and loud melodic mix of warbled calls and trills.  Call is a Whit-wheet.	Long, thick and dark decurved bill (upper and lower mandible); up to 27mm nare to tip.  Note: Be cautious with first year birds as the bill length can be the same length of an adult BETH.	Adult has an orange-yellow iris (with an outer red ring).  Juvi has a dark purple-grey iris the first eight weeks then lighter grey up to 8-10 months before turning yellow to yellow-orange.	Overall plumage is gray-brown; larger than BETH by 10 to 18 grams variance and 4-7 inches bigger in length); round spotting on the breast (can be diffuse and indistinct).  NOTE: Be cautious with first year birds as the spotting can be minimal and more diffused.	This bird has been observed most often calling from structures and most often tops of trees; swift and direct in movement; more aggressive than the other thrashers found in Arizona; has adapted well in residential areas; appears to prefer nesting in cholla cactus in its natural habitat or around residential areas.
Crissal Thrasher CRTH	The song is a warbling and melodic (chidery and cheeoo-ree-weep); primarily in calls of 2 and 3 notes. Note: NOMO will attempt to mimic but often doesn't follow through repeating of 3 notes.	Long, curved and thin bill; thinner in width and longer curve and length than CBTH.	Adult has a brown to yellow-brown iris.	Overall plumage medium to dark gray brown (often more brown); white throat; broad and distinct malar stripes; deep chestnut on the undertail coverts; lower belly is pale gray.	Short glide and rapid wing beats. Prefers to dense scrub and found in deep washes and riparian edges. Prefers to breed in bushes and shrubs (e.g. jojoba, wolfberry).
LeConte's Thrasher LCTH	The song long loud warbling that is infrequent with repetition of phrases.  The call is a higher pitch "suuu-weep"	Long decurved bill; most often shorter than the CBTH.	Adult and juvi have a dark iris.	Overall plumage is pale faded grayish-brown; lacking of the supercilium; narrow malar strip; and the lower belly is pale gray.	Tend to perch at the top of brush when singing; runs along the ground more often than flying from bush to bush; seems to prefer sandier habitats than other thrashers.
Sage Thrasher SATH	Song is a long ramble of varied notes; call is a short "chuck"	Shortest bill of all the thrashers (10 to 11 mm).	Adult iris ranges from lemon yellow to amber.	A gray and white bird; usually a streaked and white throat; distinct streaks on breast; white wing bar; and square tail.	Swift and direct in flight; closer related to mockingbirds but does tend to run rather than fly bush to bush; elusive in behavior if pressured.

### You Tube Videos:

[https://youtu.be/E\\_mZa2O3sxI](https://youtu.be/E_mZa2O3sxI)  
<https://youtu.be/CUWALfVfIMs>

<https://youtu.be/jNY-K0KAz-4>  
<https://youtu.be/3j2FbjzwpOE>

<https://youtu.be/fscLOSKNZwY>  
<https://youtu.be/WoAnS771SOI>

**Note: To receive a word version or questions of training materials, contact Chrissy Kondrat at [ckondrat-smith@azgfd.gov](mailto:ckondrat-smith@azgfd.gov).**

**Additional Resources:**

Arnett, John and Jennie McFarland. 2013. "FIELD MANUAL FOR BIRD SURVEYS IN SOUTHERN MOHAVE COUNTY, AZ ARIZONA FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS & ARIZONA IMPORTANT BIRD AREA PROGRAM April 26-28, 2013."

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Pardieck, K., and R. B. Waide. 1992. Avinet. ([http://www.avinet.com/avi\\_faq.html#abstract](http://www.avinet.com/avi_faq.html#abstract)). 1992

Pyle, Peter. 1997. Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part I. Slate Creek Press, California.

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