

on it with its feet and immediately killed it with its beak. After pecking at the goldfinch for about 15 seconds, the crow flew with it to a tree about 30 m away and completely consumed it in approximately eight minutes.

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Photo Quiz

by
Doug McRae

Answer to Photo Quiz in *Ontario Birds* 10 (1): **Northern Mockingbird**.

This Northern Mockingbird should not present too many problems, unless you were looking for a trick. The most diagnostic feature -- the white wing patch -- is clearly visible in this photo and eliminates most other possibilities. Shrikes, which also show a similar wing patch, would have a much heavier bill and stronger black masks.

Had the wing patch been hidden, there are still some other features visible which could be helpful in identifying this bird. The white outer tail feathers are easily seen in this shot from below, and the thin pointed bill can also be seen.

There is nothing in this photograph to give a sense of relative scale and this can throw an observer off from time to time. To my eye, this bird appears smaller than a Mockingbird should and, because the

belly feathers are fluffed out, the bird looks fatter than most Mockingbirds. If these two things gave you trouble, you might start looking for other possibilities. The thin bill might suggest a warbler (Black-throated Blue being the only one with a similar wing patch), but the tail is too long. Another possible bird for confusion would be a Gnatcatcher, but the lack of an eyering on this bird and the presence of the wing patch

rule out this species too. Besides, in the field the larger size of the Mockingbird would be apparent.

In Ontario, this bird is a "normal" sight only in the greater Niagara peninsula region, but can be found almost anywhere in the province. Our next bird is a classic identification challenge, especially for those who haven't had the chance to study this group before.



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