Abstract
This paper documents the occurrence of a Song Thrush (Turdus philomelos) at Saint-Fulgence, Québec, Canada 11-17 November 2006. This record represents the first of this species within the North American continental boundaries as defined by the American Ornithologists' Union (A.O.U. 1998).

Field encounter
On 11 November 2006, Claude Samson and Diane Côté found an unfamiliar thrush in their backyard at Saint-Fulgence (48° 27' N, 70° 54' W), in the Saguenay-Lake-Saint-Jean region of Québec. Due to its secretive behavior and because it was seen very infrequently in the next four days, Samson and Côté were unsuccessful in their attempts to identify the bird. In the late afternoon of 16 November, Germain Savard received several photographs of the mystery bird taken by Samson through a telescope from inside the house. With no field guides at hand at his place of work, Savard was unable to identify the bird conclusively and so forwarded the photographs to Claude Auchu and Christiane Girard for comment. That evening, Savard received a phone call from them that they had identified the bird as a Song Thrush (Turdus philomelos), which they knew would represent a first record of the species for North America. Given the importance of this discovery, an opinion was also solicited from Michel Gosselin of the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa, who independently identified the bird as a Song Thrush. The following day, 17 November, Savard and seven other birders of the Saguenay region gathered at the living room window of the Samson-Côté home, the only place where it was possible to see the Song Thrush without frightening it. The bird was then observed intermittently throughout the day. A strong cold front swept over the region the following night, and the Song Thrush was not observed thereafter. During the week prior to the passage of this front, rain and very low cloud cover had persisted, conditions that probably kept the thrush grounded during this time. On 17 November, the last day on which the bird was observed, the temperature reached a maximum of 20° C, which was exceptional for this time of year.

Description and identification
The Song Thrush (Figures 1, 2, 3) appeared intermediate in size between the North American Catharus thrushes and American Robin (Turdus migratorius). The upperparts were plain grayish brown without any obvious paler or darker areas other than in wing coverts (see below) and faint, small pale marks in the crown. The underparts were whitish, strongly marked with drop-like, dark brown spots on the chest, flanks, belly, and undertail coverts. A soft russet-buff coloration was obvious on the upper breast and faintly present on the flanks and auriculareas. The white throat was framed by dark submalar stripes, narrow near the chin and broader and more diffuse, with several tiers of stippling at the lower terminus. The malar area was mostly off-white in color, with a few flecks of brown but mostly clean, in contrast to the auriculareas, which were finely mottled with brown, and the submalar markings. The lower/posterior portion of
American Robin in shape—and was stout and long—rather similar to that of stretched its wings briefly and described also show buff tips. Three observers saw among the details that prompted Auchu but not mentioned in European field white supercilium. The Song Thrush's au-

lricular border and eye ring are illustrated (MacKinnon and Philips 2000). It has been suggested that Chinese Thrush forms a superspecies with Song Thrush (Cramp 1988, Sibley and Monroe 1990). The yard frequented by the thrush was a well-vegetated property along the Saguenay River planted mainly with White Spruce (Picea glauca), Northern White-Cedar (Thuja occidentalis), and Showy Mountain-Ash (Sorbus decora). The bird spent most of its time on the ground eating the fallen fruits of Showy Mountain-Ash and some insects. More rarely, it perched in the trees to take fruit. After feeding for a few minutes, it usually disappeared for periods of up to two hours. Very reclusive in the first days of its visit, it had become more confiding and fed for longer periods during the last few days of its visit. In general, it seemed a shy bird and most frequently remained motionless when disturbed. It often ran on the ground, holding its head low. It was seen on several occasions feeding in the company of European Starlings (Sturnus vulgaris); no interactions were noted between the species.

Discussion

Song Thrushes nest commonly from Scandinavia, the British Isles, and nor-

eastern Spain eastward to Lake Baikal in southern Siberia. The species winters mainly in western Europe but reaches northern Africa and the Middle East as far east as Iran. Introduced populations persist in southeastern Australia and in New Zealand (Long 1981, Collar 2005). Although geographic variation is slight and clinal, four subspecies of Song Thrush are recognized (Cramp 1988, Collar 2005). In northern and continental Europe (except in the west), the breeding subspecies is nominate philome-

nos. In western Europe, two subspecies occur: hebridensis, inhabiting the Outer Hebrides and the Isle of Skye, and clarkei, resident in the rest of the British Isles, western and central Netherlands, Belgium, and northwestern and western France (Cramp 1988). East of these subspecies is T. p. natellae, which breeds in central and western Siberia and winters in northeastern Africa and southwestern Asia (Collar 2005). Differences in col-

oration, size of spots on the underparts, and overall size are the main distinguishing characteristics among these sub-

species. Identification of the Saint-Ful-

gence bird to subspecies was not possible in the field or from photographs, but it is reasonable to assume that this vagrant was of the migratory nominate subspecies based on its pattern of occurrence to both Greenland and Iceland.

Outside its typical range, Song Thrush an annual vagrant in Iceland, with an average of 13 to 14 birds reported per year between 1979 and 2003, most of these occurring during the months of October and November (<www.hi.is/-yannki/story_turphi.html>). The autumn of 2006 had reports of at least 38 individuals in Iceland (the second highest number on record), including 36 during the period 12-15 October. Song Thrushes in Iceland have been mostly of the nominate subspecies, although three January specimens of hebridensis have been ob-
tained there (Y. Kolbeinsson, pers. comm.). There is also a Greenland record of a mummified Song Thrush of the nominate subspecies from June 1982 (Boertmann 1994, 1998). As Greenland was not included in the seventh edition of the American Ornithologists' Union's Check-list (A.O.U. 1998), the Saint-Ful-
gence Song Thrush represents the first record for the A.O.U. area as currently defined (A.O.U. 1998) and for continental North America. Neither Song Thrush
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Song Thrush was part of the movement that was observed in Iceland in mid-October. This bird could well have reached land somewhere on the coast of Labrador, then moved southwest inland to find itself in a birder's backyard in the Saguenay area a month later.

Despite its inland location, the Saguenay River valley and Lake-Saint-Jean regions have hosted several uncommon primarily Eurasian taxa, including Common Greenshank (Tringa nebularia), Eurasian Whimbrel (Numenius phaeopus phaeopus), Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa), Ross's Gull (Rhodostethia rosca), Slaty-backed Gull (Larus schistisagus), White-winged Tern (Chlidonias leucopterus), White Wagtail (Motacilla alba), and Brambling (Fringilla montifringilla).

Acknowledgments

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Literature cited


