

# Wood Thrush

*Hylocichla mustelina*

**STATUS**

Threatened 

Not Listed 

53



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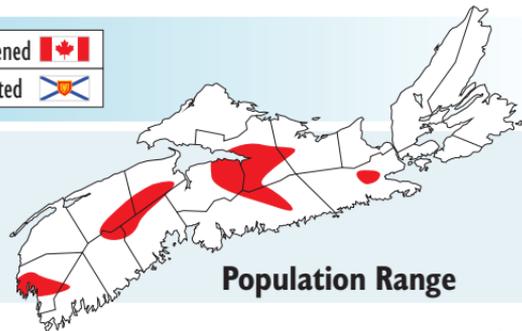
## Species Description

The Wood Thrush is a medium-sized (19-21 cm) songbird with a white eye ring and pink legs. Its crown is reddish-brown and its back, wings and tail are olive-brown. Its underparts are white with numerous conspicuous dark spots. Females and males are similar in appearance. Its song is a distinct and pleasant, fluty “ee-oh-lay”.



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Infrequently observed in Nova Scotia. Winters in Central America. Has declined by 83% over the last 40 years in Canada.



**Population Range**

## Habitat

Found in deciduous and mixedwood forests that have a complex understory of tree saplings and shrubs (for nesting), mature, tall trees (for singing perches) and an open forest floor composed of leaf litter (for foraging). Nests are often laid near the ground in low branches of saplings including American Beech and Sugar Maple.



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Wood Thrush can be found hopping on the forest floor in search of insect prey in the leaf litter. They breed from May to August.

## Interesting Points

- Using geolocators it was discovered that it takes only two weeks for Wood Thrush to migrate south to Central America.
- Many species including hawks, crows, raccoons, chipmunks, squirrels, and mice prey on Wood Thrush nests.
- When Brown-headed Cowbirds lay their eggs in Wood Thrush nests, they will raise the young as their own.



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## Similar Species

Refer to page 38 (Bicknell's Thrush) to view photos and descriptions for the different thrush species. The Wood Thrush is uncommon in Nova Scotia but can be distinguished from other thrushes due to its white breast and conspicuous dark spots. Other similar species include:



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### Ovenbird:

(Left) Reddish crown with black stripes, smaller size (compared to the robin-sized Wood Thrush).

### Brown Thrasher:

(Right) Uncommon spring and fall migrant. Long bill and tail, yellow eyes.



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## Threats to Survival

- Habitat fragmentation and loss.
- Over-browsing by White-tailed Deer (reduced cover and insect prey).
- High levels of nest predation (increases with habitat fragmentation).
- Brown-headed Cowbird parasitism and predation.
- Forest degradation from beech bark disease.
- Exotic earthworms (reduced leaf litter for foraging).

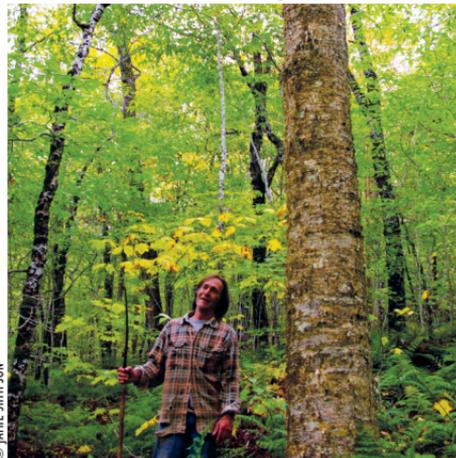


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Wood Thrush with a cowbird nestling

## How You Can Help

Learn to recognize this species and report your sightings to eBird. Woodlot owners can avoid clearcutting and practice uneven-aged forestry techniques that maintain a closed canopy and a diversity of tree ages and species.



© JAMES SIMPSON

Uneven-aged forest woodlot

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** Environment Canada (506) 364-5044 or [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca)

**Info:** [www.speciestrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciestrisk.gc.ca), Maritimes Breeding Bird Atlas: [www.mba-aom.ca](http://www.mba-aom.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** [eBird.org](http://eBird.org), 1-866-727-3447, [www.speciestrisk.ca/sightings](http://www.speciestrisk.ca/sightings)

**Stewardship:** Bird Studies Canada 1-888-448-2473, [www.bsc-eoc.org](http://www.bsc-eoc.org)