WILSON'S THRUSH OR VEERY, *Turdus Wilsonii*, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 349.

TAWNY THRUSH, *Turdus Wilsonii*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. ii. p. 362; vol. v. p. 446.

Male.

Wings with the third quill largest, the fourth scarcely shorter, and slightly exceeding the second. Upper parts uniform light reddish-brown, a little deeper on the head; quill and tail-coverts light olive-brown, the outer webs of the former like the back; lower parts greyish-white, the sides and lower part of the neck, and a small portion of the breast tinged with pale yellowish-brown, and marked with small faint and undecided triangular brown spots. Female an inch less in length than the male, but otherwise similar.

Male, $7\frac{2}{12}$, 12.

HERMIT THRUSH.

+TURDUS SOLITARIUS, *Wils.*

PLATE CXLVI.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This, kind reader, is another constant resident in the Southern States, more especially those of Mississippi and Louisiana, where it abounds during the winter months, and is found in considerable numbers during spring and summer. In the lower parts of Kentucky, Indiana and Tennessee, it is also observed during spring and summer; but it becomes scarcer as you advance towards the Middle Districts, where a few are occasionally seen about the low woodlands of the Atlantic shores.

Except during winter, this Thrush prefers the darkest, most swampy, and most secluded cane-brakes along the margins of the Mississippi, where it breeds and spends the summer, retiring to higher lands during the period when the alluvial grounds are covered with the water which, during freshets, generally inundates these low cane-brakes and swampy retreats.

The flight of the Hermit Thrush is performed low over the ground, and in a gliding manner, as the bird shifts from one place to another at a short distance. In this respect, it differs greatly from its relative, my great favourite, the Wood Thrush, the flight of which is more protracted, and is performed at a greater elevation.

This Thrush is most frequently seen on the ground, where it hops with the same movements employed by the well-known little *Red-breast* of Europe, in other words, before it hops its breast almost comes in contact with the ground, the tail is a little raised, the wings droop, and after hopping, it runs a few steps, erects its head, and looks around.

All the nests of the Hermit Thrush which I have found were in every instance placed lower on the branches of trees than those of the Wood Thrush, seldom above seven or eight feet from the ground, and sometimes so low that I could easily look into them. These nests were fixed to a horizontal bough, but were not *saddled* upon it so deeply as those of the Wood Thrush are. They were smaller, and had no mud or plaster of any kind, but were extremely compact, the outer parts being formed of coarse dry weeds, and here and there a withered leaf, the interior composed of a long delicate kind of grass, which is found growing along the edges of cane-brakes. This grass is arranged in a circular manner, to the whole extent of its length, and gives the inner part of the nest of this bird a remarkable appearance of neatness and finish. The female lays from four to six eggs, of a light blue colour, sprinkled with dark dots towards the large end. The first set are laid early in April, the second about the middle of June; for, in Lower Louisiana, this species rears two broods in the year. The female is much attached to her nest, and glides off silently from it when closely approached, not, however, unless she thinks herself or her nest observed. The young run after the parents, on the ground, for several days after they leave the nest.

As soon as the waters of the Mississippi become so swelled as to overflow the banks, the Hermit Thrush retires to the nearest hills, and mixes with many other birds, amongst which the Wood Thrush is pre-eminent. The former is, however, easily recognised at once, by its single plaintive note, heard from the boughs of low trees, on the berries of which it feeds. In fact, its food is altogether composed of different fruits and berries, which are at all seasons abundant in our woods.

In the Middle Districts the Hermit Thrush is only observed during a few weeks in the spring, and again in autumn. It arrives in the States of New Jersey and New York between the end of April and the middle of May, generally in a desultory manner, and, throwing itself into the depths of the forests, there spends the summer months, frequenting the lowest and most shady thickets. Its song is sometimes agreeable.

HERMIT THRUSH, *Turdus solitarius*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. v. p. 95.

TURDUS MINOR, Bonap. Syn., p. 75.

LITTLE OR HERMIT THRUSH, *Turdus minor*, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 346.

MERULA SOLITARIA, *Hermit Thrush*, Swains. & Rich. F. Bor. Amer., vol. ii. p. 184.

HERMIT THRUSH, *Turdus minor*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. i. p. 303; vol. v. p. 445.

Adult Male.

Bill of ordinary length, nearly straight, compressed towards the end; upper mandible with the dorsal outline a little convex, the tip slightly declinate, the margins acute, inflected towards the end, slightly notched close upon the tip; lower mandible slightly convex in its dorsal line, the tip rather obtuse. Head of ordinary size; neck and body rather slender. Feet rather long; tarsus longish, compressed, slender, anteriorly covered with a few elongated, indistinct scutella, posteriorly edged, longer than the middle toe; toes scutellate above, lateral ones almost equal, the outer connected as far as the second joint.

Plumage rather loose. A few longish bristles at the base of the upper mandible. Wings of ordinary length, the third quill longest, the first very short. Tail rather short, even, of twelve broad feathers, the shafts of which project a little beyond the extremity of the webs, as is the case with the outer primaries.

Bill dark brown, yellowish towards the base of the lower mandible. Iris hazel. Feet flesh-colour. The general colour of the upper parts is light yellowish-brown, changing on the rump and tail into dull yellowish-red. Quills dusky, margined externally with yellowish-brown. Primary coverts yellowish-brown, dusky at the end; secondary coverts tipped with yellowish-red. Under parts greyish-white, the neck and breast spotted with dark brown.

Length 7 inches, extent of wings $10\frac{1}{2}$; bill along the ridge $\frac{7}{12}$, along the gap $\frac{5}{6}$; tarsus $1\frac{1}{6}$.

Adult Female.

The female differs only in having the spots on the breast somewhat larger, and the tints of the upper parts rather deeper.

The branches so thickly covered with dull red berries, and upon which two Hermit Thrushes are seen, belong to a shrub which grows in the swampy recesses preferred by these birds. Its leaves fall off at an early period, and are of an ovato-lanceolate form, thin consistence, and deep green colour, their under surface light grey. The common name of it is *Robin Wood*. It seldom grows taller than from seven to eight feet, and all the branches, in a favourable season, are thickly covered with the berries, on which many birds, besides the *Turdus migratorius*, from which it seems to have derived its common name, are seen to feed.

Hermit Thrush

Male 1. Female 2.

Plant Robin Wood.

Audubon, John James. 1841. "Hermit Thrush, *Turdus solitarius*, Wils. [Pl. 146]."
The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories 3, 29–31. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319259>.

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