

The Veery is found throughout the lowland regions of the Hudson River Valley where it is a common, but declining as a breeder. It can also be seen during spring and fall migration.

Conservation Status

Partners in Flight lists this species as Regional Concern in Bird Conservation Region 30, which includes the Hudson Highlands and Manhattan Hills. The NYS Breeding Bird Atlas shows a consistent distribution over the past 20 years in the Hudson River Valley, but Breeding Bird Survey data reflect a decline in the state's population during the past four decades.



Identification

This medium-sized thrush, smaller than an American Robin, has reddish brown upperparts, a buffy throat and chest with light streaks, and a white belly. The sexes look alike, but the female is somewhat smaller than the male. It is a bird of the forest understory with a beautiful song. Its name reflects the sound of its song--a flute-like, descending, spiraling "veeur, veeur, veeur," which can be heard throughout the early morning and evening during the breeding season.

Habitat

This bird is found in moist deciduous or mixed woods with a partially open canopy, bottomland forests, wooded swamps, damp ravines, and regenerating clear cuts. It prefers thickets of early deciduous second growth and open woods with a dense understory of ferns, shrubs, and saplings.

Food

The Veery feeds mostly on the ground, turning over leaves and debris. It also gleans insects from foliage and flycatches. It eats insects during spring and summer and mostly wild fruit in the fall. Favored insects include beetles, wasps, bees, earthworms, snails, spiders, dragonflies, damselflies, butterflies, moths, and mosquitoes. Favored plant foods include fruiting shrubs and trees such as cherry, dogwood, grape, elderberry, and honeysuckle.

Nesting

The nest is placed in the base of a sapling or shrub, in shoots, fallen branches, briars, or vines, or on the ground in a clump of weeds. It is a bulky cup constructed of grasses, weed stems, bark fibers, small twigs, mosses, and decayed leaves.

Threats

- Loss of understory from forest management techniques that remove understory.
- Loss of understory from overbrowsing by white-tailed deer.
- Fragmentation and loss of early successional and second-growth woodland breeding habitat to development, recreational development, and agriculture.
- Increased likelihood of nest parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbird due to fragmentation.

Management Recommendations

- Practice forest management in a way that mimics natural disturbance and promotes deciduous shrubs and saplings while maintaining overall forest cover in the larger landscape.
- Maintain large and unfragmented forest blocks. Patches of 150 acres or larger generally will provide thrushes with high to moderate levels of habitat suitability.
- Promote understory growth through natural disturbance or management.
- Limit overbrowsing by deer.

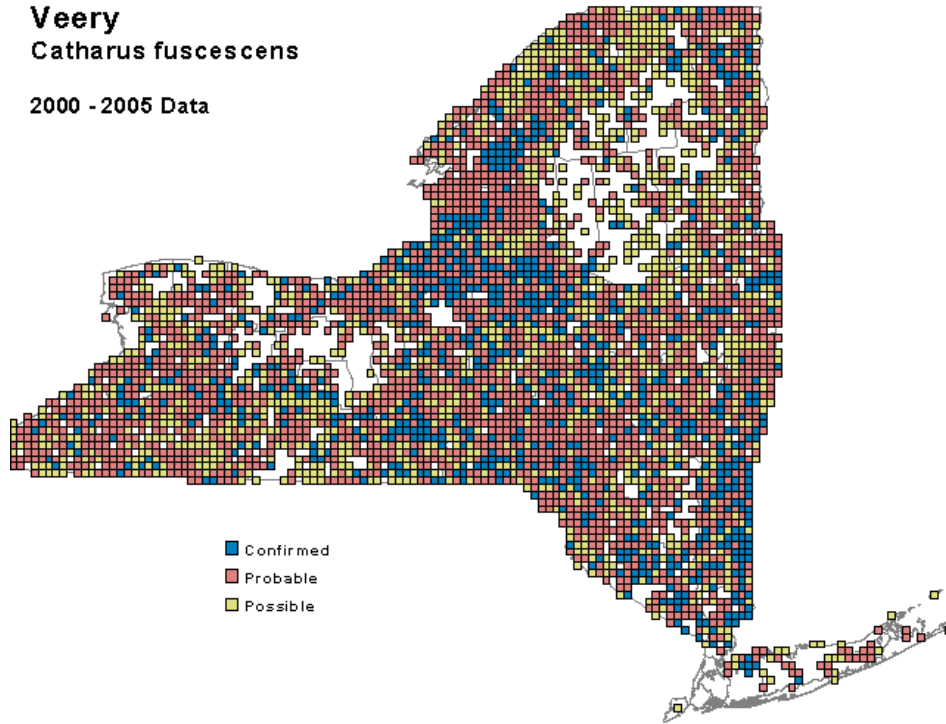
This management summary is adapted from Bevier et al. 2004 and Rosenberg et al. 2003.

For additional information, see the following references:

- Bertin, R. I. 1977. Breeding habitats of the Wood Thrush and Veery. *Condor* 79:303-311.
<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Condor/files/issues/v079n03/p0303p0311.pdf>
- Bevier, L., A. F. Poole, and W. Moskoff. 2004. Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*). The Birds of North America Online. (A. Poole, ed.) Ithaca: Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; Retrieved from The Birds of North American Online database: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/BNA/account/Veery/>.
- Dilger, W. C. 1956. Adaptive modifications and ecological isolating mechanisms in the thrush genera *catharus* and *hylocichla*. *Wilson Bulletin* 68:171-199.
<http://elibrary.unm.edu/sora/Wilson/v068n03/p0171-p0199.pdf>
- Illinois Natural History Survey. Veery. <http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/chf/pub/ifwis/birds/veery.html>
- NatureServe. 2008. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 7.0. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>.
- Rosenberg, K. V., R. S. Hames, R.W. Rohrbaugh, Jr., S. Barker Swarthout, J.D. Lowe, and A.A. Dhont. 2003. A Land-Manager's Guide to Improving Habitat for Forest Thrushes. Ithaca, NY. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/conservation/thrush/thrushguide.pdf>
- Schmidt, K.A. 2003. Linking frequencies of acorn masting in temperate forests to long-term population growth rates in a songbird: the veery (*Catharus fuscenscens*). *Oikos* 103:548-558. (Study at Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Dutchess County)
- Schmidt, K.A., Neils, L.C., Briggs, N, Ostfeld, R.S. 2005. Invasive shrubs and songbird nesting success: effects of climate variability and predator abundance. *Ecological Applications* 15:258-265. (SE NY)
- Sousa, P.J. 1982. Habitat Suitability Index Models: Veery. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
<http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov/wdb/pub/hsi/hsi-022.pdf>
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2001. Veery Habitat Model.
<http://www.vws.gov/r5gomp/gom/habitatstudy/metadata/veery/model.htm>

NYS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS COMPARATIVE DATA

Veery
Catharus fuscescens
2000 - 2005 Data



Veery
Catharus fuscescens
1980 - 1985 Data

