

RECENT RANGE EXTENSION OF THE VEERY ON LONG ISLAND

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Although the Veery (*Hylocichla fuscescens*) has been considered a breeding species on Long Island for over one hundred years, it has, until recent years, been known only as a local nester on the western third. Giraud (1844) wrote, "It visits us in the spring, and continues with us during the summer," without giving any specific nesting localities. Likewise, Eaton (1914) spoke of it only as "rather uncommon on Long Island."

Recent writers have been more specific. Cruickshank (1942) wrote, "On Long Island, a few breeding pairs have been found on the north shore between Flushing and Northport and on the south shore between Idlewild and Woodmere. In recent years in southern Nassau County birds have been heard singing throughout June in ideal habitat near Massapequa and along the Meadowbrook Causeway, and it seems probable that they have bred there." Two years earlier, however, Turrell (1939) writing of the Smithtown area said, "Although its nest has never been found in this area to my knowledge, I have heard the bird singing in mid-July, which is sufficient evidence to establish a breeding record." This reference is probably to the area along the Nissequogue River.

During the 1940's the range of the Veery apparently remained static on the Island but during the present decade it has occupied territory in three areas east of the previously known breeding sites. In 1946, when Dennis Puleston began field work in the Carmen's River area between Brookhaven and Mastic, the Veery was unknown as a nesting species. In 1952, singing birds were found in May and remained to August in suitable breeding habitat. Since that time the species has become a regular breeding bird in the low-lying, swampy woodlands on the east or Mastic side of the river. At least six pairs are normally present although the 1958 population, in common with that of many other species, was abnormally low.

On June 14, 1956, the writer heard at least six singing Veeries on the grounds of the Cutting Arboretum on the banks of the Connecticut River at Great River. Although no attempt was made to find a nest, this number of birds in suitable habitat at the height of the breeding season seems reasonable evidence of nesting.

Prior to 1957, the Veery was unknown as a summer resident in the Peconic River region from Manorville to Riverhead. In late May of that year, however, a pair of Veeries moved into the low-lying wooded swamps bordering the Peconic River near the writer's residence in Manorville. These birds were heard and seen into July and presumably bred. In mid-May of 1958, several Veeries were present in the same area for over a week and showed evidence of territorialism but then disappeared. Later at least two birds were relocated calling and singing about one fourth mile to the east and were present at least until July 23.

On May 24, 1958, an adult Veery was found nest building by Dennis Puleston and the writer in a swampy woods near the Peconic River at Calverton. On June 14, the nest contained three young a few days old

and on the following day a photographic record of the nest was taken by Puleston.

It is probably significant that the four new Veery nesting locations discovered in the last twenty years are along Long Island's four largest rivers, the Nissequogue, Connecticut, Carmen's and Peconic. A natural alteration of habitat has been taking place in each of these regions which has rendered them attractive to the Veery for the first time. Observation indicates that plant succession in all four areas has been similar. Since the Peconic River is most familiar to the writer, the changes there will be described.

Originally, the Peconic River was bordered largely by wide, grassy fresh water marshes with only a narrow fringe of brush between the marsh and the adjacent upland forest. During the last twenty to thirty years, the marsh has been progressively overgrown with shrubs and trees, primarily High-bush Blueberry, Button-bush, Alder, Poison Ivy, Pepperidge and Swamp Maple, while near by swampy areas once largely bushy have been overtopped by moderate sized trees. These changes have created vast stretches of seemingly ideal Veery habitat and it is anticipated that much of it will be occupied in coming years.

LITERATURE

- Cruikshank, A. D., 1942, Birds Around New York City, The American Museum of Natural History Handbook Series, No. 13.
Eaton, E. H., 1914, Birds of New York, New York State Museum Memoir 12.
Giraud, J. P. Jr., 1844, Birds of Long Island, Wiley and Putnam, New York.
Turrell, L. W., 1939, The Natural History of Smithtown, Arts-craft Press, St. James, Long Island.

Manorville, L. I., N. Y.

W. O. S. MEETING

LILLIAN C. STONER

The Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. was quite well represented at the Fortieth Annual Meeting of The Wilson Ornithological Society at Rockland, Maine, June 11-14, 1959. Included in the attendance were 12 of our Federation.

Six of the 24 papers presented on the two-day paper session were given by the following New York State members: Kenneth C. Parker, Eugene Eisenmann and Stephen W. Eaton, each, offered papers on the Wood Warbler Symposium; while Eleanor E. Dater, Walter R. Spofford and Lawrence I. Grinnell spoke respectively on Lawrence Warbler, Golden Eagle and Tropical Birds of Australia.

The picture of the head of the Puffin, the peculiar looking bird with the large and colorful beak, was the emblem Ralph S. Palmer had prepared for this meeting. It was used on the Information and Abstract Booklets and Banquet Menu cards.

This organization, which was founded December 3, 1888 and named after Alexander Wilson, the first American ornithologist, had a membership last year of 1485. New members accepted at the business session numbered 188.