

NATURE NOW

Songs by Wood, Veery Thrush Among Chorus of Bird Music

David K. Falvey and
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WALLOON LAKE.—To many of us who spend long summers in the North Woods country, its varied chorus of bird song is an avid delight. This is especially true of one for whom music has ever been an integral part of each day's living. Bird music is heard at its fullest and best by those who come North early, since for most species it reaches its crescendo during the courtship and nesting period. Two of the most beautiful of our early singers are the wood thrush and the veery thrush. Belonging to a family noted for its singing talents, the former is commonly given first place on any roster of bird musicians.

HERE AT WALLOON we share the wood thrushes choicest habitat; a most deciduous woodland with a well-developed undergrowth bordering on a lake.

The wood thrush's song has long defied description. It is often clear and flute-like, yet sometimes it sounds muted like the tone of a violin. Its varied phrasing is frequently broken by pauses which sometimes end with a high-pitched trill. A slow rendering of this song, made in the field, clearly reveals the bird's ability to produce several notes simultaneously, the whole giving the effect of a minor chord.

To these ears the song often delivered at sunrise and sunset seems to ask and to answer its own questions. But the poignant notes evoke in this listener many questions which she cannot answer.

HOWEVER, IT IS the song of the veery thrush which makes our spring and early summer woods ring.

No muted singer is he; his metallic notes seem to bound and rebound from tree to tree. A more generous and less varied singer than the wood thrush, in his downward-stared notes he employs no more than a half dozen changes of pitch. But the result is a vibrant song, voicing a wild and always remote way of life.

One early summer we were the lucky hosts to a winter wren which fastened its noisy nest to the timbers supporting our cottage. It

beautiful high-pitched song delivered with great rapidity is like a bubbling warble broken by several trills.

One of the longest songs among all bird music, it is seldom forgotten by the few listeners who have been privileged to hear it.

ANOTHER EARLY singer in the fastness of our woodland world is the oven bird. This, the most heavy-bodied of our warblers, is a denizen of the forest floor where he feeds and makes his leafy nest. It is so well camouflaged that many a veteran naturalist has never seen this cleverly concealed oven-like structure.

All bird students know the familiar "teacher-teacher" call of the oven-bird. Its vigorous notes, increasing in volume as they proceed, end on a loud crescendo.

Like many another of our avian friends, this species gives voice to a number of songs and calls. The trained listener learns to recognize bird songs by their quality as well as by the pitch of their notes.

NOW IN MIDSUMMER, with their arduous family chores completed, the voice of many of our birds is stilled. However, some species, like the song sparrow, nest a second time.

Happily, one pair of these fills all our daylight hours with their out-crowd lands or meadows, the song sparrow seems equally at home on our wild arid and cedar-fringed lake shore. He is one of our most generous and prolific singers, his repertoire including as many as 20 selections, each usually employing from seven to 11 different notes.

Other birds which we hear throughout the summer days are the pewee, the crested and the least flycatcher, the chickadee, the cedar waxwing, the red-eyed vireo, the sapsucker and the rare pileated woodpecker.

The vocal efforts of these are more accurately described as "calls" or "alarm notes" rather than songs. The two latter are "drummers," the sapsucker hammering on limbs, tin roofs or wires.

which he excavates in the dead snags of old trees which house colonies of carpenter ants. These insects are his favorite food.

Many attempts have been made to tabulate bird songs, with symbols or with notes on a standard musical staff. However, Dr. Arthur Allen, veteran ornithologist of Cornell University, first transferred this music to records made in the field, thereby enabling all of us to hear the actual bird notes.

And so there is always a part of every out-of-door experience—and sometimes it seems that this is the imperishable part—which cannot be impressed on the printed page or recorded on a wax disk.

forests, of marsh and shore-line, of early dawn, or high noon, of day's end.



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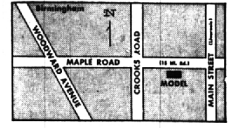
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THE PILEATED woodpecker, which is our rarest bird, is seldom seen except during the mating and nesting season. His spring call, an oft-repeated note first rising then falling, resembles that of the flicker but is louder and deeper.

We hear his "drumming" throughout the summer, and we often see the rectangular holes

Slate Antique Show

The Bedford-Detroit Antique Show will be held daily Aug. 27, 28, 29 at Carpenter's Auditorium in Detroit. Hours will be from 12 noon to 10 p.m. This showing is the 53rd semi-annual presentation and is thereby recognized as the oldest show in the state.

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