

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

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Edition 22.1



Hermit Thrush by Dave Woehr



Hermit Thrush Nest by Kent McFarland (CC BY-NC 2.0)



Hermit Thrush by Tom Murray (CC BY-NC 2.0)

Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*)

By Dave Woehr, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist

The Hermit Thrush is rather well-named bird being somewhat of a hermit. It is a little smaller than a robin and exhibits a rather reclusive personality much of the time, preferring to hide out in woodlands with a scrubby understory. The subdued colors of this bird's plumage blend well with the surrounding habitat. Often its [melodious call](#) is the first thing to give away its presence. Woodland trail hikers sometimes see the bird fly up from the ground only to land on a nearby low branch.

The Hermit Thrush is the only member of the *Catharus* thrushes to be found locally throughout the year, even in the depths of winter, feeding on insects and berries. Its nearest relatives are the Wood Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Veery, all of which only spend stays of short duration during the warmer months. The Hermit Thrush is the official state bird of Vermont, and seems to have a stable and healthy population with no evidence of serious decline as seen in some other avian species.

Hermit Thrushes nest on the ground in the woods. The nest is bulky, cup-shaped, and contains three to six pale blue eggs which sometimes have brown spots. It is constructed of grasses, bark, leaves, mosses, twigs, rootlets, hair, and lichens. Likely places to find a Hermit Thrush include our local woodlands, parks, and cemeteries.

To learn more about this species, visit [page 33 of Ohio Division of Wildlife's Common Birds of Ohio Field Guide](#).