

Brown Thrasher

Toxostoma rufum

General Information:

-This shy bird always repeats itself. The male sings from an exposed perch, sometimes quite high. It is able to imitate other birds but most often sings its own song, which is a curious mixture of musical phrases. Its bright rufous upper-parts and heavily streaked under-parts distinguish this species from all other thrashers in its range.

Song:

-Male sings conversation-like phrases of *hello, hello, yes, yes, who is this, who is this, I should say, I should say*, with the varied phrases being given in two's and three's. Reported to have the largest song repertoire of all North American birds with more than 1100 song types recorded.

Behavior:

-Solitary or in pairs, this highly terrestrial bird forages on or near the ground for food. Finds insects by digging with its bill. Eats mainly seeds, small amphibians, fruit, and some grains. Runs quickly on the ground; turn over leaves and moves debris with bill. Frequents dense brush, early successional stage woodlots, and forest edges.

Breeding:

-Monogamous and a solitary nester.

Nesting:

-Incubation of 11-14 days by both sexes. The 2 broods per year of altricial young are brooded by the female, fed by both sexes, and stay in the nest for 9-13 days.

Population:

-Common to fairly common.

Conservation:

-Will sometimes tend feeder for raisins, suet, and bread.

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

- If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Brown Thrasher on your shoreland property I suggest planting shrubs that are going to be somewhat thick during the earlier stages of their lives, like Ninebark, American and Beaked Hazelnut, Snowberry, Sandbar Willow, Pussy Willow, and Blueberry. For trees I don't think that you could go wrong with any of the oaks or birches, interspersed in with a couple Red Pine &/or Eastern White Pine. I highly encourage the planting of emergent aquatic vegetation.

