

First photographic evidence of Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) for Peru

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Abstract

The Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) is little known in Peru. We present the first photographic evidence of Veery in Peru during October 2004. The date of our observation and of other sight-records suggests that Veery is a rare migrant in extreme eastern Peru.

Key words: *Catharus fuscescens*, migration, Peru, Veery

Resumen

El Zorzal de Dorso Rojizo (*Catharus fuscescens*) es poco conocido en Perú. Estamos presentando la primera evidencia fotográfica de esta especie, tomada en octubre de 2004, en Perú. La fecha de nuestra observación, sumada a otros registros visuales, sugiere que el Zorzal de Dorso Rojizo es un ave migratoria, rara en el extremo este del Perú.

Palabras claves: *Catharus fuscescens*, migración, Perú, Zorzal de Dorso Rojizo

Introduction

The Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) breeds in forests across the northern United States and southern Canada, migrates across the Gulf of Mexico through the Yucatán Peninsula, Central America and northern South America, and winters in cerrado and secondary woodlands in south-central Amazonian Brazil and in southeast Brazil (Bevier et al. 2004, Remsen 2001, Willis & Oniki 1993). Remsen (2001) defined the true winter range for Veery based on 14 specimens collected between 2 December and 20 February, and considered all other 91 South American specimens collected outside these dates to be migrants in passage.

Two sight records exist for Peru, and both lack photographic or audio documentation. One was seen at the edge of bamboo by Mark B. Robbins in Tambopata on 5 November 1980 (Parker 1982, Remsen 2001). Another was reported as a vagrant in Manu (Walker et al. 2006) at Amazonia Lodge by Clive Byers 26 November 1994 (Stotz et al. 1985). Three specimens collected near the border of Peru in Brazil and Chile also exist. Two fall migrants were collected on 23 October 1959 along the Rio Javarí (Remsen 2001), as well as a spring vagrant collected on 17 March 1973 at Chapisca,

Chile (McFarlane 1974), which perhaps continued north into Peru. Five Veery were captured and photographed in poorly drained stunted forest at two sites in Pando, Bolivia on 23 October and 1-2 November 2005 (Tobias & Seddon 2007).

Methods

Between 8 and 18 October 2004, we visited a large *Guadua weberbaueri* bamboo patch bordered by mature terra-firme forest and cleared pasture along the north bank of the Río Tahuamanu at Ocania, Dpto. Madre de Dios, Peru (11°23'S, 69°32'W), 6 Km. west of Iberia, itself roughly 130 Km. north of Puerto Maldonado on the road to Iñapari in Acre, Brazil. We surveyed birds along 1,220 m of trail in this bamboo patch using mist-nets (4,843.5 net-m hrs over 6 days) and point counts (17.0 hrs, 6 mornings before 10:00h).

Results & Discussion

We captured one Veery in a mist-net on 17 October 2004 within *Guadua* bamboo. In ten days at this site, this was our only Veery observation. During the same period, we observed two Swainson's Thrushes (*Catharus ustulatus*); one on 12 October and one, a net-

capture, on 13 October 2004. We placed an aluminum band (598) on its left leg and photographed the bird before releasing it (Fig. 1). The Veery weighed 24.5 g, and had a wing chord of 95 mm and a tail of 65 mm, placing it within the range for Veery, and Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrushes (*Catharus minimus*) (Pyle

1997). It had no visible fat deposits in the furculum and the skull was fully ossified. It had a pale spot on the innermost greater covert on its left wing, which we interpret as a retained hatch-year feather (Pyle 1997). The fully ossified skull and mostly adult greater coverts suggest this bird was an adult.



Fig. 1. This Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*) was captured on 17 October 2004 at Oceania, Dpto. Madre de Dios, Peru (inset shows throat and breast of the same individual). Note uniformly reddish-brown upperparts, pale gray flanks that contrast with the wing, gray lore and lack of buffy eye-ring. Additional photographs of this bird are available from MJA and DJL upon request. (Photo: DJL).

This is the first photographic evidence of Veery in Peru. The timing of our observation and the other reports suggests that Veery is a rare migrant in extreme eastern Peru, and is consistent with a more western fall migration route suggested by Remsen (2001) and Stotz et al. (1992). If the stunted forests of Pando, Bolivia represent an additional important wintering area as Tobias & Seddon (2007) suggest, then our bird may have been a winter resident. Researchers in eastern Peru should maintain a watchful eye for Veery so as to better document its status as a migrant.

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Acknowledgments

DJL is grateful to Raul Baez Huayllapuma for assistance in the field, INRENA for permission to conduct research in Peru, and to Fulbright for supporting this research. Mark B. Robbins made valuable comments to the manuscript and Christopher L. Wood had helpful suggestions regarding the limits of identification and aging of *Catharus* thrushes.

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