

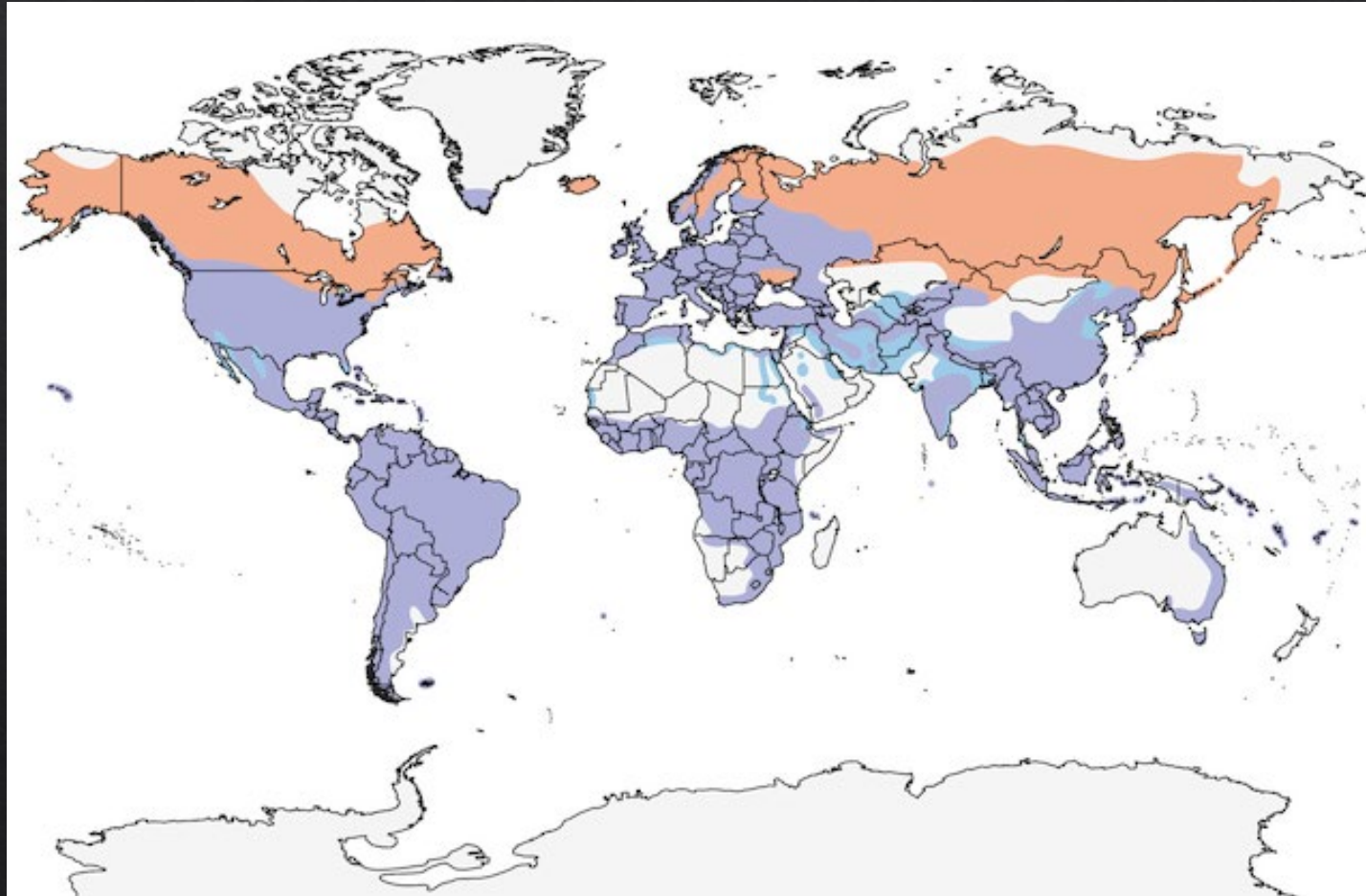
Thrushes



Photos by Greg Lavaty

Order: Passeriformes

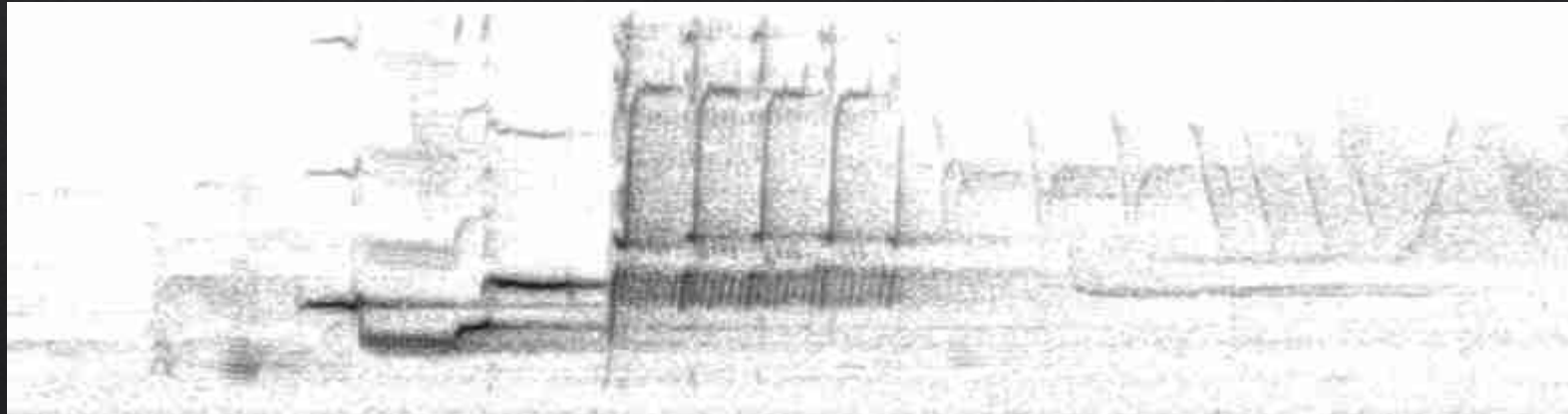
Family: Turdidae– 18 genera, 123 species worldwide, 13 species regular in ABA area



Thrushes

Thrush vocalizations

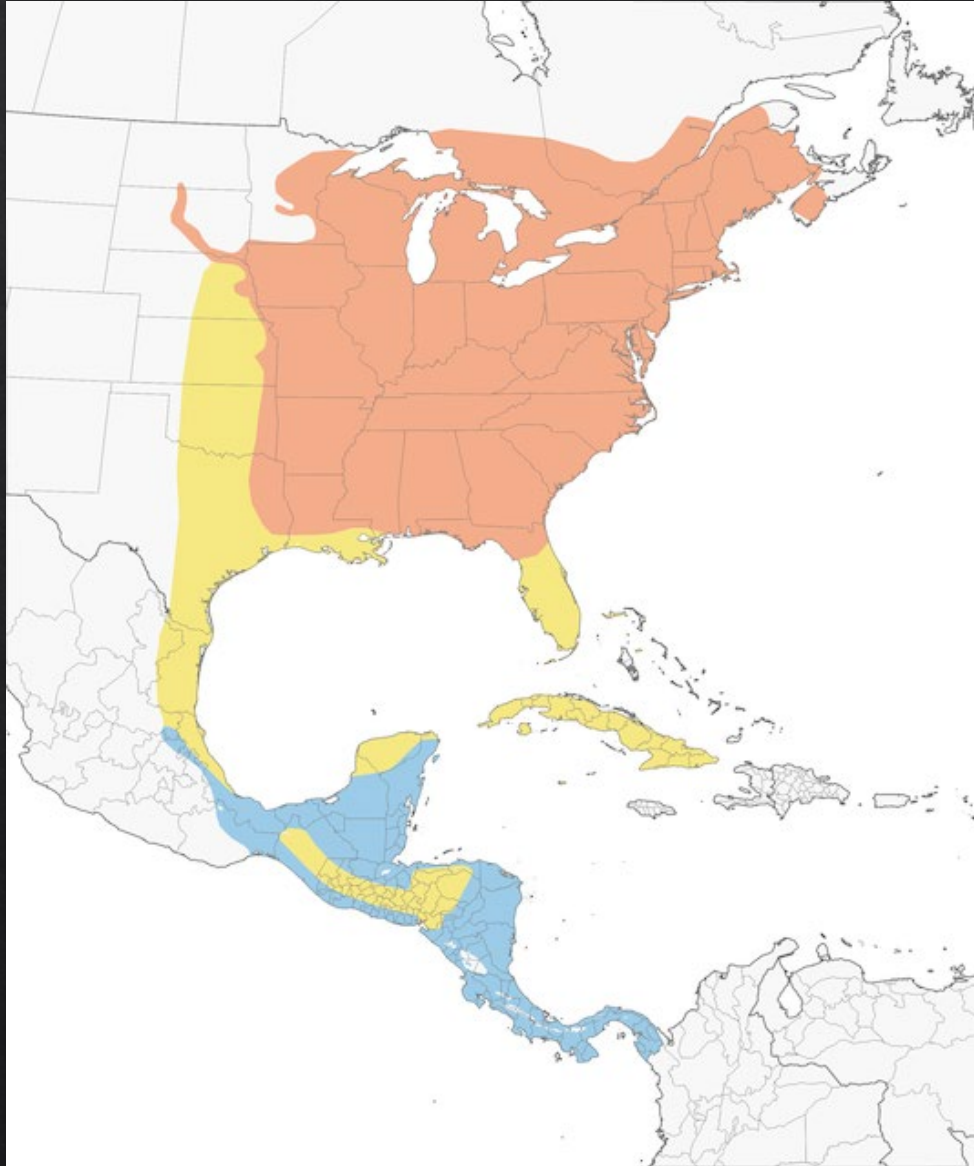
- ◆ Perhaps the most renowned singers of all birds
- ◆ Can produce simultaneous notes from each half of syrinx, producing harmonies
- ◆ Many have complex, ethereal songs



Wood Thrush



Wood Thrush



- *Hylocichla mustellina*
- Breeds in eastern forests
- Completely vacates in winter
- Edge and interior of moist woodlands with understory
- Central TX – Rare spring migrant
- Texas Coast – Common spring migrant, breeds E. Texas Piney Woods

Wood Thrush



- Larger and more robust than other thrushes
- Plump, long-legged, stocky

Wood Thrush

- Reddish brown upperparts



- Bold white eye ring
- Bold black spots on clean white underparts

Wood Thrush

Russet brightest on
head and nape



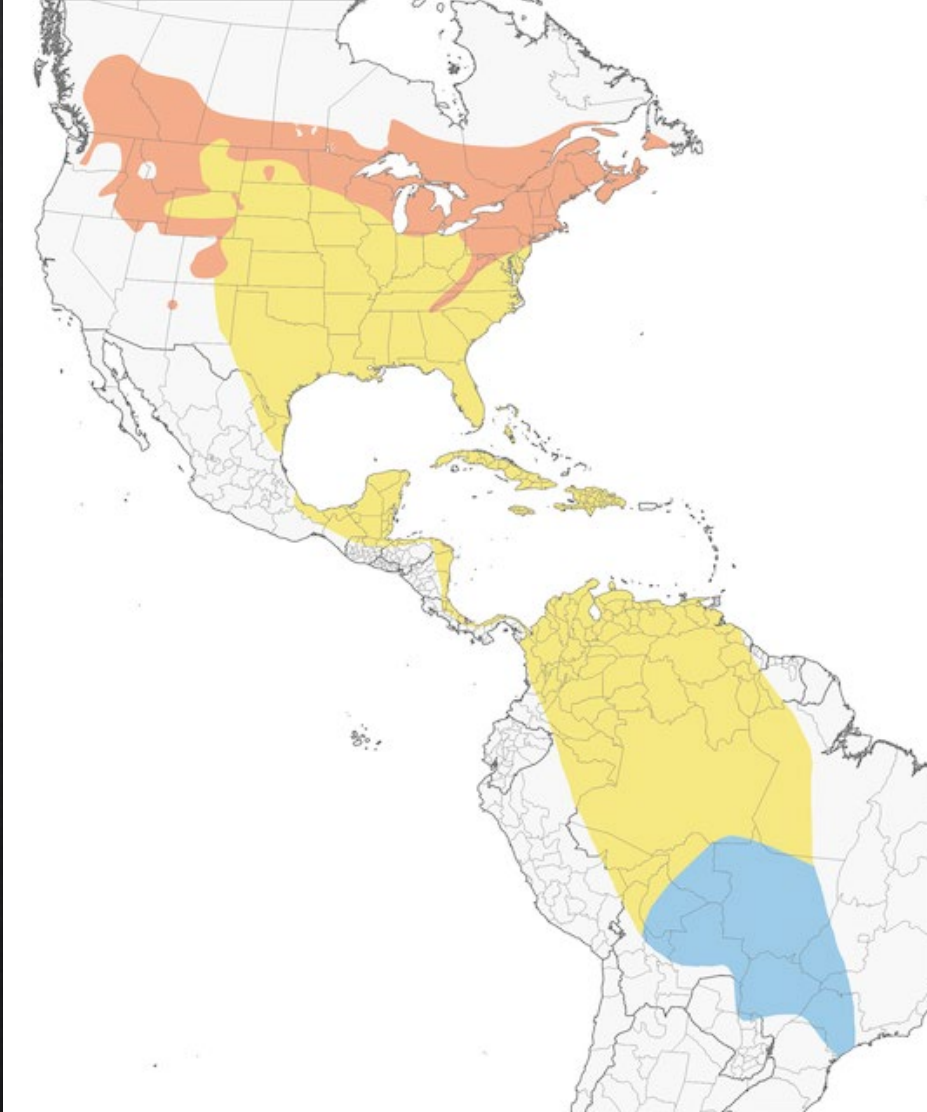
Wood Thrush



Veery



Veery



- *Catharus fuscescens*
- Breeds in northern forests
- Thick damp deciduous woods, thickets
- Central TX – rare spring migrant
- Texas Coast - fairly common spring migrant

Veery

- Smaller and more slender than Wood Thrush
- Upperparts plain ruddy brown
- Face pattern indistinct
- Clean white belly with gray flanks



Veery



- Upper breast weakly spotted
- Spots bleed into warm color

Veery



Veery



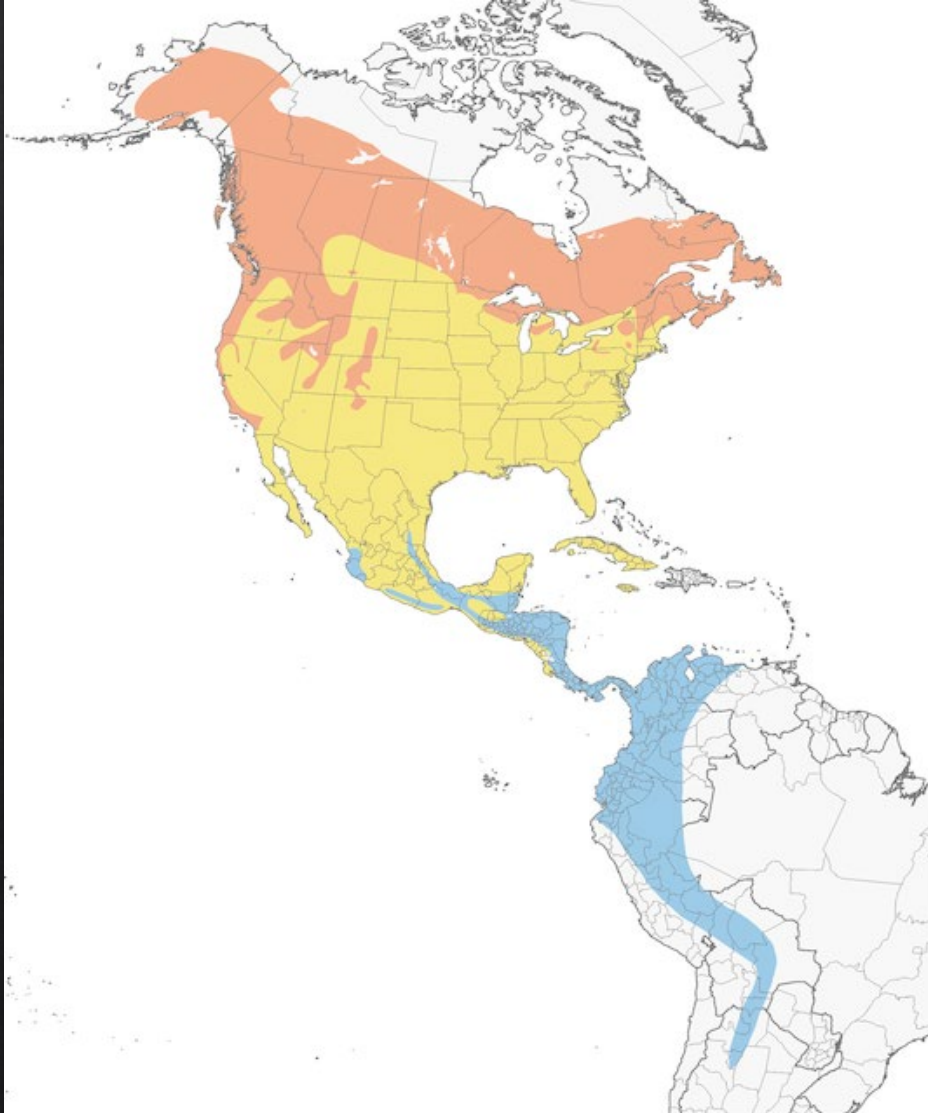
Veery



Swainson's Thrush



Swainson's Thrush



- *Catharus ustulatus*
- Northern and western breeder
- Common migrant across US
- Streamside thickets, dense understory in mixed forest
- Central TX – fairly common spring migrant
- Texas Coast – abundant spring, uncommon fall migrant

Swainson's Thrush

- Buffy spectacles
- Olive gray back
- Round head
- Well-proportioned body



Swainson's Thrush



- Face is warm, buffy, paler than back
- Heavily spotted upper breast

Swainson's Thrush



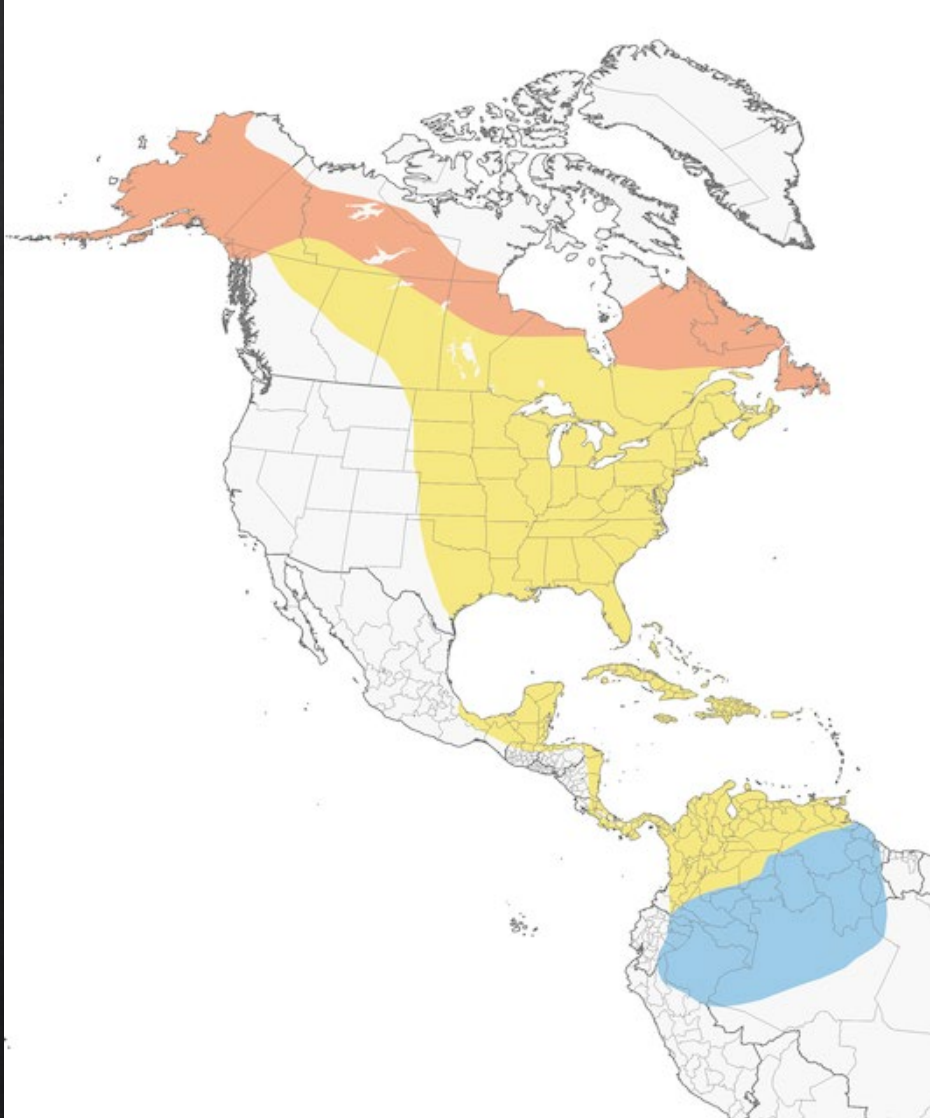
Swainson's Thrush



Gray-cheeked Thrush



Gray-cheeked Thrush



- *Catharus minimus*
- Far northern breeder
- Less common than Swainson's in migration
- Dense shrubs in forest, dense woodland understory
- Central TX – rare spring migrant
- Texas Coast – common spring migrant

Gray-cheeked Thrush

- Plain, gray and cold-toned
- Variable breast spotting
- Dusky flanks



Gray-cheeked Thrush



- Face plain and gray, little contrast with back
- Pale gray crescent behind eye
- No buffy or warm tones on face

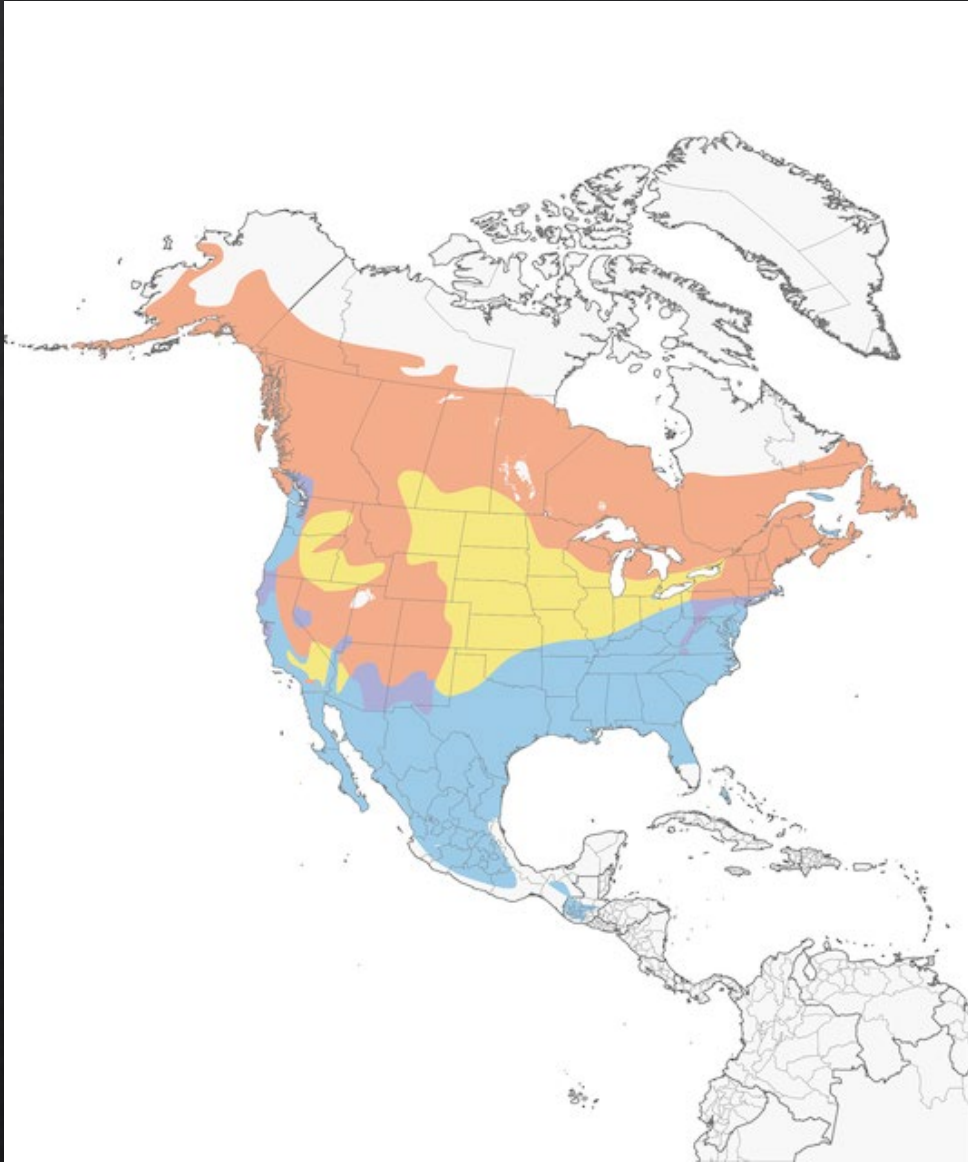
Gray-cheeked Thrush



Hermit Thrush



Hermit Thrush



- *Catharus guttatus*
- Widespread northern and western breeder
- Only thrush that winters in US
- Brushy understory, berry thickets, often in drier habitat than other thrushes
- Central TX – fairly common from late Oct. to mid Apr.
- Texas Coast – common Nov. to late Mar.

Hermit Thrush



- Gray-brown upperparts contrast with rusty tail and wing edges
- Only thrush present Nov. – Mar.

Hermit Thrush



- Small, compact, cocked tail
- Often flicks tail upward

- Buffy flanks

Hermit Thrush

- Bold spots on whitish breast
- Often shows narrow but complete white eyering



Hermit Thrush

- White chest often stands out in poor light



Hermit Thrush







Swainson's and Gray-cheeked





















Bluebirds



Photos by Greg Lavaty

Bluebirds

Bluebird Ranges

- ◇ Eastern and Western separated by range, barely overlap (west Texas in winter)
- ◇ Where Mountain overlaps Eastern and Western, nests at higher elevation
- ◇ In winter, Mountain forms large loose flocks that move to lower elevation shrubland, grasslands, agricultural fields



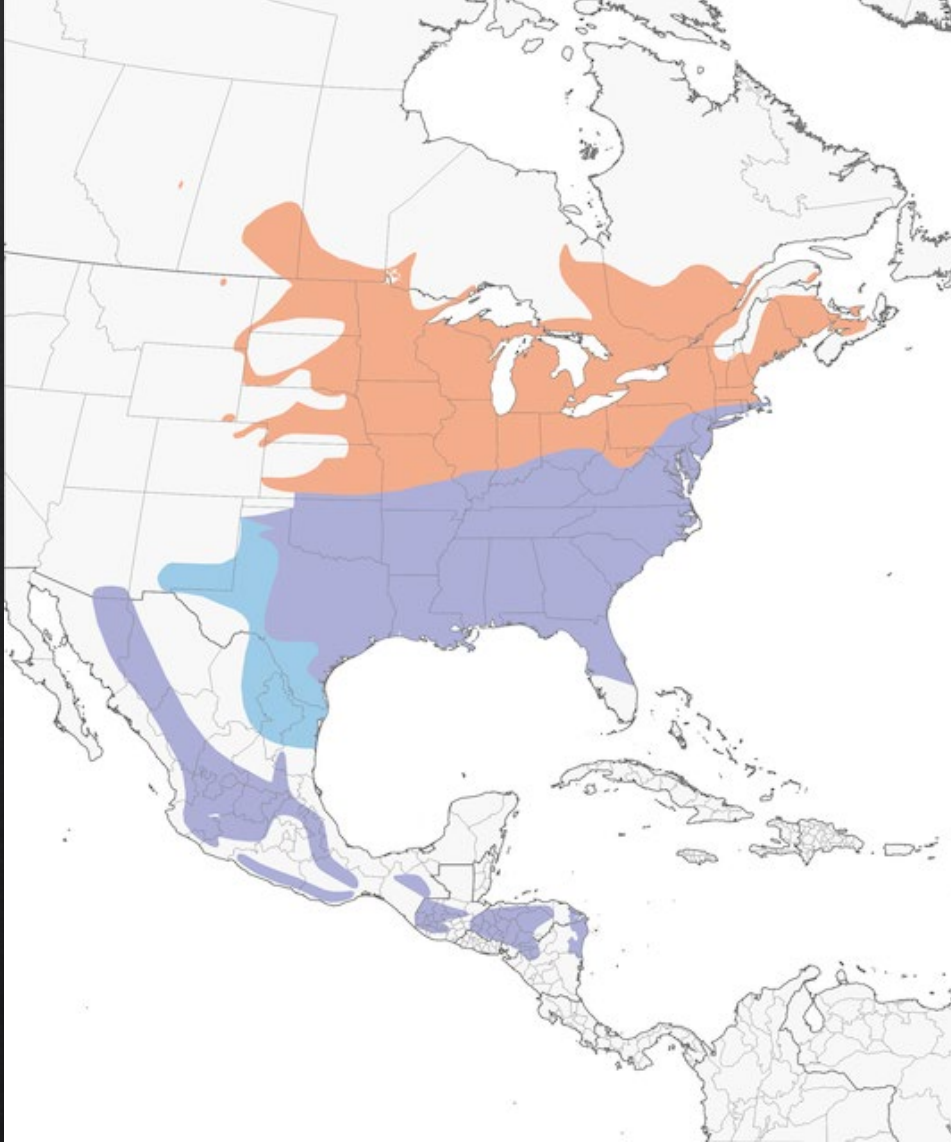
Bluebirds

Bluebird Behavior

- ◇ Perch-hunting birds, search for prey from elevated perch
- ◇ Swoops down on prey like a shrike, may fly-catch



Eastern Bluebird



- *Sialia sialis*
- Breeds across eastern US
- Open and semi-open habitats, often on fences and power lines
- Usually in small groups

- Central TX – fairly common summer, common in winter
- Expands into west and south TX in winter

Eastern Bluebird



Male

- Deep blue head and back
- Rust from chin to lower breast
- White belly and vent

Eastern Bluebird



Female

- Grayish with blue tinged wings and tail
- Orange side of neck down to flanks
- Whitish throat and belly

Eastern Bluebird

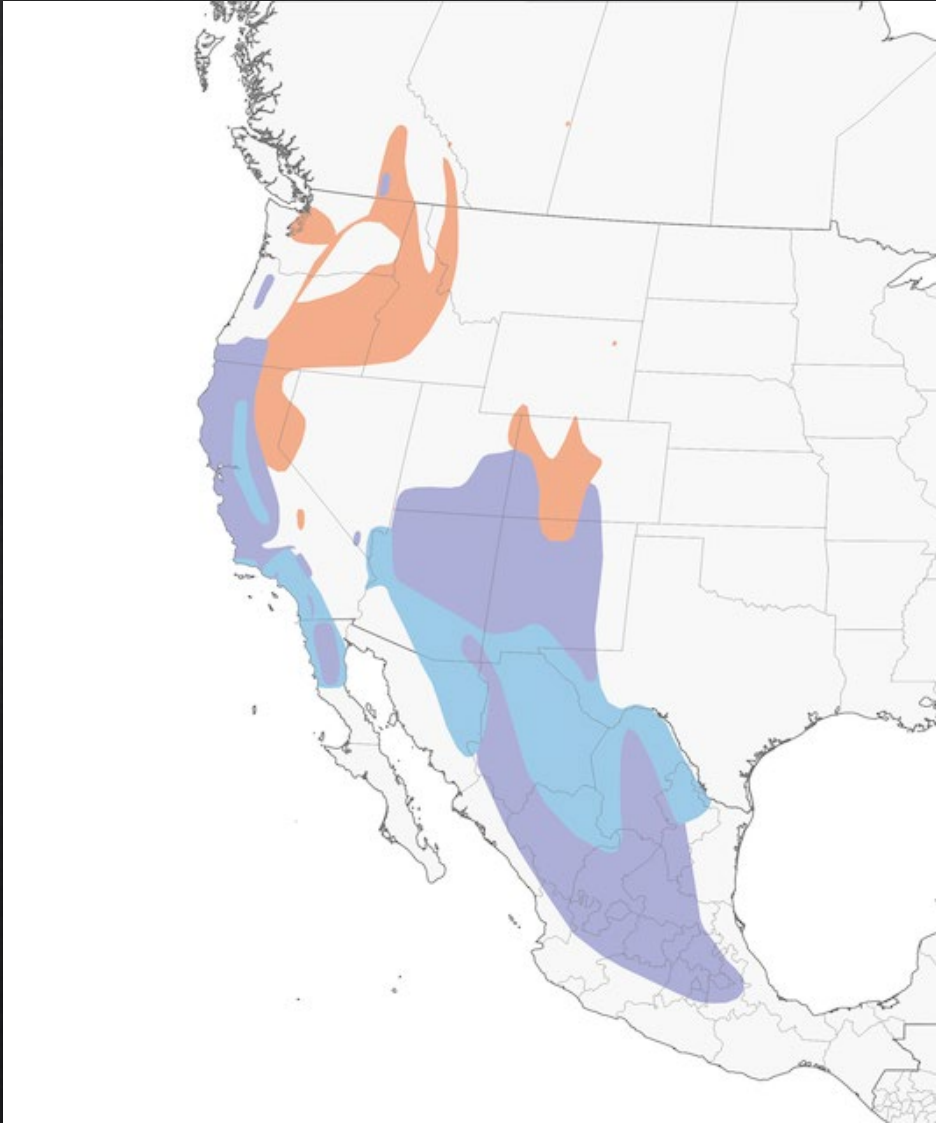


Eastern Bluebird



Juvenile

Western Bluebird



- *Sialia mexicana*
- Breeds in western US, Mexico
- Open wooded habitat, pine forests, parks
- Uncommon and local breeder in Davis and Guadalupe Mtns. mostly above 6,000 ft. In winter may occur elsewhere in Trans-Pecos

Western Bluebird

Male

- Blue throat
- Blue or gray belly



Western Bluebird



Male

- Rusty scapulars
- Overall darker than Eastern

Western Bluebird



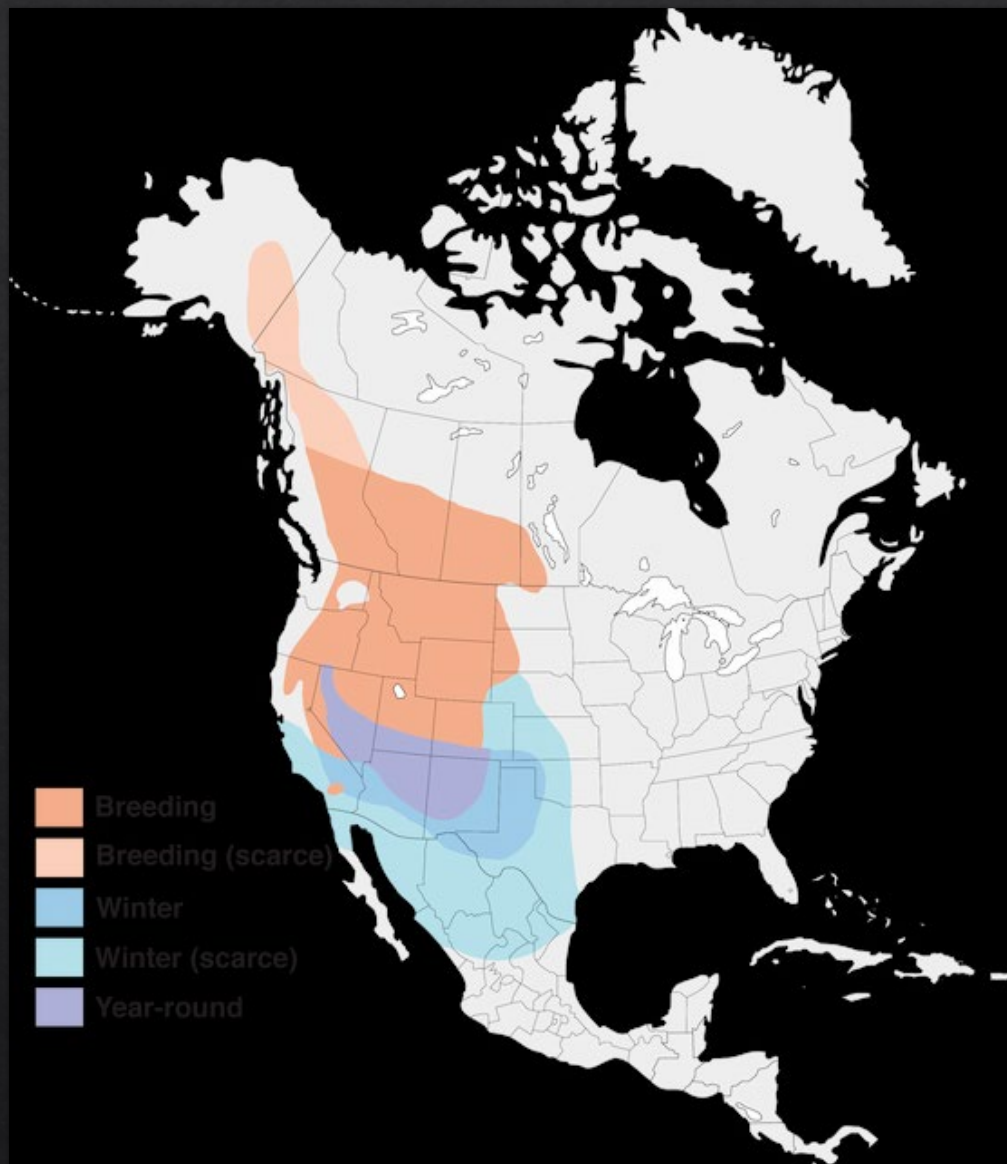
Female

- Gray throat and auriculars
- Gray flanks and belly

Western Bluebird



Mountain Bluebird



- *Sialia currucoides*
- Breeds in montane grasslands and meadows, even above treeline
- Winters in flocks in open shrubland and grassland
- Uncommon winter resident in Trans-Pecos and Panhandle, irruptive winter visitor in western half of state.

Mountain Bluebird



Male

- Sky blue overall

Mountain Bluebird



Female

- Plain ashy gray overall
- Pale blue wings
- Low contrast

Mountain Bluebird

Very long primaries

