

Musical Interlude: Part Four
KMUN Program
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From the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge to your backyard, we bring Willapa Nature Notes

A beautiful musical interlude introduces Nature Notes. As noted in my last nature note about our musical interlude, there are four birds that star along with the musical notes of the violin and the guitar. Today, the star of the show is the Hermit Thrush.

The Hermit Thrush is wide-spread in the Pacific Northwest during the summer. It is also a common to uncommon winter resident in Western Washington and Western Oregon. If you see a thrush that is a warm rich brown above with a bright rusty reddish tail, a pale breast and belly with smudged spots, a throat dotted with bold black spots, and an eye with a thin white eye ring, you are looking at a Hermit Thrush. It is the only thrush that continually quickly raises its tail and slowly lowers it while flicking its wings quickly upward. Their favourite habitats include the understory in mature forests, including conifer forests, hardwood and mixed forests. It dines mostly on insects and fruit that it finds on the forest floor and in low trees or shrubs.

Its song, like the Swainson's Thrush's is flute like, lilting and melodious. It is also loud and haunting. It can be heard echoing through the forest on early summer evenings and mornings. It begins with a loud sustained whistle and ends with softer flute like tones. According to the Cornell Ornithological Lab., its most frequent call is a low-pitched *tchup* or *quoit* which signals danger. It talks to its young with a two-syllable *chuck* and *lisp*. Sometimes their spring song comes across as a faint whisper.

Listen to the interlude for the clear flutelike notes of the Hermit Thrush. You will be delighted by its haunting musical notes.