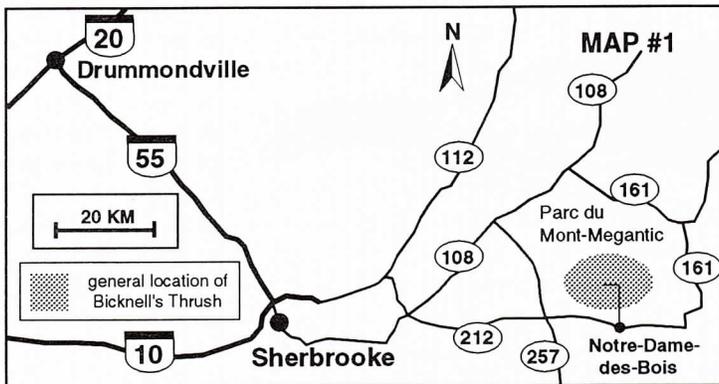


Bicknell's Thrush

Observation Sites in Quebec

by Henri Ouellet

There are several easily accessible locations where Bicknell's Thrush can be readily observed in Quebec, but some locations may be difficult to reach or are a long distance from major cities in Ontario and Quebec. With a good road map of Quebec and the following information, birders should not have trouble locating suitable places and birds at the right time during the nesting season.



Map by Michael King

Map 1. The easiest spot, particularly for those who do not have much time at their disposal, is undoubtedly Mont Mégantic, east of Sherbrooke in the Eastern Townships. This area, where an astronomical observatory is located, is part of a provincial park, Parc du Mont-Mégantic, and the summit can be reached on a paved road. Bicknell's Thrush can be heard and seen from the main road but one increases the chance of good sightings by using the numerous paths that lead away from the road, starting near the observatory. The best times of the day are very early mornings around sunrise, and evenings before sunset. There is much singing in early June on calm and foggy days, at all hours. This bird also sings occasionally at night, particularly when there is no wind. Mont Mégantic offers the added opportunity to hear and observe several species of the boreal forest such as Boreal Chickadee, Common Raven, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo and Gray Jay to name only a few.

Early mornings and evenings, or calm foggy days in the first three weeks of June are best for hearing and seeing the bird.

Map by Michael King

Map 2. Another choice area for seeing Bicknell's Thrush is the Gaspé Peninsula. The small locality of Mont Saint-Pierre offers two possibilities. The first is the series of hills that surrounds the village, particularly those on the east side which are accessible by a gravel road that leads to a launching pad for paragliders. The upper part of the road goes through suitable habitats and supports a few pairs in the second growth stands that border it. Mont Saint-Pierre also leads to Mont Jacques-Cartier in the Chic-Chocs Faunal Reserve. It is located some 35 km south of the village and at the end of the gravel road one can use the parking lot from where several trails lead to Mont Jacques-Cartier. The areas of transition between coniferous stands and alpine tundra support stunted conifers, birches and willows. This is the traditional habitat of Bicknell's Thrush in that part of its range. Early mornings and evenings, or calm foggy days in the first three weeks of June are best for hearing and seeing the bird. The area of Mont Albert in Gaspésie Provincial Park, with its numerous trails leading to traditional habitats also offers excellent opportunities to see this thrush.

Map 2. Forillon National Park, particularly the higher portions, appear to support a small population of Bicknell's Thrush but I have not checked this part personally. During fall migration, from mid-August to mid-September, it has been reported in good numbers.

Map 2. The higher hills around Percé support a small population of Bicknell's Thrush and all the areas are easily accessible by car or on foot from the village or from the back

