

came within 40 yards of me as it flew away. A quick look through 7X binoculars confirmed all field marks of the Pileated Woodpecker. This sighting appears to be the first for this species from the heavily birded Bodie Island-Pea Island section of the North Carolina coast. It is noteworthy because the surrounding area is apparently almost completely unsuitable for the Pileated, consisting only of dune vegetation, marshes, and maritime shrub thickets. The Pileated flew from an acre-sized plot of small to medium-sized planted pines which is surrounded by younger planted pines and shrubs.

The Pileated Woodpecker has been reported previously from Wachese, N.C., on Roanoke Island, approximately 4 miles away across Roanoke Sound and also at Kitty Hawk, 18 miles to the north. Both of these sites have better habitat for this woodpecker.

Brown Thrasher Encounter with Snake

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The Brown Thrasher (*Toxostoma rufum*) eats primarily insects and larva but has been reported to eat lizards, salamanders, and tree frogs (Beal, McAtee, and Kalmbach, 1916, in Bent, USNM Bull. 195, p. 364, 1948). On 19 May 1973 I observed an adult Brown Thrasher striking a small snake on the Chapel Hill campus of the University of North Carolina. The bird was standing on the ground where the snake had been discovered in the leaf litter. I found that the snake had been decapitated and was wriggling vigorously. The body was approximately 8 inches in length and ½ inch at its largest diameter. The head could not be found. While I was examining the snake, an immature Brown Snake (*Storeria dekayi*), the thrasher flew off about 15 feet and made throaty *chuck* sounds, the only vocalization heard during this observation.

After 30 seconds I moved 20 feet away, and the thrasher returned to the snake. The bird immediately began striking the snake. The bill was maintained at 90 degrees to its body axis, and its head was raised about 2 inches above the snake before delivery of each blow. The body pivoted at the acetabulum; otherwise, there was no movement. After about a minute of jabbing, during which time the snake ceased movement, the thrasher flew about 40 feet with the snake in its bill. For another minute the thrasher pecked at the snake and on three occasions threw the body about 6 inches above the ground. The thrasher spent about a quarter of this time peering at the snake. Pecking, throwing, and peering were accomplished using primarily the neck with little body movement. During the next 3 minutes the thrasher attempted to swallow the prey. Wing flashing was not observed (see Potter, *Chat*, 32:103, 1968).

I was unable to confirm whether the thrasher succeeded in swallowing the snake, because a car stopped nearby and the bird flew out of sight. However, as the thrasher flew, I could not see the snake, and a thorough search for the snake was negative. I remained in the vicinity for another 3 minutes watching apparently the same bird forage in the forest litter.

The thrasher and *Storeria dekayi* frequent the same habitat. This report indicates that the opportunistic feeding habits of the Brown Thrasher allow it to include small snakes in its diet.