

Yahgan: **Hakásir**, Hakásij, Hakásirj, Xakacir
 Mapudungun: **Wilki**, Huilqui, Huilque
 Spanish: **Zorzal**, Zorzal patagónico
 English: **Austral Thrush**
 Scientific: *Turdus falcklandii*

The melodic call of the Austral Thrush epitomizes the sunrises and sunsets of the forests, farmlands, and even plazas and gardens of southern South America. From its song derives the Mapudungun name *wilki*, as well as its nickname "orchestra director of the birds and nature," given to it by the *Lafkenche* poet Lorenzo Aillapan. In San Juan de Chadmo on Chiloé Island, its song is interpreted as "blessed and

praised be God."
 For the *Lafkenche* poet the melodious *wilki* captures the essence of the Earth, vitalizing all the living beings listening to its whistle:



Singing I say: life – happiness – love.
 Among songs and dances, through the air to the ear,
 I say hello to the human, likewise to those who care for the children,
 to those who are living thanks to virgin Nature.
Chülle Mapu, earthly paradise, from the mountains to the sea
 From north to south, all things rejuvenate, returning to spirituality..."

Pin ñi ñilkantun: mongen, ayüwün, poyen.
 Rangñi ñilkantu ka pürin kürif mew wefi pilun püle,
 Chaliwün che feyti petu penielu fey ñi pichike pu yall,
 Feyti petu mongelelu puche, we mongen lefün füla.
 Chülle mapu dulliñ mülewe rumel pirentu winkul ka lafken piile
 Pikun püle ka willi kürif ruf mongetuy wüñotulu pillüjem..."

The *wilki* is the largest flying Passeriform in the *Nothofagus* forests, where it occupies all type of habitats in the interior and edges of forests. They consume all kind of food from the soil and canopy. The *wilki* is so abundant throughout the Mapuche territory, that it gives its names to places in the northern, central, and southern regions. For example, in the Cachapoal Valley, Huilquío means place of Austral Thrushes (*wilki* = Austral Thrush, *o* = diminutive of *we*, place), in the Andes Cordillera of Talca, Huilquilemu means forest (*lemu*) of the *wilki*, and on Chiloé Island, Huilqueco means river or water (*ko*) of the *wilki*.

In the Yahgan territory the Austral Thrush or *hakasir* also inspires the women and other members of the culture. The Yahgnas observe how this bird feeds and educates its chicks in trees and along the rivers that



spill through the forests. The Yahgan grandmothers Ursula and Cristina Calderón explain how, when the Austral Thrush has chicks, the mother teaches the oldest one. Grandmother Ursula describes how the "mother *hakasir* rises to a stick. I saw her talking, whistling, teaching her child, constantly moving around the canopy. I was lying down, watching while the *hakasir* told him, 'when you get a brother, you'll have to educate him, and stimulate him to work and wash himself.' In that way the *hakasir* grows. If the Austral Thrush's son doesn't listen to his mother, if the little *hakasir* doesn't obey, she abandons him. The young one stays alone, and doesn't have anything to eat. Then, it feeds on bad *dihueñes* (the fungus *Cyttaria* sp.), those that are overripe, that do harm, and the little *hakasir* dies. If the little *hakasir* obeys his mother, though, he grows up healthy eating good fruit like *amai*



(*Gaultheria mucronata*) and *mema* (another fungus species of the genus *Cyttaria*)."

Thus, the Austral Thrush, *wilki* or *hakasir*, expresses to us how the lives and languages of the birds are interwoven with those of human beings in the forested territories of southern South America, as they should be in the rest of the world.



Yahgan story. When the Austral Thrush has chicks, the mother teaches the oldest one. She rises to a stick. I saw the little bird, teaching, talking to her child. I was lying down, watching her. She told him, "When you'll have a brother, you'll have to help raise him, stimulate him to work, to wash himself. In that way the little bird was singing. They flew to the river, where they dove into the water, washing themselves, shaking themselves, and flying back to the tree. In that way they grew up. If the little Austral Thrush doesn't listen to his mother, if he doesn't obey, she abandons him. The young one stays alone, doesn't have anything to eat, lives on bad *dihueñes*, those that are already overripe, that do harm, and he dies. But on the other hand, if he obeys his mother, he grows up healthy living on good fruit, like *chaura* (*amai* or *Gaultheria mucronata*) and *mema* (another fungus species of the genus *Cyttaria*).

Mapuche story. With its call the austral thrush typifies the sunrises of the forests throughout the south of Chile and Argentina. The Mapudungun name *wilki* is onomatopoeic from its melodic whistle. To its beat grow the children, and the mothers nurse the babies singing, "moyoy ta piñeñ, wiñ! lichituy piñeñ, wiñ!"

Mapudungun version. Tachi *wilki* pu aliwen koniñi wakeñ ñilkantun mawidaantu meñ willi püle Chile mapa ka Argentina. Uytukun *wilki* fey tañi wüñil ñilkantun wüyeñkantu wüñil tremün pichike domo ka feyti pu ñuke moyolu tañi pu piñeñ ñilkantuy moyoy ta piñeñ – wüy/wüy ta piñeñ – lichituy ta piñeñ.

*From the poem *Wilki*, *Twenty Winged Poems* (Aillapan & Rozzi, 2001)