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Mate Fidelity in Ring-billed Gulls.—Long-lived seabirds often retain the same mate from one breeding season to the next (e.g., Richdale 1951, *Megadyptes antipodes*; Coulson 1972, *Rissa tridactyla*; Nelson 1978, *Sula bassana*). Among gulls (*Larus* spp.), mate fidelity has been investigated in several species, notably the Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*, Drost et al. 1961), Glaucous-winged Gull (*L. glaucescens*, Vermeer 1963), and Red-billed Gull (*L. novaehollandiae scopulinus*, Mills 1973). Kovacs and Ryder (1981) demonstrated that female-female pairs of Ring-billed Gulls (*L. delawarensis*) sometimes show mate fidelity. The extent of this tendency among male-female pairs of Ring-billed Gulls, however, has remained undocumented.

From 1978 to 1981 we observed wing-tagged Ring-billed Gulls (Southern 1971) at the Calcite colony near Rogers City, Michigan (Presque Isle County, 45°N, 83°W). In 65 instances, we were able to determine: (1) whether or not a particular bird retained its mate of the previous year, and (2) the colony subdivision in which the tagged bird nested (mapped in Southern and Southern 1981). In some cases, we could not specifically identify a new or old mate, but were able to assess whether or not a change had occurred (e.g., old mate unmarked, new mate tagged).

Table 1 shows the frequency of mate change and mate fidelity we observed. Of the 10 females and 15 males known to have changed mates, at least 7 females and 6 males did so although their partner of the previous year was present. In all instances of mate change where the new mate was identifiable, both males (7) and females (4) paired with birds that had been their neighbors in the previous year. This is not surprising, considering the high degree of nest site tenacity shown by Ring-bills (Southern and Southern 1979, Blokpoel and Courtney 1980).

We have little information on the effect, if any, of reproductive success on the pair bond. Four pairs were known to stay together despite reproductive failure the prior year, while 3 pair bonds were broken following reproductive failure. One pair fledged one chick in 1980 but each member had a new mate in 1981. In all of these cases, mates of the previous year were recorded in the colony, i.e. birds apparently had a choice between their old mate or a new one.

Advantages associated with mate fidelity, or mate switching, in seabirds have been discussed by Coulson (1972) and Mills (1973). Further long-term studies of Ring-billed

TABLE 1. Frequency of mate change and mate fidelity for Ring-billed Gulls at the Calcite colony.

	Changed mate	Changed location	Changed mate & location	Same mate & location
Females	9	1	1	18
Males	12	1	3	18
Unknown sex	2	0	0	0
TOTAL	23	2	4	36
	(35.4%)	(3.1%)	(6.2%)	(55.4%)

Gulls are needed to determine the function of mate fidelity in this species, and the influence of various proximate factors on this behavioral tendency.

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Foraging by Cattle Egrets and American Kestrels at a Fire's Edge.—We observed Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) and American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) to congregate at both controlled and naturally occurring fires in southcentral Florida. On 27 December 1980, at approximately 11:00, we observed a burning sugar cane field near Clewiston, Florida. The berm between the cane field and a secondary road was covered by grasses and weedy forbs, most under 0.25 m in height. A line of fire advanced across the berm in a northwest breeze and 12 Cattle Egrets foraged on the ground within 1 m of the flames. The egrets were not repelled by the smoke and several egrets flew through dense clouds of it. On the other side of the road, several flocks of Cattle Egrets foraged between rows of smoldering cane stalks in a recently burned field.

Winter months in southcentral Florida are typically dry and naturally occurring fires