

# News, Notes, Comments

## House Wren with 14 Rectrices

An immature House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) with a total of 14 rectrices (photo below) was captured on 19 Aug 1999 in coastal scrub habitat at Point Reyes Bird Observatory, Palomarin Field Station in Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, California.

The bird was going through body molt, and all rectrices except RR-1 (which was 95% grown) were full length. The bird was unbanded at the time of capture. The occurrence of 13 rectrices has been recorded in Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*, Yunick 1977) and Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*, Pyle 1997) and two extra rectrices have been reported in non-passerine species such as Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura*) and Common Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*, Pyle 1997).

### LITERATURE CITED

- Pyle, P. 1997. Identification guide to North American birds, Part I. Slate Creek Press, Bolinas, CA.  
Yunick, R.P. 1977. Dark-eyed Junco with 13 rectrices. *N. Am. Bird Bander* 2:6.

This is PRBO contribution 850.

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## Juvenile Gray Catbird Undergoes Complete Prebasic Molt

On 13 Jul 1999, a Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) was captured in Pavilion Twp., Kalamazoo Co., MI, at a Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship banding station. The bird had incomplete skull ossification, gray iris, and fluffy, loose juvenile plumage; clearly a hatching-year bird (Pyle 1997).

On 20 Aug 1999 this bird was recaptured, at which time it showed symmetrical flight feather molt. Primaries 1 (P1) through P4 were contrastingly fresh and new, indicating they had already been replaced; P5 through P7 were emerging; and P8 was still entirely sheathed; P9 and P10 had not yet been molted. The secondaries also appeared fresh and replaced recently. Also of interest was that replaced P2 on both wings was entirely white.

Pyle (1997) states that hatching-year Gray Catbirds undergo only a partial first prebasic molt; "partial molt" is defined as involving body plumage, sometimes some wing coverts, occasionally one or two tertials, and/or one or two central rectrices. None of the other nine North American species of Mimidae in Pyle (1997) have a complete first prebasic molt (defined as involving all body and all flight feathers); although some species have an incomplete first prebasic molt (defined as involving all body feathers but only some flight feathers). In four species (Bendire's [*Toxostoma bendirei*], Curve-billed [*T. curvirostre*], Crissal [*T. crissale*] and LeConte's [*T. lecontei*] thrashers) some juveniles may molt some outer primaries, and in one other species (Northern Mockingbird [*Mimus polyglottos*]), some juveniles may molt some inner primaries. Two earlier works (Dwight 1900 and Roberts 1955) also describe fall molt in juvenile Gray Catbirds as partial, and both specify that this molt does not include flight feathers.

### LITERATURE CITED

- Dwight, J., Jr. 1900. The sequence of plumages and molts of the passerine birds of New York. *Ann. New York Acad. Sci.* 13:73-360.