

FURTHER NOTES ON THE CONSTANCY OF CATBIRDS
TO MATES AND TO TERRITORY

BY GEOFFREY GILL

In the WILSON BULLETIN for June, 1935 (pp. 104-106) I presented an article in regard to the attachment shown by Catbirds (*Dumetella carolinensis*) to mates and territory. The data in this previous article were collected during the summer seasons of 1932, 1933, and 1934. Two more years have rolled by and while individuals of this species have been known to live longer than five years, it is thought that the average life span of these birds is seldom much more than five years, and in all probability is less.

At this time, I wish to record the data collected in the past two summers in relation to a male Catbird, which for convenience was named "6M32" in the former article. This bird nested on Territory 6 in 1932, and in 1933 it nested twice on Territory 1, with different mates for both the first and second nestings. In 1934 "6M32" remained constant to Territory 1, and while both the early and late season's nests were built there, 6M32 again changed mates with each nest. At the close of the third season, this male had been constant to the same territory for two seasons and four nestings out of five, but had mated with five different females. In 1934 6M32's last mate was No. 34-142811, marked with colored bands.

For the sake of the records, it can be noted that this female has never occupied Territory 1 since, although she appeared in our traps at the close of the nesting season in the following year, and again on May 4, 1936. No. 34-142811 probably nested during these two seasons at some distance from the banding station, as her nests or territories were never found.

During May, 1935, Territory 1 was watched very closely in hope that 6M32 would be found there again. On May 15, two very wary birds were found on the territory. As appears usual at such times, the one believed to be the male kept to the tops of the trees while singing, making the observation of colored bands, even with glasses, difficult. 6M32 is recognized by a blue band on the right leg and a red band over the usual survey band on the left.

On May 26, the nest was located containing one egg, but three Catbirds were present. One of these was No. C-144294, color banded as a fledgling in 1933, and which returned the previous year on June 4 but was never seen or trapped after this occasion. It is interesting to note that the mother of this two-year-old "interloper" was 6M32's first known mate, but was sired by her second known husband.

The two other birds were afterwards found to be the resident pair. The female, No. 34-142816 was banded the previous year with colored bands on June 24. This bird had been retrapped by us on May 13, 1935, and her colored bands checked. The male appeared to be No. B-165487, for he carried a red band over the usual survey band on the left. The right leg was bare of bands. Such identifications by colored bands are checked and checked again. Repeated visits to this territory brought matters to the same visible conclusion. The male was banded with colored bands as an adult on May 11, 1932, and was considered an old bird. His presence in the light of previous records was hardly accountable. All efforts to trap him failed and his record proved that he had never been trapped since banding.

On June 15, the four young were banded and two weeks later the territory was deserted.

Before going further, I wish to emphasize the colored banding of the male found in 1935 on Territory 1 and the colored banding of the male expected there after being constant for two years. 6M32 has a blue band on the right leg and a red band under the survey band on the left. The 1935 male had no band on the right leg and a red band over the survey band on the left. Both birds were banded with colored bands in 1932, three years previous to this time. Many workers, who have used colored bands on birds, have found that they are not always reliable after the second year. In the light of the revelations of 1936, this thought should be borne in mind.

On May 11, 1936, the female which had occupied Territory 1 in 1935, appeared in our traps. Her colored bands were all right and it was soon found she was nesting on Territory 1 again. The male, as usual, was difficult to see. Finally the nest was located in a small cedar directly back of the spot used as an observation post. A close approach to the nest brought both parent birds near, fearlessly scolding, as is characteristic of the species. The male had a red band on the left leg, but the colored band had telescoped over the survey band so that it was impossible to know if it belonged above or below the band. Sight identification was hopeless. It might be either of two birds.

We set traps to catch the male but they were evaded. On June 6 we caught the female again, and on June 12 we banded the four young fledglings. On June 17 the male was trapped. It was 6M32.

6M32 had lost the blue band from the right leg and the red band had expanded so far as to be almost dropping off. New colored bands replaced the old ones and off he flew. Both birds of this pair were

checked around Territory 1 to the end of June, when they apparently moved away. It is doubtful whether there was a second nesting in this spot in 1936.

It appears probable, although it can not be proved, that the male on Territory 1 in 1935, might have been 6M32.

If this can be assumed, then 6M32 had six different mates in five years. He was constant to one territory for four consecutive summers and six nestings. During the first four nestings on his favorite territory he had four different mates, but in the last two years, as he grew older, he had only one nest each season and was always faithful to the same mate.

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BIRD NOTES FROM THE LAKE FRANCIS REGION OF SOUTHERN MINNESOTA

BY IRA N. GABRIELSON

Two weeks during August of 1915 were spent by the writer at Lake Francis and Lake Elysian in southern Minnesota. The town of Elysian is situated in a narrow neck of land lying between Lake Francis and Lake Elysian. Both are comparatively small bodies of water, Lake Francis being the smaller and the deeper, the other being a larger and more shallow lake.

Birds were very abundant as individuals although the number of species noted was rather limited. The list as it is, is published in the hope that these notes may be of some value to anyone working on the birds of this region.*

PIED-BILLED GREBE. *Podilymbus podiceps*. This grebe was very common, especially on little pools and swamps adjacent to the lake, but not connected with it. It was not observed on Lake Francis, but there were numbers on Lake Elysian.

BLACK TERN. *Chlidonias nigra surinamensis*. A common species noted every day during my stay. Numbers of them were commencing to change into the white plumage. Spotted and pied birds were observed on several occasions.

*Editor's Note. This paper was submitted before the publication of the Revised A. O. U. Check-List. It was set up in the original, old Check-List order, with certain corrections in the nomenclature. The insertion of the subspecific appellations in the vernacular names has not seemed to the Editor to be sufficiently vital to justify resetting of so many lines. In justice to the author it should be said that they were marked in the returned proof.