

Abnormal Retention of Juvenal Feathers by a Catbird.—The juvenal plumage of the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) closely resembles the definitive "adult" plumage in color and pattern. The most obvious characteristic of the juvenal plumage is the fluffy texture of the individual body feathers, typical of most passerines at this stage. The fluffy or downy appearance is caused by the lack of interlocking of barbules on adjacent barbs, the barbs themselves being rather widely spaced. In the Catbird, this downy texture is especially noticeable on the under tail coverts, which are also much paler than the rich reddish brown of later plumages.

On 6 August 1967, we netted several Catbirds at our banding station at Powdermill Nature Reserve, near Rector, Pennsylvania. One of these was thought, after a first glance at its under tail coverts, to be a young bird. Further examination showed, however, that it was a one-year-old bird (SY in the new Banding Office age terminology). Its cranium was fully ossified, it had dark brown rather than gray irides, its mouth lining was completely black, and (the strongest evidence of all) it had a well developed incubation patch. Our erroneous initial assessment of this bird's age was understandable when we discovered that it had retained the under tail coverts of its juvenal plumage, presumably since having attained them about a year earlier. Examination with a 5x hand lens sufficed to show that the feathers of the crissum had the structure of the true juvenal plumage, and were not simply excessively worn and faded feathers of the "adult" (= in this case, first basic) plumage. The under tail coverts of another adult Catbird, captured at the same time, were available for comparison under the lens.

At the time of the first prebasic ("post-juvenal") molt, Catbirds normally replace all body feathers, retaining only the flight feathers of wing and tail. Birds of this age class (HY in the fall, SY in the spring and summer until the next molt) can usually be recognized as such, especially if older birds are available for direct comparison. The juvenal rectrices are narrower and tend to be more pointed than those of later plumages, and by late spring and summer are usually more badly worn than the rectrices of older birds. The remiges, too, tend to be worn, and are distinctly brownish rather than grayish on the inner webs.

Neither of us recalls having handled another Catbird exhibiting such a retention of juvenal feathers, nor was any such phenomenon apparent in the Carnegie Museum series of approximately 80 specimens.

The Catbird described in this note was released, bearing band no 69-18349.—Kenneth C. Parkes, Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213, and Robert C. Leberman, Powdermill Nature Reserve, Star Route South, Rector, Pa. 15677.

Tree Sparrow Killed by Gray Squirrel.—As I watched from my study window the morning of 19 February 1967, I saw the door shut behind a Tree Sparrow (*Spizella arborea*) as it entered a four-cell potter trap. A moment later, a Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) climbed up the pole to the platform, on which the cage was placed, and entered a cell adjoining that containing the sparrow and began to eat seeds.

Because the sparrow seemed agitated, I hurried from my desk, down the stairs and ran to the cage. During my approximately 3-4 minute trip, the squirrel had entered the sparrow's cell. As I approached, it took the sparrow's head in its mouth, jumped to the ground and ran through the snow to the base of a tree about 15 ft. away from me (and the trap). It bit the sparrow repeatedly and appeared to be eating. After approximately six to ten minutes, the squirrel left the sparrow on the snow and unhurriedly ascended a tree.

Close inspection of the Tree Sparrow showed the skull fractured in several places, exposing the bleeding brain tissue. The right leg was broken and almost all the flesh had been stripped from the tibia. No other part of the bird seemed injured.

This is the second observation of Gray Squirrel predation in my back yard (Prescott, *Bird-Banding*, 38: 152, 1967). In the former instance, the skull of a Slate-colored Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) had been badly chewed and on both occasions the bird was carried with the head held securely in the squirrel's mouth.

The Gray Squirrels were able to open and close the doors to the potter traps, entering and leaving freely. But this was the first time I had seen a squirrel enter a cell containing a bird. Since this incident, I have utilized potter traps with self-locking doors. To the best of my knowledge, the squirrels have not been able to