

GENERAL NOTES

Notes on an epigamic display of the Catbird.—Although a general description of the courtship (heterosexual reproductive communication system leading to consummation sexual act) behavior of the Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) is to be found in Bent (1948. "Life Histories of North American Nuthatches, Wrens, Thrashers and Their Allies," *Smith. Inst. U.S. Natl. Mus., Bull.* 195:1-475) neither detailed observations on specific displays nor their correlation with distinct phases of the breeding cycle seems to be on record. Between 6:00 AM and 6:05 AM on 2 July 1962, on the Charles C. Barlow farm one mile north of Roodhouse, Greene County, Illinois, I observed an epigamic "dance" performed by a male Catbird.

The male had alighted upon a stone bench approximately 3 feet from a lilac (*Syringa*) in which sat a second Catbird, presumably a female. The male assumed a semicrouching posture with the crown and back feathers ruffled, the head bowed—the bill pointing downward—and the tail quarter-fanned and depressed so as to drag on the surface of the bench. In this attitude the bird then began a shuffling "dance," at the same time rocking slightly from side to side. The male moved along a circular path and paused six times to flick his tail upward, thus displaying the chestnut patch on the under tail coverts. The patch could have been observed by the other bird during only three of the flicks.

This part of the display lasted three minutes, during which time the male emitted a faint catlike mewing note. The other bird remained on its perch and appeared to be intently watching the actions of the male.

The male then assumed an erect posture with the tail cocked and the feathers of the thorax seemingly adpressed. Such an attitude recalls the "hostile dancing" posture described by Hailman (1960. *Condor*, 5:464-468) for the Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). The male hopped in an exaggerated manner around the periphery of the surface of the bench and emitted a louder, more intense mewing note. At this juncture the other bird flew to the surface of the bench and began to hop around the periphery. The male, maintaining the posture described above, chased the other bird over the surface of the bench. The latter then flew to the ground and began to forage. The male also flew to the ground. There he continued to hop in an exaggerated manner for another minute before both birds departed.

At the time that these displays were observed, the above pair of Catbirds was known to have a nest in a nearby mulberry (*Morus*), containing three feathered young with eyes open, just beginning to venture to the edge of the nest. Saunders (*in Bent*, op. cit.) indicates that second or third nests may be built before the young leave the first nest; thus, courtship behavior, as described above, would be expected at this juncture as a prelude to another brood.—JON C. BARLOW, *Department of Mammalogy, American Museum of Natural History, New York 24, New York, 3 December 1962.*

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher in Ohio.—Records of the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Muscivora forficata*) in the eastern United States are not uncommon, but to our knowledge none has been reported from Ohio. On 18 May 1962, Mr. Orval Crates, who lives on a farm 2 miles south of Jenera, Ohio, reported that he had seen a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that morning and on the preceding day. With my son, Thomas Phillips, I drove to the Crates farm and picked up Mark Crates, son of Orval Crates, and his friend, John Spaeth. We drove a mile south to Hancock County Road 28, turned east for one-half mile, and then north on to Van Buren Township Road 61. Two hundred yards down the road we