



On the migration trail with birds: the noisy elusive catbird

Beauty, serenity Community dedicates memorial garden

What is meant when someone talks about some birds being partial migrants?

The movement of part of a population of birds, which may be one sex or a certain age group, is called partial migration.

Research into migratory habits of juncos (a type of bird) has shown that the females tend to go farther south in the fall flight, and that the winter population in Texas is 75 percent female.

Farther north, males outnumber females. Because sexes have distinctive plumage patterns, you can check the juncos in your yard. The number of females remaining with the males depends on the temperature. The milder the winter is in the north, the more female juncos you will see.

One reason is that female juncos are smaller than males. This means that they are susceptible to cold and are less dominant at bird feeders. The survival chances of the females are therefore better if they move away from the males. Males may stay behind because they will be able to stake out breeding territories earlier if they do not move too far away.

Are there green herons in lower Michigan? Where do green herons nest?

Yes, there are green herons in lower Michigan. In the condo complex that Tom and I have recently moved to, we have green herons in the woods behind us.

They're found more than other herons in small ponds and along wooded streams. They actually look more blue than green. They're the size of a crow, dark underparts and bright orange or yellow legs. Their pattern is

rapid, with deep wingbeats. The crest is not always visible. The neck is much shorter than that of other herons.

Green herons nest in the tops of trees. In our condo complex, they have been nesting in the very tops of our very tall pines.

Is there such a bird called a catbird in Michigan?

Yes, we do have a bird called the catbird. The catbird is more often heard than seen. It moves in undergrowth and scrub but has a powerful voice.

This plain gray bird has a black cap and tail. The long tail is usually cocked up, showing the color chestnut on his underside.

His call is a nasal, catlike mew, which gives this species its name. His song includes mew-

ing notes among a selection of squeaks and more tuneful sounds.

The catbird's diet includes both plant and animal food. Insects are eaten in the warmer months, and berries and other fruits are his main source of food in the winter.

Nesting information: May through August is their nesting season. They have one or two broods with four glossy, greenish blue eggs. The incubation period is 12 to 15 days. The female incubates the eggs. At about 10 to 15 days old, the young will fledge.

Bev Cornell, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator and retired veterinary aide, will answer your pet or wildlife questions in care of Ask Bristol, 33411 Grand River, Farmington MI 48335.



Marbles: He is now six months old and growing rapidly, reports Bev Cornell, who has had many inquiries from Farmington readers about her new collie pup.



STAFF PHOTOS BY BILL BREKLER

Serene scene: The serenity garden dedicated last week is in Heritage Park. Above, Bill Burkmyre holds his daughter Amanda so she can touch the tree dedicated to her sister Meagan. Left, Elizabeth Detter shows a memorial plaque dedicated to her husband, Gordon, to granddaughter Korinn Detter and Brian, Sharon, Matthew and Sabrina Detter. Top, Farmington Hills City Manager Steve Brock, Council member Vickie Barnett, Garden Club president Janet Hunt, and Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi at the flowering crab tree sponsored by the club.



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