

Bird Notes for Hikers June 14, 2020

Catbird & Thrasher

The Catbird and Thrasher belong to the same family, the mimics, a family they share with the Mockingbird.

Our 2 common species, Gray Catbird and Brown Thrasher, share the same shrubby type of habitat, but the Catbird likes lowland wet shrubland while the Thrasher is found in upland dry shrubland.

They are similar in shape: long and slim with a long tail;

and in behaviour: lurking low to the ground in the undergrowth or on the ground;

but they are very different in colour: Gray Catbird is dark gray, Brown Thrasher is reddish-brown.

Their voices are somewhat similar in that they imitate other bird sounds, but the cadence is different and distinctive:

each of the Thrasher's phrase imitations is repeated with a pause between, such as "tweet tweet, chirp chirp, warble warble".

The Catbird song is a continuous mish-mash of bird sounds, although they do have their own distinctive meow or mew, which gives them their name, and a harsh cut-cut-cut when startled.

Stew Hamill