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Familiar Birds in Their Winter Homes

By ALEXANDER F. SKUTCH, Baltimore, Md.

IT IS usually a pleasure to meet a friend from home when in a distant land. Sometimes we recognize him at once as "the same person" we knew at home, his dress and mannerisms have not been affected by his visit abroad; but often the altered environment, the removal of restraints to which he has been all his life subjected, cause the appearance of hidden traits which surprise us. Sometimes, too, he dons a costume in which we hardly recognize our old acquaintance. And just as travel sometimes alters the behavior of men, so among birds we find species whose habits in their winter homes are so different from those with which we are familiar that they surprise us.

During my sojourns in several countries of Central America I have kept a sharp lookout for our native birds, noting wherever possible the times of their arrival and departure, and something of their habits in their winter haunts. Almost the first migrant from the North I encountered in the tropics was the Catbird. I had made my way down a drainage-ditch through a recently begun banana plantation in western Panama, dodging at intervals under brush and fallen tree-trunks which spanned the dry channel, to the edge of the forest. Here, beneath the tall, vine-laden trees, was a thicket of the beef-steak heliconia, with huge, upright, stiff leaves and great, bizarre, pendent



A WINTER CATBIRD

Photographed by F. M. Chapman, Little River, Fla.

SNOWY EGRET AT NEST
Photographed by S. A. Grimes, Duval County, Florida, May 27, 1930

