Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher

- Name: Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher or blue-grey Gnatcatcher

- Size: 10-13 cm (3.9-5.1 in) in length | 6.3in (16cm) in wingspan | 5-7g (0.18-0.25oz) weight

- Adult Male: Blue gray on the upperparts with white underparts, have slender dark bill, and a long black tail edged in white

Adult Female: Less blue, while juveniles are greenish gray

Both Sex: Have a white eye ring

- Breeding Habitat: Includes open deciduous woods and shrublands in southern Ontario, the eastern and southwestern United States, and Mexico

- Even though the species are common, and its population is increasing in number while expanding to the northeast, it is the only one that breeds in Eastern North America

- Both parents build a cone-like nest on a horizontal tree branch and share feeding the young

- Incubation Period: 13 days for both sexes and 2 broods maybe raised in a season

- Migration: To southern United States, Mexico, northern Central America (Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras), Cube, Bahamas, Turks, and Caicos Islands, and the Cayman Islands

- Food: Actively in trees or shrubs

=> Mainly feed on insects, insect eggs, and spiders

=> Hover over foliage while snatching prey (gleaning)

=> Fly to catch insects in flight (hawking)

- When searching for food or defending their territory, the tail is often held upright

Sites/URL

- <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Blue-gray_Gnatcatcher/overview>

- <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/blue-gray-gnatcatcher>

- <https://identify.whatbird.com/obj/351/overview/Blue-gray_Gnatcatcher.aspx>

Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher is a tiny bird that lives in forests. Gnatcatchers also have a scientific name which is Polioptila caerulea. Gnatcatcher’s size on average is quite small, where the length is between 10-13cm, a wingspan of 16cm, and weight in between 5-7g. Comparing to other birds, the size of the Gnatcatcher is around sparrow or smaller.

Gnatcatchers have an ideal shape of having long legs, a long tail, a thin, straight bill, and a white eye-ring. However, different genders have their own special identification. Adult males have blue, gray upperparts with white underparts, have a slender dark bill, and a long black tail edged in white. During summer, male Gnatcatchers have a black V-shaped on their foreheads. Adult females are less blue, while baby females are greenish-gray.

When Gnatcatchers migrate, they tend to spread out through the southern United States, Mexico, northern Central America, Cuba, Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Caymans Islands.

When Gnatcatchers sing a song or call another gnatcatcher, they are often heard around breeding grounds, away from the nest, and usually just heard sometime of the year. The songs and calls vary and some of them are as if they are wheezing them through nasal.

Gnatcatchers as mentioned live in forests, but in detail, they live in deciduous forests, often in moister areas. Also, not only they in the forest but they live in shrublands. Their breeding habitat includes the areas in southern Ontario, the eastern and southwestern United Stated States, and Mexico. When they choose locations to breed, Eastern North America is the only location where they will breed. When building small cup nests for breeding, both male and female Gnatcatchers cooperate. Materials used to create it are weeds, animal hair, feathers, barks, and plant fibers. Moreover, to stay hidden and safe within the forest, Gnatcatchers camouflage the outer nest using spiderwebs and some pieces of lichen. When building nests, Gnatcatchers build them between 3 – 25 feet above the ground. Female Gnatcatchers lay around 4-6 eggs or sometimes 3-6. Each egg is pale blue colored usually with brown dots on them. Both parents incubate their eggs for between 11-15 days, but usually 13 days. At first, females incubate the eggs while the male hunts for food and come back with them. When young Gnatcatchers are hatched, they are born naked and helpless with eyes closed and very little movement. The young Gnatcatchers leave their nest approximately 10-15 days after they hatch. Per year, 1 or 2 broods are created. Even though the adult Gnatcatchers have a couple of predators, the nestlings, and eggs could be taken by jays, magpies, and woodpeckers. Sometimes they are taken by snakes, crows, raccoons, and other organisms. When Gnatcatchers hunt for food, their prey are usually hidden or inside trees or shrubs. Their diet is a wide variety of small insects, insect eggs, and spiders. Some examples of their food are moths, beetles, butterflies, caterpillars, and many kinds of spiders.

Gnatcatchers have a couple of interesting facts about them. Their breeding range is expanding towards the north, especially within North America. When hunting for food, they flick their tails, and the movement may scare the insects that are hiding due to the white color at the edge of their tail. Also, when hunting a big bug, they first tear off their wings and injure the bugs until they can’t move or die. A pair of Gnatcatchers can build up to seven nests during a breeding season. Gnatcatchers have a nickname, which is “Little Mockingbird”.

1st, 2nd, 3rd picture: <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/blue-gray-gnatcatcher#>

2 sounds: <https://identify.whatbird.com/obj/351/overview/Blue-gray_Gnatcatcher.aspx>

4th picture: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Blue_gray_gnatcatcher_nest,_side_2016-01-07-17.24_(24438660975).jpg>

5th picture: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Polioptila_caerulea>

1st video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSZP8QD-xSg&ab_channel=BobRodriguez>

2nd video: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Blue-gray_Gnatcatcher/id>