in regard to rearing young ceases after fledging. Individual fledglings are instead exclusively cared for by one parent, and if only one offspring survives, rearing is done entirely by one parent. In 2004, only one juvenile fledgling survived, and its care was solely assumed by the male.

On 30 June, both parents and the juvenile offspring were observed. Confirmation of the pair's identity was made by head pattern. The next day, the female resumed her caching behavior. Once again, the Hairy Woodpecker pair was highly vocal, making it easy to monitor their arrival in the backyard. The male continued to feed with the juvenile until mid-July, usually at the suet feeder. When the male ceased feeding its offspring, he resumed visits to the peanut feeder. In late August, the female was noted to visit the yard less frequently, but could be heard on the diseased elm tree behind my property. When she came into the yard to feed at the peanut feeder, she ate peanuts directly, and no additional caching behavior was observed.

Hairy Woodpecker photo taken in Illinois by Mary Kay Rubey.

The 2004 breeding season differed from the 2003 breeding season in a number of ways. In 2003, the female appeared for the first time on 8 January 2003, and was observed on various trees but never at the feeders. No courtship displays were noted in 2003, and only the male was observed at feeders, at infrequent intervals, during the month of May. As in 2004, only one offspring fledged, although four eggs are usually incubated (Kleen et al. 2004). The confirmation of nesting was made on 19 June 2003 when a male was observed feeding a juvenile at a backyard feeder. No caching behavior was noted in 2003. After the fledgling was able to feed on its own, Hairy Woodpeckers were rarely seen in the yard during the summer and fall of 2003. Based on these data, it appears that Hairy Woodpeckers nested in the vicinity of my home in 2003, but their immediate nesting territory was farther away than in 2004.

The local nesting of Hairy Woodpeckers in a suburban area (enhanced by the presence of dying elm trees) in 2004, allowed for in-depth observation of their behavior. Hairy Woodpeckers demonstrate great individuality in their pair-bond formations, yet these behaviors have not been fully studied, due to the birds' usual preference for unfragmented tracts of mature forest. The selection of a nest site near a backyard feeder provided the opportunity to monitor courtship, incubation, and care-of-fledgling behavior. Given the birds' propensity to nest in the same territory in subsequent years, it is possible that this bonded pair will continue to nest in the immediate vicinity, allowing for additional study.

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