

perches on low limbs or rocks. Although they usually prefer secluded foraging spots, they will forage on mud flats and may forage at any time during the day or night. They have relatively large bills and hence may take larger prey items such as frogs.

Their most interesting foraging behavior is bait fishing, which makes them one of the few tool-using birds. They have been observed dropping crusts of bread, mayflies, feathers, twigs, leaves, berries, insects, and plastic foam bits into the water and catching the fish that rise to the bait. The cover drawings illustrate a Green Heron baiting fish, and the drawing on the previous page shows the culmination of this effort with the heron and its captured fish. Like human fisherman, they generally have the best results using live bait! Green Herons are largely fish eaters (piscivorous) but will take a wide spectrum of small vertebrates and invertebrates when opportunities arise.

Population changes over time are difficult to assess because of the cryptic behavior of the species, but habitat destruction (e.g., draining swamps for agriculture) has probably reduced local populations. Increased recreational use of river channels, ponds, and lakes may also have a negative impact on local populations, and Green Herons may still be subject to predator control at some fish hatcheries. At the present time, however, Green Herons are increasing their range in many parts of North America and have largely escaped the depredations caused by DDT and other persistent pesticides in some heron species. Despite their generally cryptic behavior, Green Herons seem to tolerate human disturbance reasonably well and sometimes nest in urban areas. Good luck to the Mount Auburn Cemetery pair this spring!

W. E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

Julie Zickefoose is an artist, writer, and naturalist who is devoted to the study, conservation, and appreciation of nature. Educated at Harvard University in biology and art, Julie worked six years as a field biologist for The Nature Conservancy before turning to full-time freelance art. She contributes regularly to magazines from *Ladybug* to *Bird Watcher's Digest*, for which she is a contributing editor. Book illustration credits include the Academy of Natural Sciences, for which she is contributing illustrations to the multi-volume work *The Birds of North America*.

Julie has shown her work at Harvard University, the National Zoo, the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, and the XIX International Ornithological Congress. She also sings and plays in a band, The Swinging Orangutangs, whose members include her husband, Bill Thompson III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Julie can be reached at Indigo Hill Arts, Route 1, Box 270, Whipple, Ohio 45788.

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