

GENERAL NOTES

Western Grebe in Colorado.—The Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) has been considered a rare bird in Colorado and there are comparatively few specimens in State collections. The many irrigation reservoirs are unfavorable for nesting sites because of the great fluctuation in water levels, and as there are not many natural lakes suitable for breeding areas, this bird has not been found nesting. During the past season two grebes were observed on Barr Lake, Adams County, on May 24, and on May 31, several were seen by R. J. Niedrach and H. G. Smith.

An amazing concentration of Western Grebes was observed by the undersigned on Barr Lake on June 17 on a sheltered inlet along the southern shore. There was a slick calm without a breath of air to stir the surface of the cove, and mirrored here and there over the surface were pairs of birds, often in groups of half a dozen. Many were going through their characteristic courtship glides, and others seemed to be showing interest in stands of vegetation appropriate for nesting sites. With one sweep of the glass, we counted fifty-two birds, and some, no doubt, were below the surface of the water. We returned a few days later and found that water had been withdrawn from the lake for irrigation purposes and that no vegetation suitable for concealing nests remained in the water. Only a half dozen birds were seen, and although they remained on the lake for the next few weeks, at least, no evidence of their nesting was obtained.—ALFRED M. BAILEY AND ROBERT J. NIEDRACH, *Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver, Colorado.*

Audubon's Shearwater in Massachusetts.—An Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri lherminieri*) was found dead on the beach at Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, August 13, 1937, by Francis Minot and Wilson Olney. Suspecting, because of its small size, that the bird might prove to be this species, Mr. Minot brought it to the New England Museum of Natural History in Boston. Messrs. James Lee Peters and Ludlow Griscom at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard, made the identification. The measurements were as follows: wings, 184 mm., 187 mm.; exposed culmen, 31; depth at base, 9; least depth, 6.8; width at base, 12 plus; tail, 85. The wing is short but all other measurements are clearly typical of *lherminieri*. This constitutes the first record for the species in New England. Unfortunately a gull had started to eat the neck of the specimen, rendering it unfit to mount for exhibition purposes, but it makes a satisfactory skin in the study collection.—JULIET RICHARDSON, *New England Museum of Natural History, Boston, Mass.*

American Egret along the upper Hudson River.—All recent records tend to indicate that the American Egret (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) has become increasingly common in New York State during its post-breeding wanderings. This is particularly true during the present season in the territory along the Hudson River which appears to serve as a more or less well-marked fly-way for the bird. Since this egret recently has been reported to nest in southwestern New Jersey (Stone, W., Auk, 51: 368-369, 1934) and other northerly breeding records for it have appeared in the literature not long since, perhaps an increase in its numbers is to be expected in the Albany and contiguous sections of the Hudson River Valley. The following late summer records for 1937 are offered by way of illustrating the bird's status in this territory.

A correspondent, Dr. Samuel J. Pashley, of Hudson Falls, New York, writes me under date of July 23, 1937: "For the last three days five adult egrets have been

feeding along a branch of Big Creek, about one mile west of South Hartford, or nine miles east of Hudson Falls, New York." On August 1, 1937, Mrs. Stoner and I observed a single American Egret at Burden's Pond well within the city limits of southeastern Troy, New York; and on August 6, we saw two others at the Watervliet Reservoir ten miles west of Albany. The comparative fearlessness of all three of these birds was noteworthy.

Since August 1, this egret has become increasingly common in the Albany district but we made no detailed observations or counts until August 15. On this date we motored south along the east bank of the Hudson River—New York State Highway No. 9J—to Stockport station on the New York Central Railroad. We observed no egrets until we had left Schodaack Landing twelve miles south of Albany; but between a short distance south of that village and the Stockport station, twelve miles by river, we saw, within the space of one hour six egrets. Five of these were flying north, three in one group; the other was standing in a grassy inlet. The Stockport railroad station is only a few yards from the river and a considerable expanse of low, swampy bank and back waters can be seen from its immediate vicinity. At first we noted but a single egret. About one-fourth of a mile north of the station is a long, narrow marsh grown up mostly in arrow arum (*Peltandra*), pickerel-weed (*Pontederia*), yellow pond-lily (*Nymphaea*) and water rice (*Zizania*). Small areas of open, shallow water occur among the plant growths. This marsh communicates with the river by a slender waterway which flows under the railroad tracks, hence the height of the water in it is influenced by the tide which, at this point, varies from about one and a half to four feet. The tidal movement, in turn, encourages the entrance of various kinds of aquatic life into the marsh thereby rendering it a favorable feeding ground for egrets and other wading birds. This marsh, forty to fifty yards in width, extends in a north-south direction for 1600 feet immediately adjacent to and parallel with the New York Central Railroad tracks and the Hudson River. Its east bank is precipitous and rocky and supports a bordering thicket mostly of oaks and other hardwoods. Its west bank is the cinder roadbed of the railroad. Here, at 1.15 p. m., feeding in the shallow areas among the clumps of aquatic vegetation, were eighteen American Egrets. As I approached, walking along the railroad tracks, the birds took flight, one by one, to a more distant part of the marsh. The noise from a passing high-speed train caused only five of the birds to fly up but they soon dropped into the water again. As I continued toward the farther end of the marsh the assemblage of large white birds congregated there stood out boldly against the green background for a moment, then all eighteen slowly and majestically took flight. Some returned almost immediately to perch and preen in the tall trees bordering the marsh; others made their way to adjoining lowlands; a few of the more venturesome individuals returned to feed before I had left the scene. As a matter of fact the American Egrets were less wary than the lone Great Blue Heron which accompanied them and preceded them in taking wing.

On the afternoon of August 18, we again covered the same territory that we had three days earlier. We observed no egrets until we arrived at Stockport Creek which flows into the Hudson River near the Stockport railroad station. Three egrets were seen here. Two individuals were feeding in the marsh north of the station while three others perched in an oak tree on its bank. So, only five individuals were assembled where we had observed eighteen on August 15. However, in the three and one-half hours which we spent in this vicinity we observed a total of at least fifteen different egrets; thirteen of these were visible at one time on the neighboring marshy expanse of the river.

In an endeavor to ascertain the local status of the American Egret in the adjacent territory to the north, we investigated the banks of the Mohawk River between Niskayuna village and a point three miles east of it on the afternoon of August 20. Here within the space of one hour, 5.30 p. m. to 6.30 p. m., we observed a total of eighteen egrets. All were standing motionless or feeding along the low cat-tail bordered banks and inlets. This section is from four to seven miles west of the junction of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers at Cohoes about nine miles north of Albany.

Our late-August records for the Albany region may, then, be summed up as follows. In a two-hour period between 11.30 a. m. and 1.30 p. m., on August 15, we observed, flying over the Hudson River and feeding in bordering marshes, a total of twenty-five American Egrets within a distance of twelve miles; eighteen of these were in one small marsh. Three days later, between 3.40 p. m. and 7.10 p. m., we observed, in the same territory, at least fifteen different individuals; possibly some of these were birds seen on August 15. And, between 5.30 p. m. and 6.30 p. m., on August 21, we observed at least eighteen different individuals along a three-mile extent of the Mohawk River some thirty-five miles northwest of the locality of the preceding observations and from four to seven miles west of the Hudson River.

It is altogether likely that other swampy shores and inlets in both the upper Hudson and the lower Mohawk Rivers harbored comparable numbers of American Egrets unseen by us. This probable condition when taken in conjunction with our own actual counts and the observations of others would appear to warrant the conclusion that, seasonally and locally at least, this egret is considerably more common than usual. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that it will increase unmolested and that its breeding range may even be extended into New York State.—DAYTON STONER, *New York State Museum, Albany, New York.*

American Egret in Quebec.—On September 14, 1937, fourteen American Egrets, (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) were observed by the writer, feeding in the marshy upper reaches of the South River (tributary of the Richelieu River), six and a half miles north of the international boundary, in the Province of Quebec, Canada. This flock was kept under constant observation for two and a half hours, and presented a picture which it is not often one's privilege to see in eastern Canada. Unfortunately the duck shooting commenced next day, with the result that the flock was disturbed and thought to have left the district. However, a check-up on their movements revealed that they had split up into twos and threes, and could still be seen at widely separated points.—J. D. CLEGHORN, *McGill University, Montreal, Canada.*

American Egret and Anhinga nesting in Oklahoma.—Until May 11, 1937, it was not known to ornithologists that *Casmerodius albus egretta* and *Anhinga anhinga* bred in the State of Oklahoma. On that date a local guide took my daughter Constance and myself to visit a heronry of "White Cranes" about 7 miles south of Eagletown, McCurtain County, in the southeastern corner of Oklahoma. Here we found several American Egrets and Anhingas on nests, besides many Ward's Herons (*Ardea herodias wardi*) and one pair of Yellow-crowned Night Herons (*Nyctanassa v. violacea*); great numbers of Turkey and Black Vultures (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*, *Coragyps a. atratus*) were also present. The guide said that "White Cranes" had nested in the region for many years, but that he had not seen an Anhinga before.

The next day he took us to Forked Lake to visit a heronry exclusively of "White Cranes," but not a bird was to be seen, for much of the cypress had been cut the previous summer while the young were in the nests. On learning that the same