

## GENERAL NOTES

**Canvasback male participating in a Redhead courtship party.**—On 10 April 1966 I observed a male Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*) participating in a courting party of Redheads (*A. americana*) on a 30-acre marsh in southeastern South Dakota. This courtship party was composed of four male Redheads, a female Redhead, and one male Canvasback. Active courtship occurred between 1200 and 1235 hours.

The courtship activities were observed through 7 × 50 binoculars from a distance of 80 yards on a clear, warm day. Only visual displays were noted because of the distance involved and the noise of other ducks on the marsh.

One drake Redhead and the drake Canvasback courted the female Redhead most intensely. The other three drake Redheads followed at a distance of two to four feet and did not appear to participate in the courtship displays. All of the courtship took place on the water. The nomenclature used in this paper to describe displays is from H. A. Hochbaum, *The Canvasback on a prairie marsh* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, The Stackpole Co., 1959; pp. 23–24) with the exception of the Turn-the-back-of-the-head display which is from P. A. Johnsgard, *Handbook of waterfowl behavior* (Ithaca, New York, Comstock Publishing Associates, 1965; see pp. 228–234).

Neck-stretching was the most common display used by the Canvasback. This display was usually of short duration since it was frequently interrupted by Head-thrusts which followed contact with the drake Redhead. These apparent Head-thrusts may have been threat-posture displays of short duration. Contact between the males did not seem to be caused by aggressiveness toward each other but seemed to be a result of incidental collision as the males swam side-by-side chasing the female Redhead across the water. Most of the chasing by the males was executed at a distance of a few inches and as soon as either drake caught up to the hen, she would immediately dive and the whole party would follow. This entire sequence of chasing and diving was repeated again and again until the courtship was over. The active drake Redhead also used the Neck-stretch display most commonly and this neck-stretching was also repeatedly interrupted by Head-thrusts toward the Canvasback. The fighting and neck-stretching displays were of very short duration as the birds rapidly lowered and raised their heads. Other typical displays were seen, but much less frequently than the neck-stretching and Head-thrusts. These other displays occurred when either male swam parallel to, or ahead of, the female. The Canvasback used the sneak display a few times and both the Canvasback and Redhead used the Turn-the-back-of-the-head display whenever either one swam ahead of the female Redhead. After the active courtship had ceased, the group remained together loafing and feeding for the rest of the afternoon.

Many Lesser Scaup (*A. affinis*), Baldpates (*Mareca americana*), and other waterfowl were also present on the marsh. A few Redheads in addition to those in the courtship party were present on the marsh, but the only Canvasback was the one engaged in the courtship of the female Redhead.

Male Canvasbacks, isolated from members of their own species, have been reported to actively display in courting groups of Redheads under conditions of captivity (H. A. Hochbaum, *ibid.*; pp. 38–40). Hochbaum also mentions that he has observed in the wild a drake Redhead in a courting party of Canvasbacks and a drake Pintail (*Anas acuta*) in a courting party of Mallards (*A. platyrhynchos*). M. W. Weller (*Auk*, 84: 557, 1967) mentions observing a male Redhead and a female Canvasback behaving as a pair.—RICHARD L. TIMKEN, *Department of Zoology, University of South Dakota, Vermillion, South Dakota.*