

Notes on the Boat-billed Heron in Surinam.—So little is known on the life of the Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) that even the following casual remarks may be worth recording. Although my records are sparse, I have never seen this bird active in daylight and it is in my experience strictly nocturnal. When driving on a country road between two inland swamps at 2200 hours on 27 September 1949 the headlights of my car revealed an adult bird standing on the middle of the road which I watched for some time. I have received a few specimens that were shot about sundown. It is not confined to the coastal region, as Dr. Geyskes shot an immature specimen about 40 km inland at Republiek on 26 February 1950. My male specimens weighed 577–642 g and a breeding female 570 g.

On 27 August 1967 I found a group of about 50 pairs nesting rather close together in the midst of the large colony of Scarlet Ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*) and herons in the mangroves bordering the seacoast west of the mouth of the Surinam River mentioned in my note on the Roseate Spoonbill (above). It was the first time I saw this bird in the coastal mangroves.

The nests were like other heron nests nearby, crude platforms of sticks low in the *Avicennia* trees. Most nests contained two and a few three fully fledged nestlings which stood huddled together very erect on or above the nest. A small number had downy nestlings and I found one nest with 2 and another with 3 immaculate white eggs (Figure 1). The clutch of 3 contained fully developed embryos and the clutch of 2 were fresh. The clutch of 2 weighed 40.9 and 40.4 g. Their measurements (54.9 × 38.6, 54.4 × 38.6; and 52 × 37.3, 52 × 37.4, and 51.1 × 36 mm) are within the dimensions of the 574 eggs (a sad story of former wholesale robbery!) from Surinam in the Penard collection in the Leiden Museum (Hellebrekers, Zool. Med., 24: 243, 1942). These are dated June–July.

Recently hatched nestlings have greenish-yellow skin and their upperparts are covered with gray down, somewhat darker on the head. The upper bill is black, the skin of the lower one yellow, the legs and feet are greenish yellow, the iris dark brown.

The juvenile is much darker than the adult bird; its forehead is brownish, the upper head black, and the upperparts chocolate brown, but paler on the wings. The underparts are cream-white with a brownish wash and faintly streaked with brown on the flanks. The upperparts have no streaks or spots. The full adult is a pale grayish

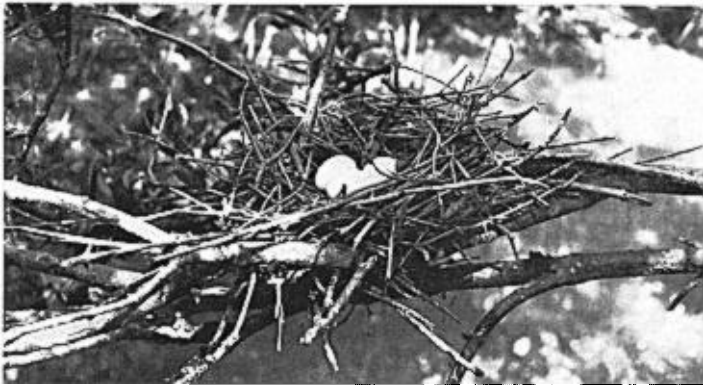


Figure 1. Nest of Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) with 3 eggs. Surinam, 27 August 1967.

white bird. (I must point out that the so-called "adult" in the color plate by Don Eckelberry (The Living Bird, 4: facing p. 142, 1965) is not fully adult as its upperparts are too dark and its breast much too brown.)

The behavior of the adults when flushed from their nests is striking. Instead of taking wing and circling overhead as do the Scarlet Ibis and other herons, they flutter to dense bushes and trees and hide in the foliage. The Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) acts similarly, while the Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax violacea*), which feeds actively on the open coastal mudflats by day, flies above the rookery when disturbed.

When approached, the nestling Boat-billed Herons regurgitated their food which consisted in all cases observed of two species of swamp fishes, *Callichthys callichthys* and *Erythrinus erythrinus*. Boat-billed Herons collected inland had insects (Hymenoptera; Formicidae: Myrmicinae) in their gizzards.—F. HAVERSCHMIDT, *Wolfskuilstraat 9A, Ommen, Holland*.

The Roseate Spoonbill breeding in Surinam.—R. F. Palmer (Handbook of North American birds, vol. 1, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale Univ. Press, 1962, p. 537) gives a map of the breeding localities of the Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*) that shows a wide gap on the Atlantic coast of South America between Venezuela and Argentina. On 24 September 1967 I was banding nestling Scarlet Ibises (*Eudocimus ruber*) with a group of cooperators in a large colony in the low mangroves (*Avicennia nitida*) bordering the seacoast west of the mouth of the Surinam River. The exact position is 5° 40' N, 55° 20' W. While wading through the low trees one of my cooperators—Mr. Th. Renssen—located a small group of four nests of Roseate Spoonbills. These were rather large platforms of dead sticks built in the top of low mangrove trees at a height of 3–4 m. One nest contained four large nestlings that I photographed, three from another nest were perched above it, and each of the others contained three large nestlings. Scarlet Ibises were nesting all around them and a single pair of White-necked Herons (*Ardea cocoi*) had a nest with two half-grown young on the top of a low tree nearby.

While banding again on 10 October 1967 we found another small group of nesting Spoonbills with large nestlings. In addition to the very large number of Scarlet Ibises, this mixed colony contained large numbers of nesting Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*), Tricolored Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor*), Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*), Yellow-crowned Night Herons (*Nyctanassa violacea*), smaller numbers of Cattle Egrets (*Ardeola ibis*), Common Egrets (*Egretta alba*), Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and a few Boat-billed Herons (*Cochlearius cochlearius*).—F. HAVERSCHMIDT, *Wolfskuilstraat 9A, Ommen, Holland*.

Grackle anting with a mothball.—While eating my noonday lunch on my back porch today (6 July 1968), I noticed a Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) going through strange contortions on a tilled garden plot about 15 feet away. It repeatedly picked up a small white object about the size of the tip of my little finger and rubbed it under its lifted wing with great vigor. The bird dropped it and picked it up time and again, always going through the same motions. After the bird left, I examined the small white object. It was hard, and on putting it to my nose, I discovered it was a piece of eroded mothball, about half the size of a fresh one and slightly flattened.—CHARLOTTE A. DUBOIS, *Princeton, New Jersey*.