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Arctic Loon "checking" nest.—In late June and early July 1967 I had the opportunity to watch the nest of an Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*) at Churchill, Manitoba. About 650 m inland from Hudson Bay, the nest was on a mossy hummock in the small fishless tundra pond shown just south of the western tip of the lake containing Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) colony C on the map in Evans and McNicholl (1972). As I was checking nearby nests of Arctic Terns and Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) at varying times of the day every 2 to 4 days, I was regularly able to observe the nest from a distance. On cool or windy days an adult loon was always on the nest when I was in the vicinity, but on warm still days the adults were absent, even though both parents incubate (Sjölander 1968). Every 12 to 15 min during these periods of absence, an adult loon would fly from the direction of Hudson Bay, circle over the nest, arch the head and neck towards the nest as if peering at the eggs, and return to the bay.

I was unable to find any directly comparable behavior in either the periodical literature on loons or the summaries provided in various regional avifaunal works and by Bent (1919) and Palmer (1962). L. M. Turner (*in* Bent 1919: 74) referred to a Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) as "hovering" in circles and calling over the nest in response to disturbance by him, but the above observation appears to be undisturbed behavior, and also differed in that the loon was silent while circling overhead. Sjölander (*pers. comm.*) has seen similar behavior by all four loon species "frequently accompanied by the croaking warning call" and only when disturbed by him. Such behavior probably results from conflict between escape and attack or nest defense tendencies. Yonge (*pers. comm.*) noted no such behavior while studying Common Loons (*G. immer*) in Saskatchewan; Middleton (*pers. comm.*) similarly recalled no such activities in an Ontario study; and McIntyre (*pers. comm.*) also has not seen it. A somewhat similar behavior by adult Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*) was reported by Arthur (*in* Bent 1921: 207). They circled over young and either landed or flew off "on seeing they were safe." How much this behavior was influenced by disturbance is not clear.

As pointed out by Snyder (1957: 30-31) and by Dunker and Elgmork (1973), Arctic Loons frequently nest on fishless ponds and must forage elsewhere. At

Churchill, most of this foraging takes place on Hudson Bay (Jehl and Smith 1970). Such was the case with both adults of the nest mentioned here. At least in some areas and seasons loons prefer to fish in still weather (Sjölander pers. comm.), a condition often lacking for several days at Churchill. Thus, when weather conditions permit the eggs to be untended, it may be advantageous for both adults to feed provided that the eggs are checked frequently to deter potential predators. As suggested by Sjölander (pers. comm.) such "checking" behavior may result from a conflict between feeding and incubating drives during periods of prolonged feeding.

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First record of the Greater Shearwater from the Gulf of Mexico.—On 4 November 1973 Jeffrey Greenhouse and Joseph Kleiman of Birmingham, Michigan, found a nearly dead shearwater near the south jetty of Galveston Beach, Galveston County, Texas. The bird was taken to S. M. Ray of the Texas A&M University Marine Laboratory, Galveston, where it soon died and was prepared as a study skin. Ray brought the skin to me, commenting that it might be a Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*). I agreed with Ray's identification, which was confirmed by comparison with material in the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology collections.

The specimen has been deposited in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collections at Texas A&M University. Selected measurements in mm are: wing (chord) 333, tail 103, exposed culmen 42.6. No information is available on gonad condition. The bird is molting on the upper back; the remiges and rectrices show wear, but no molt. Stresemann and Stresemann (1970, J. Ornithol. 111: 378) state that young birds molt the body plumage only at 6-7 months of age, while away from the breeding grounds. This places the molt period around October or November.