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Postmortem change in a Black-crowned Night-Heron's eye color.—On 23 April 1972, about 2115, I collected an immature male Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) among rushes (*Juncus* sp.) in the Oued el Ferd, 10.7 km east and 15 km south of Gabès, Gouvernorat de Gabès, Tunisia. When fresh (2230), both irises, viewed under fluorescent light, were red-brown. But at 1100 the next day, when the bird had been refrigerated for some 12.5 hours, the irises were red-orange.

Witherby et al. (1939, The handbook of British birds, vol. 3, London, Witherby, p. 152) note of this species, "iris crimson (juvenile brown)." Etchécopar and Hüe (1964, Les oiseaux du nord de l'Afrique[,] de la Mer Rouge aux Canaries, Paris, Éd. N. Boubée & Cie, p. 63) write, "L'iris est rouge"; Hollom (translating Etchécopar and Hüe 1967, The birds of North Africa, from the Canary Islands to the Red Sea, Edinburgh, Oliver & Boyd, p. 53) translates this literally, "Iris is red." Verbal characterizations of color are difficult. Systems for objective description require comparison with published standards, such as those reviewed by Wood and Wood (1972, Bird-Banding 43: 182). The apparent disparity between the earlier observations and that reported here may be more of wording than of actual fact.

Changes at death in the colors of birds' eyes and of other soft tissues are well known. The principal significance of this observation is the lightened saturation (chroma) of the iris after death, when experience generally is that colors become darker when a bird dies. This description by a single observer of lightened tone provides an impression that is independent of the problems of definition.

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