

### A Nearly Synchronous Hatching of Barn Owls

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In May 1978 I observed a nearly synchronous hatching of a large clutch of Barn Owls (*Tyto alba*) in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. The site was a wooden nest box installed inside the upper level of a two-story garage-utility building with the access hole leading out over a driveway and parking area, which were in regular use.

Bent (1938, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 170: 142) stated that "the eggs are laid at intervals of two or three days, and incubation begins soon after the first egg is laid; consequently the young hatch at similar intervals and vary greatly in size." According to Welty (1975, *The Life of Birds*, 2nd ed. Philadelphia, Saunders: 310) "In a brood of six young Barn Owls, the first to hatch will be about 15 days older than the last."

This year the adult owls took up residence in mid-March. The nest was not inspected in April for fear that early disturbance during egg-laying and incubation might jeopardize its success. The first inspection of the box on 9 May revealed 8 owlets all 1–2 days old, plus 3 eggs. Apparently a staggered hatching did not take place, as the chicks were of almost identical size and appearance. I believe these 8 chicks were the result of a nearly synchronous hatching, all within 48 h. On 14 May, 9 owlets plus 2 eggs were found. On 26 May and 4 June there were 10 owlets, but the egg was missing. On 25 June I visited the nest and banded all 10 owlets; the difference between the 8 first-hatched birds and the 2 that hatched later was still apparent. The 2 smaller chicks, although a bit thin, were lively, alert and healthy. On 7 July, 6 of the 10 had fledged, and on 13 July all had fledged.—Received 5 September 1978, accepted 21 November 1978.

### Status of the Genus *Phalacrocorax* in Puerto Rico Including the First Records of *P. auritus*

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The only published record of a cormorant from Puerto Rico to date is one by Danforth (1926, J. Dept. Agric. P.R. 10: 35), who saw what he confidently felt was an Olivaceous Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax olivaceus*) flying over Cartagena Lagoon, southwestern Puerto Rico, on 17 October 1924.

On 17 January 1973 Roy Thomas and I observed a large, immature cormorant swimming on one of several fresh water ponds on the Cerromar Hotel golf course, approximately 6 km west of Dorado (Table 1, #2). Photographs were taken and sent to the Migratory Bird and Habitat Research Laboratory (MBHRL), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where Chandler S. Robbins and Jay M. Shepard identified the bird as a Double-crested Cormorant (*P. auritus*). This represents the first record of *P. auritus* for Puerto Rico. Two slides have been accessioned into the collection of the MBHRL (numbers 120-1Ta, 120-1Tb).

The mounted specimen of record #3 (Table 1) was found at a restaurant (Richard's Place) near Loíza Aldea. J. Phillip Angle and John C. Barber of the National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) determined that this too was a Double-crested Cormorant, most probably an immature ♀ of *P. a. floridanus*. Its measurements were, bill length 54.0 mm, wing (chord) 280.0 mm, and tarsus (approximately) 56.0 mm. The specimen was returned to Richard's Place and three slides are in the collection of the MBHRL (120-2Ta, 120-2Tb, 120-2Tc).

This note contains eleven new cormorant records for Puerto Rico (Table 1). Sightings range from 25 July to 18 January, while months of peak occurrence are November through January. All individuals for which there are detailed descriptions were immature birds and apparently represent wanderers from

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