



FIGURE 1. Cooling curves as a function of age in *Molothrus ater ater*. Numbers 1 through 10 indicate age, where Day 1 is the day of hatching.

and in Field Sparrows (*Spizella pusilla pusilla*) and Chipping Sparrows (*S. passerina passerina*) (Dawson and Evans 1957). Vesper Sparrows show the beginning of homeothermy on the 4th day after hatching. Field and Chipping Sparrows are able to effectively regulate their body temperatures above 37°C by 6 or 7 days after hatching. Maher (1964) has reported that the Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) and Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) are essentially endothermic by the 7th day, where the House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) does not develop

effective temperature control until 9 days after hatching (Kendeigh 1939). *M. ater ater* maintains a body temperature above 37°C by the 9th day after hatching.

Because of its rapid growth rate, one might expect the Brown-headed Cowbird to become homeothermic faster than other passerines. Since this does not occur, it appears that, in the cowbird, expending energy to maintain a constant body temperature is not as important as expending energy for growth.

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## UNUSUAL FEEDING BEHAVIOR OF GREAT BLUE HERONS AND COMMON EGRETS

JAN G. REESE

"Bradford"  
St. Michaels, Maryland 21663

On 9 June 1972, I observed 87 Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) and 4 Common Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) picking up dead fish from the surface waters of Chesapeake Bay, 3 miles N-NW of Poplar Island, Talbot County, Maryland. The herons and egrets were in a loose flock with 40 Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) and 8 Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*). All except the Ospreys were removing some of the thousands of rotting menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) drifting SE from a mammoth fish kill which occurred in the bay (Magothy River area) on 6 June.

The herons and egrets were nesting on Poplar Island and were flying just above the water to and from the floating fish. When spearing for fish, the herons assumed a position with the body nearly ver-

tical, legs down (some in the water), wings flapping in a backward motion, and held the neck outstretched. A few herons landed briefly in the 100-ft deep water when taking a fish. Some herons filled the gular pouch before returning to the island, while others returned after retrieving a single fish. Single fish were carried either in the gular pouch or were held perpendicular to the bill.

This unusual feeding practice was in progress when I arrived on the scene at 07:00, but stopped abruptly at 08:10, when all the herons and egrets dispersed at once. A 20-mph wind from the west (with 18-24 inch seas) decreased sharply about 08:00, suggesting that these weather conditions may have been an important factor enabling this type of feeding.

In Rideau Lake, Ontario, Taverner (Can. Field-Nat. 36:59, 1922) observed that a Great Blue Heron landed briefly in deep water, but he was unable to see if the bird removed anything. Bent (Life histories of North American marsh birds, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. No. 135, 1926) reported a Great Blue Heron removing an eel-like object from the deep-water portion of a New Hampshire lake.

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