

GENERAL NOTES

Confusion of White Ibis by Blue winged Teal¹—While visiting a White Ibis rookery two miles south of Gainesville, Florida, Dr. Charles F. Walker and I saw what we believed to be an unusual flight behavior among White Ibis, *Guara alba* (Linn.), and Blue-winged Teal, *Querquedula discors* (Linn.). These observations were made on April 3, 1941, at about 4:30 P.M.

In leaving for the feeding grounds, the ibis in this rookery follow a fairly constant flight path. Being aware of this and wanting to obtain a good view of them, we secured our boat at an advantageous point. From here we had a very close look at the birds as they passed about forty feet above us. There were approximately 5,000 birds in the rookery when we arrived and as they began to leave for the feeding grounds they formed an almost unbroken line along the shore of the lake.

A small flock of Blue-winged Teal, perhaps 200, were feeding slightly east of the regular line of flight of the ibis. For some reason, perhaps concern at our close approach, about half of the teal flushed and started out along a course at a right angle to that taken by the ibis. As they crossed the line of flight of the ibis they met about thirty of the latter. Confusion reigned for a moment among both flocks and when it had subsided seven of the ibis had become mixed in with the teal which had never swerved from their general path of flight. None of the teal lost their way into the flock of ibis.

As the teal passed on out over the lake the ibis remained in the flock and by obviously exerting themselves managed to keep up with the teal. After about 300 yards of mixed flight the ibis apparently discovered their plight and separated themselves from the teal. However instead of cutting across the lake to catch their late companions (or to regain their normal flight course) they recircled over the rookery and resumed the regular exit course. As they left the lake they did however cut a few corners in an attempt to regain their places in their now fast disappearing flock.

This same performance was repeated about ten minutes later when the remainder of the teal flushed and passed through a smaller flock of ibis. This time, however, only two ibis lost their way.

This indicates that, when pressed, White Ibis can maintain for a short period of time a flight speed that is equal to that of the Blue-winged Teal. Secondly it serves to indicate that the flock solidarity of White Ibis is rather weak in comparison to that of the Blue-winged Teal under these conditions.—J. C. DICKINSON, JR., University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.

Observations on a Nest of Screech Owls.—Although Screech Owls (*Otus asio naevius*) have been proven to consume large quantities of various species of mice, shrews, rats, moles, insects, reptiles and even crayfish, many develop an especial fondness for birds (see Bent, U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. No. 170, 1938). A few observations made in connection with the banding of a nest of these owls in Wallingford, Penna., seem worth recording. The nest containing four eggs was discovered on April 27, 1940, and one of the parents was also in the nesting hole. This bird, sex undetermined, was banded at once (no. 37-509768). Four young birds about ten days old were noted on the next visit (May 12). Also in the nest on this trip was a freshly decapitated adult female Wood Thrush. During subsequent trips to the nest, always in the early forenoon, a parent bird was caught on two occasions and each time it proved to be the one previously banded. The other parent was never seen. All four young were ultimately banded (nos. 37-509769, 37-509770, 37-509771, and 37-509772).

Returning June 28 to the deserted nest, all the debris in the bottom was scooped out and carried home for analysis. Feathers from the following species of birds were identified: English Sparrow, Robin, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Purple

¹ Contribution from the Department of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida.