

receive communications from those sufficiently interested and satisfactorily located to engage in this work during their leisure time, for it is obvious that a considerable part must be done by volunteer operators. It is hoped that a sufficient number will take this up to insure the complete success of the project.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) E. W. NELSON,
Chief of Bureau.

BONAPARTE'S GULLS AND LOUISIANA HERONS CATCHING FISH

During a visit in Florida in early March, 1917, I was much interested in watching from the hotel piazza the Bonaparte's Gulls (*Larus philadelphia*) feeding in the Halifax River at Ormond Beach. The birds were said to frequent the vicinity of the hotel in order to feed on the garbage which was thrown into the water. But although this may attract them, they are by no means solely dependent on it, for I repeatedly saw a bird pursuing a school of small fish along the edge of the water, and in one or two instances made certain that it secured a living fish in its beak and swallowed it. The bird, flying just above the water, followed the fish and, on overtaking them, reached out and snapped up one, just after alighting, I think. Sometimes the bird swam after the school, and I could see the water move as the fish darted away, but even although the fish saw their pursuer, they were not always able to elude him. When the school swam out into deeper water, and presumably left the surface, the gull rose and flew along the shore until he sighted another school, when, again coming near the surface, he began to strike out at the fish.

The Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*) adopted a similar method of catching fish,—also noted from the piazza of the hotel. The Heron walked slowly toward a school, with body leaning forward and head drawn partly back, and struck quickly, downward and outward. The proportion of successful strikes to failures was, during the short time I watched a bird fishing one afternoon, rather in favor of the fish.

It interested me to learn that these two birds were able to catch a fish which was startled and aware of the approach of its enemy. The skill of these birds must be remarkable,—they must possess the power of striking with great accuracy and with lightning-like speed—otherwise they would avail themselves of the advantage of attacking an unsuspecting prey, by waiting until the fish came within reach.

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