

GENERAL NOTES

Deformation in Nestling Cormorants.—While assisting Dr. Harrison F. Lewis band the young in a large colony of mixed cormorants on Lake Island near Cape Whittle on the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, July 13, 1939 I encountered two unusual conditions in the nestlings.

One of the young Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*), having a wing measurement of 92 millimeters, was found totally blind. There was a fleshy growth over both eyes. It had caused a slight swelling of the eye lids but had not affected the eye balls.

A young European Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo carbo*), with a wing measurement of 220 millimeters, was discovered with one wing twisted backward in such a way that it could not be outstretched or used in any way. The bones were growing around each other in a curved fashion indicating that the accident must have occurred when the bird was quite young. It no doubt resulted from the vigorous shuffling and fighting for position that takes place during feeding.

Since both birds were doomed to an early death when they would be deserted by their parents at the end of the nesting season, they were retained as specimens for the Dartmouth College Museum.—RICHARD LEE WEAVER, *Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire*.

American Egrets Breed in Wisconsin.—Three American Egrets (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) came to my attention on June 6, 1939, while I was visiting the Trempealeau bottoms in Wisconsin, in company with Ray C. Steele, Superintendent of the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Steele said that these birds had been noted flying about a nesting colony of Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons and Double-crested Cormorants and gave every indication that they might also be breeding.

We looked the colony over but did not see the egrets go to any nest. Steele reported, however, that three nests had been definitely located and later reported that all three pairs of birds were successful in rearing young. The files of the Biological Survey indicate that this is the first known nesting of this species in Wisconsin since those reported near Jefferson in July 1863 and Two Rivers in June 1880 (Kumlien and Hollister, "Birds of Wisconsin," *Bull. Wis. Nat. Hist. Soc.*, 3, 1903).

The American Egrets, which have been gradually recovering in numbers in recent years and slowly extending their range, now are familiar sights in localities from which they had long been absent. Steele has reported stragglers in increasing numbers in recent years, and in view of my interest in the birds at the time of my visit, suggested that I publish the record. I cannot do better than to quote from his summarized record of their appearances in this general vicinity prior to this successful breeding attempt:

"On May 20, 1936, near Marshland, Buffalo County, Wisconsin, a pair of adult egrets were observed, this being the first sight record in this locality. The writer did not again observe the birds during the season of 1936, nor were they sighted by other personnel employed on the Upper Mississippi Refuge. No observation of them was recorded during 1937.

On July 20, 1938, five adult American Egrets were observed near Brownsville, Houston County, Minnesota, and a report was recorded of 'white geese' having been observed in this locality on July 9. Undoubtedly the birds observed were egrets. On July 25, 1938, near the village of Potosi, Grant County, Wisconsin, eight American Egrets were observed, and as the season advanced it was not uncommon to see flocks of as many as 25 birds throughout the 284-mile length

of the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. They continued in evidence as far north as Buffalo County, Wisconsin, until October 8, the last date of observation recorded during 1938.

On April 26, 1939, a pair of American Egrets were observed at the Trempealeau Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Trempealeau County, Wisconsin. On May 10, 1939, 15 birds were observed near DeSoto, Crawford County, Wisconsin. On May 27, four adult birds were observed feeding in a marsh at the Trempealeau Migratory Waterfowl Refuge near a known nesting colony of Double-crested Cormorants and Great Blue and Black-crowned Night Herons. Observation disclosed that the egrets were traveling from the feeding grounds and alighting in trees among the other nesting herons and cormorants. On June 8, 1939, three egret nests were located in the heron and cormorant rookery. The nests were situated about 35 feet from the water in birch trees, the bases of which were inundated, but the trees had not yet been killed. On June 30 both still and motion pictures were made of the nesting egrets, one of the three nests containing five young birds, one containing four, and the third containing four birds and one unincubated egg. On July 16 a blind was constructed from which a more complete and better series of still and motion pictures were made. On July 31 the young birds had left the nest and were observed feeding on the nearby marshes.

The young birds evidenced little disturbance while being photographed without a blind; however, the adult birds would not come to the nest to feed the young while I was in a nearby tree but after the blind was constructed within 20 feet of the nearest nest the adult birds made frequent visits to the nests and fed the young. The slightest disturbance or noise in the blind would frighten the adults away. Several hours were spent in the blind photographing and observing these birds."—IRA N. GABRIELSON, *U.S. Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.*

The Food of Young Marsh Hawks.—Since 1935 the Game Management Section of the Illinois Natural History Survey has been giving considerable attention to the status of the Prairie Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido americanus*) in Illinois. While making a detailed study of a four square mile area of marginal prairie farmland near Hunt City, Illinois in the summer of 1936, I found the nest of a Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*). Since the area was known to harbor a population of 150-200 Prairie Chickens and more than 200 Bob-white (*Colinus virginianus*), the opportunity seemed favorable for making observations on the predator relations of this much discussed raptor to the young Prairie Chicken and Bob-white of the area.

In order to study the food habits of this family of hawks, a wire enclosure was built near the nest and the young hawks placed inside. As soon as a hawk was old enough to fly, one wing was pinioned with a leather thong. We hoped that the adult hawks would continue to bring them food and thus furnish much desired information as to the type of food that was taken from an area well populated with Prairie Chickens and Bob-white.

Although observations were made every day or two from July 10 to August 3, we were disappointed in the amount of food brought in during that time. The artificial situation created by confining the young hawks within the wire enclosure, and the prolonged dependence of the young birds may have occasioned an atypical response on the part of the parent birds. A number of times the young seemed not to have been fed from one morning till the next and occasionally seemed to lack for two or three days at a time.

During the period of observation, young (unidentified) song birds, immature rabbits and meadow mice (*Microtus*) constituted the major portion of the bill-offare for the young raptors. Recognizable bird remains included three young Bob-white and two young Upland Plovers (*Bartramia longicauda*). As far as could