

Mus. Nat. Hist., 1942) notes that in the New York area the majority of the early migrants are in adult plumage, and the majority of the later migrants are younger. Wodzicki and Stein (Emu, 58:296, 1958) note the same correlation for New Zealand Gannets. Stevenson (Audubon Field Notes, 12:273, 1958; 13:286, 1959) reports that adult-plumaged birds outnumbered younger birds in migration on two occasions in March off the east coast of Florida.

During the spring of 1971 I recorded Gannet movements and plumages in the Straits of Florida about 5 miles southeast of Marathon, Key Vaca, where on three occasions small, compact flocks were seen flying steadily northeast low over the water. No fishing or other activities were noted. The 70 Gannets I observed flew over water 75 to 100 feet deep near a reef parallel to the Florida Keys. Water depth increases rapidly seaward of the reef into the Straits of Florida. On 28 February 44 adult-plumaged Gannets were seen moving northeast in flocks of two to seven at the rate of nine birds per hour. On 4 April 23 Gannets, 18 adult-plumaged and five subadult and immature-plumaged, were seen moving northeast at the same rate. The largest flock was five. On 10 May three Gannets, one subadult and two immature-plumaged, were seen flying northeast at the rate of two birds per hour. No Gannets were seen during three subsequent trips on 17 and 31 May and 7 June.

These observations indicate that Gannet migration off Florida has begun by late February, which is earlier than previously supposed, and terminates in May. Furthermore, my observations indicate that adult-plumaged birds begin migration at an earlier date than subadults and immatures, with a mixing of age classes in April. That the Gannets followed the reef edge and avoided deep water suggests they are offshore and not pelagic birds. This may explain the lack of records of the species in the West Indies (Bond, Check-list of birds of the West Indies, 1940 and supplements) even though they occur annually in the southern Straits of Florida. This offshore habit is characteristic of other Gannet populations (Thomson, op. cit.:283-284), although New Zealand Gannets are known to migrate over sea from New Zealand to Australia by crossing the Tasman Sea and to Indian Ocean pelagic waters (Wodzicki and Stein, op. cit.:289). I wish to thank Dr. William B. Robertson, Jr. of the U. S. National Park Service and Dr. Glen E. Woolfenden of the University of South Florida for helpful suggestions on improving this manuscript.—TERRY C. MAXWELL, *CMR Box 7248, Homestead AFB, Florida 33030 (Present Address: 1025 Cactus Lane, San Angelo, Texas 76901), 10 July 1971.*

**Aerial feeding in the Snowy Egret.**—The Snowy Egret (*Leucophoyx thula*) is well known for its diversified feeding behavior. Catching aquatic prey while in flight has been noted by several authors. Bond (Auk, 51:500-502, 1934), Sprunt (Auk, 53:203, 1936), Grimes (Auk, 53:439, 1936) and Meyerriecks (Wilson Bull., 71:153-158, 1959) described a feeding behavior which Meyerriecks (op. cit.:154) called "hovering-stirring." An egret so engaged hovers near the water and with one or both feet agitates the water or stirs vegetation or debris beneath it. I have observed Snowy Egrets using hovering-stirring on several occasions in southern Florida. I have also witnessed a different method of aerial feeding which may be called "foot-dragging." Employing this technique, an egret flies just above the water with legs dangling beneath. It drags the toes of both feet through the water and takes prey from the water while in direct flight without hovering. I have only seen small organisms taken during such behavior and these were swallowed while the bird was in flight. A third type of aerial feeding has been noted by Dickinson (Auk, 64:306-307, 1947) and Jenni (Ecol. Monogr., 39:258, 1969) who reported Snowy Egrets feeding in direct flight but without dragging their feet.

I first observed foot-dragging on 22 March 1969 at a pond in the Big Cypress Swamp of southern Florida. Additional observations were made at Mrazek Pond in Everglades National Park on 10 December 1970. Certain conditions prevalent during the first series of observations are pertinent in accounting for the use of such active feeding techniques.

The pond, 0.25 hectares in area, is composed of two vegetation zones—a peripheral area of emergent grass (*Paspalum* spp.) and a central area which during periods of high water is filled with submerged naiad (*Najas flexilis*). During intervals of low rainfall, the water level in the Big Cypress Swamp drops. Fish and other aquatic organisms become concentrated within the pond from the surrounding swamp and marshlands. If low water levels occur at the proper time, these organisms provide a highly concentrated food source for numerous herons, storks and ibises which then frequent the pond. The feeding aggregation of wading birds and other aspects of the ecology of this pond were described by Kushlan (An ecological study of an alligator pond in the Big Cypress Swamp of southern Florida. M.S. Thesis, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida. 1972, 197 pp.). On 22 March 1969 herons began to arrive at the pond at 06:10 just after first light. Snowy Egrets first flew into the pond at 06:17 and began to feed immediately; by 06:45, 450 Snowy Egrets were feeding there. These birds were dispersed throughout the shallow emergent zone where they stood upon the trampled grass and used stand and wait feeding behavior exclusively. By 07:00 many herons including several hundred Snowy Egrets had left the pond. At 07:15 one Snowy Egret began feeding using foot-dragging behavior while flying from one side of the pond to the other. On each pass it flew low over the grass and upon reaching the open water of the central area it began to drag its feet in the water continuing this for the length of the pond—a distance of approximately 30 meters. Four other Snowy Egrets joined the first and these birds fed in this manner for 10 minutes. Meanwhile other Snowy Egrets continued to stand in the grass and although some successfully captured prey most did not attempt to feed.

In this instance stand and wait behavior was used early in the morning when the oxygen concentration of the water is lowest and fish are concentrated near the surface of the pond (Kushlan, op. cit.). Snowy Egrets began to use the more active technique when fish were less available and, from qualitative observation, success using stand and wait behavior was limited. These observations support the contention of Meyerriecks (Nat. Hist., 71:57, 1962) that such active feeding methods are resorted to when other methods fail or when other areas of habitat are not productive. Further evidence is derived from observations of Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor*) at the pond. Few were present in 1969 during the period when the wading bird aggregation actively utilized the pond. However several fed in the pond on 30 March 1969 after the activities of wading birds had reduced fish density (Kushlan, op. cit.). At that time Louisiana Herons along with Snowy Egrets fed by hovering-stirring almost exclusively.—JAMES A. KUSHLAN, *Department of Biology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33214, 4 October 1971.*

**Observations on the status, ecology, and behavior of Soras wintering in Trinidad, West Indies.**—The Sora (*Porzana carolina*) winters from the southern United States to northern South America, but it has been considered rare on Trinidad, West Indies (Leotaud, Oiseaux de l'Isle de la Trinidad, 1866, p. 495; Herklots, The birds of Trinidad and Tobago, Collins, London, 1961, p. 74). Belcher and Smooker (Ibis, 1935: 279–297, 1935), who found most of the other species of rails known from the Island,