

On November 29, 1927, Mr. Bradshaw wrote me as follows about a Whooping Crane that was shot not far from where I saw this bird: "On the evening of October 29, a farmer residing at Estevan, Sask., located a flock of Geese on his farm and under oath states that he took a pot shot at them and wounded what proved to be a Whooping Crane, but the bird being badly wounded he killed it and sent it to a taxidermist at Brandon for mounting. As soon as we heard of the matter we instructed the taxidermist to forward the bird to our Provincial Museum where it arrived in good shape and Mr. Mitchell, our taxidermist, has mounted it. There are one or two small buff colored feathers about two inches in diameter on the wings which might indicate that the bird is a two year old which had not yet reached mature plumage." This may have been the very bird I saw! I have two magnificent specimens in my collection, one from Dawson, Kidder Co., N. D., obtained in the early nineties, and the other from Buffalo Lake, eighteen or twenty miles northeast of Moose Jaw, Sask., killed about 1904 or 1905.—W. B. MENSCHON, *Saginaw, Mich.*

The Marthas Vineyard Crane.—It may be of interest to know that the Crane discussed in 'The Auk' for 1926, p. 538 has been positively identified as the Sarus Crane of India. It does not seem to be generally known that this species can withstand the winters of Cape Cod without shelter, yet this specimen seems quite at home even when the ground is covered with snow. Occasionally in severe weather he will take refuge in the garage on the Whittemore estate where he lives, or in the hen house but does not remain under cover long and seems immune to cold even when the temperature falls to zero.

When his mate, a pinioned bird, died, she was mounted in a life like position and placed near a window opening on the piazza. As long as the specimen remained in sight the male bird would spend hours on the piazza looking into the window.

When excited as when feeding or in the presence of visitors, this Crane goes through the most extraordinary dance using both wings and legs and the effect of lightness and buoyancy, with excessive activity, cannot be described. He is attached to the chauffeur on the estate and will follow him about like a dog and often walks along, the chauffeur holding one of his wings.

In spite of his docility on the home grounds he must possess a rare sense of danger for he ranges far and wide and, with so many sportsmen at large, it is quite remarkable that he has not been shot.—LOMBARD CARTER JONES, M.D., *Falmouth, Mass.*

The Courtship Display of the American Bittern.—About 9:30 in the morning of June 15, 1927 I had the pleasure of witnessing a courtship scene and the display of the male American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) at rather close range.

I was walking northward along the electric railway tracks, some seven-

teen miles north of Jackson, Michigan, and came to a brushy pond that touched the railway embankment on the west. This little pond is about 250 by 200 feet in size and there is timber on all sides except on the west. The margins of the pond are marshy but not brushy.

As I approached the pond a Bittern came over the heavy timber from the east and circled the pond on set wings, alighting about forty yards from me at the edge of the water. For a few minutes he assumed the erect stake-like pose and then began walking toward me along the margin of the pond in practically full view. The axis of his body was nearly horizontal with the neck and head raised somewhat. Before he had walked many yards the white nuptial plumes began showing at each 'shoulder.' He was moving toward me with a stately tread, the plume area gradually widening until the plumes appeared to meet across the back and to project about three inches beyond the brown feathers. The plumes were carried in a position nearly horizontal; that is they were not raised much above the contour of the back.

When the Bittern had approached within about thirty yards of me he raised his neck and head and I saw that the nearly white feathers on the throat from the base of the lower mandible downward some three inches were raised so that they projected straight out like a brush.

While the Bittern was approaching he continually uttered a throaty somewhat chirping call; *chu-peep, chu-peep*. The first syllable of the call being low and the second not loud. Mr. Verdi Burtch, of Branchport, N. Y., tells me that he has heard the Bittern utter a somewhat similar sound.

I now discovered the female Bittern at a distance of about twenty-five yards from me. Apparently she had been there all the time. As the male came up to her he raised his body to an erect position and strutted about her, all the while facing her. The female had now assumed an erect position, but not the 'frozen' attitude. However as the female knew of my presence she soon terminated the scene by rising in the air, the male following and also a third Bittern which had been near where the male had first alighted. This bird returned to the same spot in a minute or two, while the two courting Bitterns circled the pond high in the air for a minute and then flew off over the forest.

Owing to the lateness of the season I thought possible the ceremony was one of nest relief, but a search revealed no nest.

There was little to obstruct my view from the railway embankment, eight feet above the marsh, the light was over my shoulder and my 8x binocular was on the male Bittern during the whole performance.—WILLIAM G. FARGO, *Jackson, Mich.*

Cory's Least Bittern.—The A. O. U. Committee on Nomenclature has (Auk, XL, 1923, p. 524) seen fit to eliminate Cory's Least Bittern, (*Ixobrychus neoxenus*), from the 'Check-List,' basing its action on Bangs (Auk, XX XII, 1915, p. 483) and others who regard it as but a color