

It is interesting to note that Mr. Bent (Life Histories. Bulletin No. 130, p. 287) quotes Audubon as saying that the estimated speed of these birds is 100 mph. or more; but favored with being in a unique and interesting position for observation of the birds in flight, I can not confirm this observation.—CHARLES S. WEISER, 105 West Springettsbury Ave., York, Penna.

**Summering Eiders off the Massachusetts Coast.**—It will doubtless be of interest to record that on July 30, 1930, I found a pair of American Eiders (*Somateria m. dresseri*) in full breeding plumage at a point near Stone Horse Shoals on the Monomoy Peninsula. I first found them asleep on the beach and was able to approach to within fifty feet before they took alarm. They were apparently associating with a large flock of mixed scoters.—LESTER L. WALSH, 532 Spring Ave., Ridgewood, N. J.

**A Pennsylvania Black-crowned Night Heron Colony.**—Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax naevius*), for many years have maintained a heronry on McCormick's Island in the Susquehanna River opposite the upper end of Harrisburg, Pa. The island is one mile long and densely wooded except for a farm in the center. It is said to have been there for three generations at least.

Five years ago we saw the herons nesting in the tops of tall red birches but for the past four years they have occupied a small clump<sup>a</sup> of white pines. This year we found 150 nests in the white pine trees, 13 in scrub pines, 3 in wild cherries and 15 in red birch trees. In 134 white pine trees there were single nests but eight others had two nests each. The nests in the birches were forty feet above ground, in the pines about fifteen feet.

The white pine trees had from nine to twelve whorls of branches, most having ten or eleven. The ages of white pines are computed as from three to five years more than the number of layers of branches. In 53 trees examined the nests were on the top layer of radiating branches of sixteen trees, on the second layer in 27, on the third layer in 24 and fourth layer in 6. The first 16 were certainly built this year, and most if not all the nests on the second layer of branches. The lower thirty nests may have been built last year. All the trees were numbered for future study as to the reoccupation of nests. Doubtless many nests are destroyed by the weather but we found 36 old nests which seemed to have withstood the storms.

The census showed 145 occupied nests, of which 135 were in 122 white pine trees. The shells of 231 heron eggs were found on the ground beneath 122 trees, from one to four per tree. Occupation was determined by the appearance of the trees. Eighty-one were greatly whitened by the excreta of the herons, and 61 showed no discoloration. Ten of the 81 showed no egg shells on the ground. One showed excreta and no egg shells but the nest contained a fledgling. Among those trees showing no excreta upon the branches or ground, four held nests with young birds. The presence or absence of egg shells, or excreta, are evidently not absolute indications of the occupancy of a heron's nest.