

GENERAL NOTES.

Red-throated Loon and Holboell's Grebe in West Virginia.—Since West Virginia has no natural lakes or ponds, bird students in the state have been watching with great interest the effect that the construction of a series of power dams might have on water-bird life. It is gratifying to note that these artificially created lakes are being visited by annually increasing numbers of water-fowl.

Just outside of Morgantown the Cheat River has been dammed, making a narrow mountain lake about sixteen miles in length. A group from West Virginia University consisting of Karl Haller, James Handlan, R. H. Waldron, Jr., A. S. Margolin, and the writer has been visiting this lake regularly this past year. Among the birds noted have been Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) and Holboell's Grebe (*Colymbus griseus holboellii*), two species for which state records are very scarce.

On November 20, 1935, two Red-throated Loons were carefully identified, and a third individual, presumably of this species, but too far away to make identification certain, was seen. It happened that several Common Loons were on the lake at the time, thus making comparison easy. We found that by driving from one side of the narrow lake to the other, following the movement of the birds, we secured a number of close observations, one of them from a distance of not over thirty feet. The very much whiter appearance of these birds as compared with Common Loons, and the apparently upturned bill were points of identification noted.

Bibbee has recorded this species from Lake Terra Alta, Preston County, and A. S. Morgan has taken a specimen in Putnam County. These are, so far as the author is aware, the only previous state records.

A single Holboell's Grebe was carefully identified near Rockley, on Cheat Lake, November 13, 1935. Here also we had a splendid basis for comparison, for there were Horned Grebes on the lake at the same time. The crescent white mark on the head was noted. Bibbee, Weimer, Walron, and a few others have previous state records for this species.

Other species of water-fowl noted during the autumn migration on this body of water were Horned Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Common Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, Scaup Ducks (sp.) and Bufflehead. MAURICE BROOKS, *West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va.*

Nest-building Instinct in an Immature Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus auritus*).—In connection with my recent studies on the home-life of the Double-crested Cormorant,¹ an unusual nesting condition was noted in one of the Maine colonies. An immature bird, believed to be a male, had established territory and was engaged in nest-building when observed on July 11, 1935. At this time only the foundation had been constructed, and I estimated that the bird had actually been occupied in carrying material about two days. Working at irregular intervals, the Cormorant completed the nest on July 17. Throughout this process, he was greatly hindered by the fact that each time he left his territory, a certain amount of nesting material was stolen by the other members of the colony. Nest-robbing of this type appears to be a common characteristic of the species, as I have observed it in four of the Maine colonies, and Lewis has commented upon it among the birds of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.²

¹ These investigations were made possible by grants from the Coe Research Fund of the University of Maine.

² Lewis, H. F. *The Natural History of the Double-crested Cormorant*. 1929, Ru-Mi-Lou Books, Ottawa. Pp. 32-33.

Having completed the nest, the Cormorant guarded it jealously, and was as particular of his territorial rights as were the mature adults around him. The bird went through many of the true courtship maneuvers whenever a female flew overhead or walked by the nest. Rotation of the neck, elevation of the mandibles until they were perpendicular, and raising of the wings were all frequently observed, these acts being part of the normal display of the species. Song, and its accompanying physical contortions, were not witnessed. Incidentally, courtship among the other birds had been concluded for some little time, except for an occasional outburst of song.

The Cormorant remained on the nest constantly, except when feeding, until July 21. On that day, during a rather extended absence, his nest was almost entirely destroyed by neighboring adults. Although his premature nesting instinct had subsided to such a degree that he did not re-build, the bird never-the-less used his territory as a roosting place for two more days.

This incident is unusual, not only in itself, but because of the fact that among all the colonies which I have visited, immature Cormorants are not tolerated by the nesting birds. HOWARD L. MENDALL, *Dept. of Zoology, University of Maine, Orono, Maine.*

An Unusual Feeding Habit of the Snowy Heron.—On January 15, 1936, Mr. Robert P. Allen of the National Association Audubon Societies and the writer watched a group of Snowy Herons (*Egretta thula thula*) feeding from the Tamiami Trail, Collier Co., Florida, in a manner that was strange to both of us, and one which seems to be omitted completely in the literature.

The writer has been familiar with this species for many years in South Carolina, Georgia and Florida but never noted this performance before. The birds were in a small pond surrounded by heavy grass growth and their actions were almost those of a band of Petrels! Suddenly rising from the shallows, many would fly out over the pond, patting the water with their feet and flapping the wings quickly, making quick darts downward with the bill into the water. When first seen, it was thought to be an individual quirk of a single bird, but it soon became evident that it was not that. Nearly all of the score or more of birds present indulged in it from time to time and on occasions, half a dozen were at it at once. It was a rapid, hovering flight, close to the surface, with the feet in action as well as the wings, and reminiscent of nothing but a Petrel. It was not possible to see what was taken by the strikes of the bill, but it is likely that the birds were catching small shrimp, one of the fresh-water varieties.

The rapid actions of the species in feeding has often been commented upon, but hitherto always while the bird was wading, or walking about. I have examined the literature as best I can, and find no mention of the hovering flight, though it is possible that someone has noted it.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *Supervisor Southern Sanctuaries National Asso. Audubon Societies, Charleston, S. C.*

The Roseate Spoonbill in Georgia.—The writer, through the courtesy of Mrs. Victor Bassett, of Savannah, Ga., takes pleasure in recording the occurrence of *Ajaia ajaja* in Georgia after a lapse of many years. During the summer of 1934, both Mrs. Bassett and Mrs. H. W. Butler of Chatham County, observed a specimen of this species in a Heron rookery situated in what is known as King's Pond, Lincoln County. Both ladies were sure of their identification but as sight records are not specimens, this occurrence did not perhaps, receive the merit it deserved. In July 1934, Mrs. Butler, while in King's Pond with a small kodak, saw the bird again and