

have visited my place but both times in July or August and this spring occurrence seems very unusual.—LOMBARD CARTER JONES, *Falmouth, Mass.*

On an Unusual Feeding Habit of the Snowy Egret.—In the April, 1936, issue of 'The Auk' (p. 203), Mr. Alexander Sprunt, Jr., records an unusual feeding habit of the Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula thula*) in a pool along the Tamiami Trail in the Everglades. The birds he observed fed like Petrels, hovering over the water and making quick darts downward with the bill.

I had never seen a Heron feed in that manner until June 7, 1936, when at Orange Lake, Alachua County, Florida, with Messrs. Roy C. Hallman and Alden H. Hadley. We had scarcely gotten out of the car at the boat landing when Hallman called our attention to a number of Snowy Egrets a hundred yards or more offshore feeding in the fashion described by Sprunt. I failed to notice that the birds patted the water with their feet, though they may have. They appeared to me to be feeding a good deal as our Gulls do on the St. Johns River, by hovering and snatching up morsels of food from the surface of the water.

It was on the deep, open water in the lake between Bird Island, where Snowy and other Herons nest in good numbers, and the mainland to the west that we saw the birds feeding in this Petrel or Gull fashion. Several Snowies continued this mode of feeding all during the time we rowed out to the island, and I noticed them at it time and again during a six-hour stay in my blind up in a willow tree in the rookery.

It is hard to believe that this is a recently acquired habit, but it is certain that Sprunt, Hallman, and I saw no birds so engaged while we were at Orange Lake for two or three hours on April 21, 1935.—S. A. GRIMES, 4661 *Attleboro St., Jacksonville, Fla.*

Unusual Feeding Habits of Some of the Ardeidae.—On the morning of December 21, 1935, wishing to take some photographs of Ducks, I went into a blind I recently had built on a small island in the rest pond of my shooting grounds, just north of Avery Island, Louisiana.

I had noted that a great number of Pintails (*Dafla acuta*) and other Ducks were spending the day on the low banks of this small island, which is separated from the mainland by about thirty feet of shallow water. While waiting for the light to become strong enough for photography, I was interested in watching the birds come in. Many varieties of Ducks were present; also Coots (*Fulica americana americana*), Boat-tail Grackles (*Cassidix mexicanus major*), and Redwing Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus littoralis*) were around the blinds in numbers. American Egrets (*Casmerodius albus egretta*), Snowy Herons (*Egretta thula thula*), Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*), and Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea caerulea*) came from "Bird City" to the shallow water shortly after daylight. There are usually a few hundred of these birds that do not go to Central America at the approach of cold weather, but remain in my Heron colony, "Bird City," at Avery Island, throughout the winter, obtaining their food from the surrounding shallow waters. This particular morning a number of the different varieties of Herons lit very near my blind, a good many of them in the shallow water between my blind and the shore, some of them within twenty feet of me. They began looking for food, and as the water was very cold, there being frost all over the grass, their usual food was apparently hard to find.

Hearing a splashing in the water where these Herons were, I looked more closely expecting to see Ducks, or other water birds feeding, and was surprised to see that the splashing came from the feet and legs of the Snowy Herons and Louisiana Herons,

which, as they slowly walked forward in the shallow water would stretch one leg far in advance of the other, all of the while vibrating it rapidly as the foot slid along the bottom. It was quite evident that this movement and vibration of the feet and legs was for the purpose of frightening the small water insects, or possible minnows, which might be hiding in the grass-covered bottom of this shallow area. From the numerous times they snapped up their frightened prey, they were far more successful in getting food than the other two varieties of Herons present which did not follow this method of hunting. In fact, American Egrets and Little Blue Herons did not move their feet or legs except in their normal steps.

In procuring its food the Louisiana Heron exhibits more individuality than any of the other Herons occurring in Louisiana during the warm weather. When in search of food in the shallow grass-grown ponds, or along the edges of deeper lagoons, it is a pretty sight to see a Louisiana Heron in action. They do not stand sedately and wait for the approach of the water creatures which constitute their food supply, but move along quite rapidly, sometimes with quick running steps. Every few steps a wing on one side or the other is flipped out, and again folded with a quick side jerk. Occasionally both wings are extended and their tips flipped sideways with quick jerky motions while the bird is stepping rapidly forward. The object being to frighten into movement the underwater creatures which otherwise would remain hidden in the undergrowth. As soon as one of these moves it is quickly snapped up in the Heron's long, lance-like beak. No other Heron in Louisiana has this method of getting its food. Nor do Louisiana Herons shake their feet and legs to put their prey in motion when the water is warm as they do in winter when the water is cold and their food supply inactive.

In times of drought when most or all of the shallow water marshes and swamps are dry, it is usual for Little Blue Herons, both adults and juveniles, to alight in the open grass lands and feed on insects. At such times insects constitute the entire food of this species. The other varieties of Herons and Egrets go to the tidal flats for food, but the Little Blue never hunts its food in salt water.—E. A. McILHENNY, *Avery Island, La.*

The Redhead and Ring-necked Duck Breeding at Pymatuning Lake, Pennsylvania.—These two species must now be added to the list of Ducks known to nest in the Pymatuning region of northwestern Pennsylvania. Mated pairs were repeatedly observed there in May by Mr. R. L. Fricke and the writer. We felt confident that they were breeding, but no nests could be located. In June Mr. Fricke reported seeing several broods of young, but of which species he was not sure. Early in July I went to Pymatuning (near Linesville) and through the courtesy of the Pennsylvania Board of Game Commissioners and their field representative, Mr. Burt L. Oudette, was permitted to take a few specimens of young birds for identification. Among these both the Redhead and Ring-necked Ducks are represented. The females of these two species, as is well known, are very similar in general appearance, and can scarcely be distinguished in life. The ducklings, too, are much alike, but those of the Ring-necked are darker in general coloration, while the outline of the feathers at the base of the upper mandible is blunt, not pointed—just as in the adults.

These records are new and unexpected for western Pennsylvania.—W. E. CLYDE TODD, *Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, Pa.*

King Eiders in Massachusetts in May.—On May 9, 1936, I observed at close range for some two hours an adult pair of King Eiders (*Somateria spectabilis*) at