

that there were present on his ponds twelve American Egrets (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) and one Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula thula*). On August 4, I flushed the little egret at a distance of sixty yards when its bright-yellow feet and black tarsi were strikingly apparent. It then perched in plain view on a bare limb of a tree about 150 yards away and was carefully inspected by Mr. Watkins and myself by means of a 20-power telescope on a tripod. The yellow feet and lores were plainly visible; the plumes on the neck and back were such as I have observed on early-winter adults in central Florida. On August 6 this Snowy Egret was observed by Pierce Brodkorb and Thomas D. Hinshaw of University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, both of whom confirm my determination of the bird. Mr. Watkins later reported that this egret remained in the vicinity for three weeks. It was on these ponds that Mr. Watkins collected in 1894 the first Michigan specimen of 'Cory's Least Bittern' (*Ixobrychus neoxenus*)—see Auk, vol. 12, p. 77, 1895.

The present record of an adult Snowy Egret is of particular interest as all previous authentic records of this species in Michigan and Ohio appear to have been of immature birds. The Snowy Egret reported collected by L. W. and B. R. Campbell, in Monroe County, Michigan, August 10, 1935, was an immature bird although not specifically so reported in the published record (Auk, vol. 52, p. 322, 1935). This record seems to be the first authentic report of the species in Michigan, for since its publication, F. W. Rapp, Vicksburg, Michigan, has written the Museum that he had observed at close range on three different days, August 20–22, 1924, the white herons reported as egrets by Benjamin O. Bush and that they were certainly immature Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea caerulea*) with "plumage white, bill for about one third of the way back from the tip black, then gradually lighter toward the base, legs and feet greenish-yellow all over. These birds had a favorite post on which they would perch within about five rods of my place of concealment where I examined them with a glass." Thus Mr. Rapp has disposed of this long-suspected record.

One who has observed the actions and habits of the Snowy Egret can hardly mistake an immature Little Blue Heron for it. The Snowy Egret is very active and frequently exhibits unusual intelligence in its pursuit of food. Compared with it the Little Blue Heron is a sluggish dullard. Several recent reports in 'The Auk' of the Snowy Egret in flight picking food off the water give evidence of its intelligence and agility. I have seen this species perform this feat near Tampa Bay, Florida, flapping back and forth across a deep ditch some twenty feet wide, while American Egrets and Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*) stood on the bank looking on.—WILLIAM G. FARGO, *University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan*.

Number of Contour Feathers of *Cygnus* and *Xanthocephalus*.—In view of the recent interest in numbers of contour feathers it may be worth while to record two additional counts:

<i>Species</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of feathers</i>	<i>Weight of bird</i>	<i>Weight of feathers</i>
<i>Cygnus</i>	?	Nov. 5, 1933	25,216	6123.0 grams	621.0 grams
<i>Xanthocephalus</i>	♂	Sept. 2, 1935	4,342	85.5 grams	7.5 grams

The Whistling Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*) was collected in Erie Township, Monroe County, Michigan. The feathers were counted by Pierce Brodkorb, Leonard W. Wing, William J. Howard and myself. The only feathers not actually counted were those along the margin of a cut in the neck, estimated to be 1200, and those of

the right wing. The latter was estimated by using the number of feathers counted on the left wing, which is 609. It is interesting to compare the number of head and neck feathers (20,177) with those on the rest of the bird (5039). Many on the neck, breast and back were in the pin-feather stage.

The Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) was taken in Clay County, near Ruthven, Iowa. Its feather count is considerably higher than that of any passerine bird in Dr. Alexander Wetmore's list (Auk, vol. 53, pp. 159-169, 1936). This may perhaps be accounted for by the fact that it was in fall plumage.—GEORGE ANDREW AMMANN, *Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan*.

Injury-feigning by a Wood Duck.—In the spring of 1936 I had an unusual opportunity to observe injury-feigning in a Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*). The observation is of particular interest because the injury-feigning was done to save the young from the attack of a natural enemy, in this case a Red-shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*). The food habits of the latter are well known to be mainly beneficial, yet with a nest full of hungry young to feed, a hawk cannot be expected to pick out for food those creatures only that man considers undesirable. In any event, here in Fairfield County, Connecticut, the Red-shouldered Hawk is at present a much scarcer breeding bird than the Wood Duck.

The incident occurred in an area where a mature woodland of oaks and other broad-leaved trees borders a wooded swamp. A pair of Red-shouldered Hawks had built their nest in a black oak that stood on the border of the swamp. On the date of my observation, May 20, the hawks had young in their nest, while broods of young Wood Ducks a few days old were to be found on the waters of the swamp, in the company of their mothers. Early that morning as I approached the vicinity of the hawks' nest, I heard the call of a female Wood Duck,—a series of loud squeaky notes that sounds like the badly worn brakes of an automobile. Peering over the bushes, I saw a brood of nine young Wood Ducks following their mother in single file across a bit of open water. I had barely caught sight of them when the hawk descended upon the brood and they scattered in every direction to the shelter of swamp vegetation. The mother instantly extended her head and neck upon the water, turned on one side, flapped one wing in the air and paddled about in circles as though quite helpless. The hawk immediately turned and struck at her, but somehow she managed to get behind a clump of bushes, with which the hawk, missing its stroke, collided. It then perched on a stump and watched till the duck appeared in the open again, when it attacked a second time with the same result. This continued, the hawk returning to the stump and renewing its attack either four or five times, but in the excitement I lost count. At one time two of the young ducks left their hiding-place and scurried across the water to another, but the hawk was so interested in the frantically flapping mother that it paid no attention to them. All of this action took place within fifty yards of where I stood. The vegetation was so thick that I could have seen little or nothing had it been much farther away. Soon, however, the duck moved to a point where I could not see to advantage, and as I changed my position, the hawk saw me and flew away. The mother duck then resumed her normal posture and called to her brood. The young came out from their hiding-places and followed her off through the swamp where they were soon out of my sight.

The behavior of the mother duck in this observation was marvelous to me. Over and over she deliberately came out into the open a short distance from the hawk, and seemed to invite its attack. She skilfully avoided every attack and yet all the time maintained the attitude of complete helplessness. She was evidently enticing the hawk gradually away from the vicinity of the young when my movement inter-