

GENERAL NOTES

Western Grebe in New Hampshire.—On April 3, 1938, while studying coastal birds, a group of ornithological students and I saw a Western Grebe, *Aechmophorus occidentalis*, feeding a few hundred yards offshore at Hampton Beach, New Hampshire. A Western Grebe was again seen near the same locality on May 26, 1938, by members of the same group. The swan-like neck, and the white color of head and neck, except for crown and nape which were black, clearly distinguished this grebe from the smaller Holboell's Grebe, with which the writer is acquainted.

The above record is an addition to the sight records accumulating for this bird on the New England coast, since 1934 (see Auk, July 1937).—EUGENE J. GOELLNER, *Manchester, New Hampshire.*

Predatory instincts in the American Egret.—Arthur H. Howell, in his 'Florida Bird Life,' page 101, states that "few data on the food habits of the American Egret are available." Neither he nor A. C. Bent in the latter's 'Life Histories,' gives any instance of predatory exhibitions on the part of this species, therefore the following incident may be an addition to the literature concerning this phase of the egret's life history. In early May 1938, while on the plantation 'Cherokee,' in Colleton Co., South Carolina, belonging to Mr. W. R. Coe of New York, the writer was told by Mr. R. F. Kirkland, the Superintendent of that property, of an observation made by the latter a few days previously. Mr. Kirkland was riding horseback over part of the plantation near one of the ricefields. He noted an egret (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) feeding along one of the ditches, and was idly watching it, when he saw the bird make a sudden dart downward with its beak. Almost immediately it rose into the air with something in the bill, and flapped away. Struck by something unusual about it, he suddenly determined to see exactly what it was, and therefore spurred his horse, attained a position almost under the bird, and by shouting and waving his arms, succeeded in making it drop the object which fell nearby. Going to it at once, he was amazed to find that it was a Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus phoeniceus*). Close examination of the bird showed it to be wounded, and since some of these birds had recently been shot because of depredations on the crops, he concluded that the specimen had been injured in that way. It was not able to fly, but could walk. The seizure by the egret had further weakened it, but it was still perfectly able to struggle. Though thoroughly familiar with Carolina Low Country wildlife, Mr. Kirkland had never before seen a like instance, and was much impressed by it. Certainly, it is utterly new to the writer, who has known the egret most of his life and has studied it throughout almost its entire range.—ALEXANDER SPRUNT, JR., *R. F. D. No. 1, Charleston, South Carolina.*

American Egret and Little Blue Heron in Lower Mohawk River valley.—Supplementing the reports of Stoner (Auk, 55: 119–121, 1938; Univ. of N. Y. Bull. to Schools, 24: 119–121, Mar. 15, 1938) for 1937, and of Clausen (Auk, 55: 518, 1938) for 1934, upon the status of the American Egret (*Casmerodius albus egretta*) in the lower Mohawk River valley, there are the following records for the Crescent Lake section. In only one year since 1920, or possibly earlier, has the American Egret not been seen along this section of the canalized Mohawk River; none was seen in 1934. The birds were first recorded by the writer there in 1930, when information was obtained from several independent sources showing the egrets had been regular summer visitors there at least twelve years. Only two of the birds were seen in each of the first few years, but in the late 1920's the count varied from four to eight.

Since 1930 the usual season has been from mid-July until late September. The earliest arrival date was established in 1938, with three observed on July 4; the latest departure date was in 1937, when for the first time the birds were recorded in October (through October 10, one day after duck-hunting season was opened). The counts have shown: 1930, ten, July 19 to September 20; 1931, five, early September only; 1932, one, September 1; 1933, twelve, July 9 to September 17; 1934, none; 1935, two, August 5 to 24; 1936, fourteen, July 20 to September 29; 1937, twenty-seven, July 9 to October 10; 1938, arrived July 4.

One immature Little Blue Heron (*Florida c. caerulea*) was observed by the writer at Crescent Lake on August 16, 1931; three, likewise immature, by Edgar Bedell on September 12, 1937.

Eaton ('Birds of New York,' 1908) lists no records for either species in Schenectady, Saratoga, Albany, or Rensselaer Counties.

Crescent Lake is that section of the Barge Canal (Mohawk River) extending from the Crescent dams to Lock 7, eleven miles to the west and a few miles east of Schenectady. The Crescent dams, which hold the Crescent Lake level at 184 feet, in less than two miles drop the canal to the Hudson River level of 48 feet at Cohoes. The Lock 7 dam, in turn, holds the water in the Niskayuna Lake section of the canalized river at a 211-foot level back through the Schenectady section to Lock 8, another distance of about eleven miles. In that section of Crescent Lake where the egrets are most commonly seen, the river has a maximum width of three-quarters of a mile, mostly of less than ten feet in depth, and with several small islands and large expanses of shallow, heavily grown marshes. For many years the lake has been known because of its water chestnut (*Trapa natans*), and in recent years large sections of the area have been choked, except in the canal channel and deep water, with this imported weed (intentionally introduced in Collins Lake, of the Niskayuna Lake section, in 1884). From early June until late October large areas of the river can be penetrated only with difficulty by boat, and each year has seen the weed extend its boundaries. The dense water-chestnut growth does, however, seem to attract fish, insects, and certain birds. Crescent Lake has a very irregular shore, with many bays and coves, mostly as marshes. It borders the abandoned, water-filled Erie Canal on the Saratoga County side, and has numerous small ponds adjoining it. For many years there has been a large colony of Black-crowned Night Herons on the Saratoga side, and it is in this heronry that most of the egrets seem to collect at night. Great Blue Herons are not known to breed in the immediate vicinity, but they are common summer visitors along the section. Green Herons, and American and Least Bitterns are local breeders, with the first mentioned relatively common.—GUY BARTLETT, *R. D. 1, Schenectady, New York.*

African Cattle Heron taken in British Guiana.—An Old World genus, not previously recorded in the western hemisphere, was added to the American fauna as an accidental visitant with the collecting of an African Cattle Heron, *Bubulcus i. ibis*, near Buxton, East Coast, British Guiana, by the writer on May 27, 1937. This specimen (F. M. no. 108,002) is an apparently adult female in modified nuptial plumage. The dorsal plumes are entirely lacking but the crest feathers and sparse pectoral plumes are typically sienna, although only vaguely tinged with vinous. The legs are yellowish, becoming dusky brownish on the feet. Measurements: wing, 244 mm.; tail, 93; culmen, 56. The bird was found feeding in company with scores of Snowy Egrets, Tricolored and Little Blue Herons in a partially submerged ricefield near the railway, about a mile east of Buxton, a native village on the coastal plain approximately eleven miles east of Georgetown. So far as could be observed,