

GENERAL NOTES

Pelicans killed by lightning.—Although press reports of the destruction of birds in flight by bolts of lightning are not unknown, the present writer has considered that most of the alleged fatalities from this cause have been due chiefly to an over-active imagination. Investigation, however, reveals the fact that there are a few substantiated cases, to which the following may be added.

Among newspaper clippings received by the U. S. Biological Survey was an Associated Press dispatch from Nelson, Nebraska, under the date of October 29, 1939, to the effect that "lightning struck a flock of pelicans flying across the Emil Schief farm northwest of here, killing 33." A letter addressed to Mr. Schief at Nelson, making inquiry regarding the accuracy of the statement, brought an interesting reply. Writing from Lawrence, Nebraska, on November 9, 1939, Mr. Schief (the press dispatch had misspelled the name) stated that the occurrence took place on April 4, 1939, when there had been a series of heavy thunder-showers. Anticipating that water would be over the road, Mr. Schief's 14-year-old son Arthur started on horseback about 3.30 in the afternoon to meet his two younger brothers who would then be on their way home from school. While he was on the road, a bolt of lightning struck within 100 yards of him, and on looking in that direction he observed a flock of 75 White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*), flying about 100 feet above the ground and from which 34 were falling. One fell in a pool of water but revived in a few minutes and flew off in the direction taken by the rest of the flock. The others were dead and on some the feathers were singed. Mr. Schief's letter concludes with this comment: "This is a true and correct statement."—FREDERICK C. LINCOLN, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

Louisiana Heron in Massachusetts.—On September 7, 1940, as I was working the Rowley River salt marshes with the Misses Ruth and Lois Batchelder in their power-boat on the lookout for birds, there crossed our bows at no great distance a medium-sized heron with dark upper parts and a white belly. Though none of us had ever seen a Louisiana Heron in life, we were, collectively, familiar with its appearance in pictures, and that was the species that immediately occurred to us. The tide was high and we followed the bird about through river and creeks, and though we never got very near, we saw it clearly enough to get the diagnostic colors and markings: general appearance resembling that of the Little Blue Heron; upper parts, including wings, blue; a white area on the back (like a Dowitcher, as one of us remarked); under wing-coverts white; belly white, with a sharp line of demarcation on the breast; reddish on the neck. Later consultation of books and examination of skins in the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy convinced me that the bird was indeed a Louisiana Heron (*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*), a species new to New England, not having been reported before, so far as I can learn, from farther north than Long Island, New York. While we watched the bird it was within the limits of the town of Ipswich, Massachusetts. It is, of course, regrettable that this observation could not have been fortified with a specimen, but confirmation was obtained when the bird was seen distinctly the next day by Mr. S. Gilbert Emilio, of the Peabody Museum, Salem, and Mr. Charles P. Preston, of Virginia. Mr. Preston had been familiar with the species in the South. It was also seen in the same marsh, September 15, by Mr. Wendell Taber. All three of