

Several other records of this bird have been made in the Connecticut Valley in New Hampshire and Vermont. One was found at Jefferson, New Hampshire, October 13, 1910, and another at East Corinth, Vermont, October 9, 1938.—RICHARD WEAVER, *Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire*.

Snowy Egret again nesting in Cape May County, New Jersey.—In 'The Auk' for January 1940, McDonald, Daly, and Gillespie reported the first nest of the Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula thula*, in New Jersey since about 1886. This nest was found "in Cape May County, New Jersey," on July 9, 1939. It is a pleasure to report a 1940 breeding record for the same species in the same vague location (correspondence with last year's discoverers discloses that the site is identical; hence the birds may be the same pair).

On May 30, 1940, the writer, accompanied by Malcolm S. Ferguson and Richard A. McLean, discovered a nest of the Snowy Egret in the above situation. It contained one egg, and reposed in a cedar tree about eight feet from the ground. Numerous Black-crowned Night Herons' nests in the vicinity contained eggs also, but a few harbored newly hatched young. Three adult Snowy Egrets were observed in the colony. No Little Blue Herons could be found. Ownership of the nest was established by retiring some distance to observe the adults, two of which promptly flew to the tree in which the alleged Snowy Egret nest reposed. A Black-crowned Night Heron's nest was in the same tree, about two feet above the egret's nest. Direct comparison of the Night Heron's eggs with the single egret's egg was possible, and the difference in size was readily discerned.

On June 18, 1940, another visit was made to the colony. The Night Herons were a third to a half grown. The egret's nest contained six eggs, which represents the maximum clutch for this species according to Bent's 'Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds.' Only one adult Snowy Egret was seen. It sat in a nearby tree and, when flushed, made only a narrow circle to alight in another tree close by. On July 8, 1940, the nest contained four young birds, evenly graded in size. No trace of the last two eggs was found. The smallest bird stayed in the nest, but the three others tried to clamber away among the cedar branches. All were caught and banded. The tips of their outer primaries had not yet sprouted from their sheaths but were pinkish white—not dark—in color, thus excluding the Little Blue Heron at once as parent to these fledglings.

On this occasion two adult Snowy Egrets were observed. One alit in a neighboring tree while the young were being banded. Periodically it uttered a single harsh note of protest. Later, when the young were returned safely to the nest and we investigated other parts of the colony, it joined its mate in soaring high over the marsh. The day was clear and the birds were seen sharply enough through a binocular against a blue sky for me to state that neither one bore a band on its leg. Last year two young birds were banded.

The young Black-crowned Night Herons were almost all fully fledged at this time and the colony was virtually deserted by this species. Young Fish Crows were flopping about, just out of the nest, while seven or eight Osprey families had just begun their chick phase. No Little Blue Herons or American Egrets were seen, but a single Yellow-crowned Night Heron showed itself for a moment before making a shy exit behind an adjacent 'island' in the marsh.

The Snowy Egret, American Egret, and Little Blue Heron all nested—or are supposed to have nested—in New Jersey during the nineteenth century, the latest records being some time in the '80's. Their lowest ebb, when they were rare even

in Florida, was from 1902 to 1908. As they began to increase in numbers, they gradually reclaimed their original breeding territories. All three reached New Jersey as breeding species within about a decade, showing that the rate of increase under protection was closely parallel. The American Egret was found nesting in Salem County, New Jersey, in 1928, at a time when Snowy Egrets were still extreme rarities—even as visitors—in the State. The Little Blue Heron was found nesting in Camden County, New Jersey, in 1935. The Snowy Egret was found nesting in Cape May County, New Jersey, in 1939. Since the original nests of American Egret and Little Blue Heron were found, both of these species have established themselves in other colonies scattered through southern New Jersey, the number of pairs breeding annually in the State showing a satisfying increase year by year. Sight records of the Snowy Egret have simultaneously become more frequent. It is therefore to be expected that the Snowy Egret will likewise continue to invade this ancient territory, so that in a few years numerous breeding colonies may be familiar to many ornithologists.—C. BROOKE WORTH, *Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Princeton, New Jersey*.

American Bittern eats garter snake.—On August 22, 1940, 11.45 a. m., an American Bittern, *Botaurus lentiginosus*, was observed in the shore water of Lincoln Pond on the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville, Albany County, New York. The bittern was standing in two inches of water among a shore zone of *Glyceria borealis* with an approximately 12-inch-long garter snake, *Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*, in its bill. The writer approached to within ten feet of the bird without frightening it, and was later joined by three other observers; the addition of these caused the bird (still secreting itself in the *Glyceria*), to move fifteen feet away.

When the bittern was first seen it was holding the garter snake by the center of the body. The bird made four efforts to take the snake's head into its mouth, succeeding on the fourth attempt. The snake's head was then directed down the esophagus, with the body following, by a series of gulping movements. As the head disappeared down the bird's throat the gulping movements were transferred to the esophageal region of the neck, and later to the gizzard region after the tail had entered the bittern's bill. The swallowing process consumed about three minutes. The bittern then raised its bill in the air and held it in this position for a few seconds; lowering its bill, the bird thrust it between the right wing-feathers several times and retired to the shelter of the alders bordering the shore.

At this time of year the garter snakes come down to the shore to feed on newly transformed green frogs, *Rana clamitans*, and bullfrogs, *Rana catesbiana*. The garter snake in search of such food along the shore of Lincoln Pond apparently becomes easy prey for the voracious bittern.—WILLIAM MARCUS INGRAM, *Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Rensselaerville, New York* and *Zoology Laboratory, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York*.

Migrant ducks in the Dominican Republic.—Mr. Hugh A. Johnston, resident for years near Monte Cristi in the northwestern part of the Dominican Republic, has written me recently that migratory ducks have come to his region in great abundance during the last two winters. He reports flocks of many thousands flying over the Rio Yaque del Norte, ten miles above Monte Cristi, attracted apparently by the rice fields located on a government irrigation project.

Among them he found the American Pintail (*Dafila acuta tzitzihoo*) common, a species that has not been reported before with certainty from the island. Mr. Johnston has had individuals in captivity from specimens trapped by natives so