

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