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*Wildlife Conservation Building, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri, June 8, 1950.*

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#### GENERAL NOTES

**Raccoon Predation on the Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*.**—On June 22, 1950, while I made observations on a heron rookery located in the Crab Orchard Lake Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois, a raccoon, *Procyon lotor hirtus*, was observed to climb a tree containing heron nests. The raccoon entered a nest which was located 50 feet from the ground; it was seen feeding on remains of Great Blue Herons. It remained in the nest for 30 minutes, after which time it left the tree. About five minutes later the raccoon again climbed the tree, entered the nest, and continued its eating activities. Supporting evidence of predation by raccoons, was several scats containing heron feathers, that were found on logs in the vicinity of the rookery. The total effect of this predation on the heron colony is not known, but it is conceivable that young herons might be eaten by raccoons, both in the nest as well as during their early flight period.—ALVIN C. LOPINOT, *Department of Zoology, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.*

**Nest of the Yellow-crowned Night Heron, *Nyctanassa violacea*, in Kansas City, Mo.**—The Yellow-crowned Night Heron has been a summer visitor in the Kansas City region with increasing frequency during the past decade. Most of these birds have been in the immature plumage and, with only two exceptions, were reported in late summer.

A nest was discovered in its earliest stages of construction on May 13, 1950, and a number of local bird students made observations until August 10. Three young were reared successfully. This seems to be the northernmost nesting positively known in western Missouri or eastern Kansas.

The nest was on the fork of a horizontal limb up about 70 feet in a walnut tree in a river bottom tract of virgin timber in Swope Park which is within the city limits. On May 13, the pair was discovered courting in the "stick ceremony." The stick was placed across the fork which already supported a half-dozen sticks. Then the herons stood side by side but facing opposite directions and exchanged stroking gestures in which each passed the side of the beak downward against the primaries of the other's folded wing. The nest grew slowly. May 16, one heron was sitting on the nest

which was still too open to conceal an egg. May 20, the nest was thicker and perhaps an egg was under the sitting female. The male perched near by. Both birds seemed to pass the daylight hours in dozing. Observations were made with binoculars from a path about 100 feet from the tree. Incubation was uneventful. The first nestling was visible June 29. Subsequently, there were three nestlings of different ages; the youngest was last seen in the nesting tree on August 10. Apparently, all survived despite a July of record-breaking low temperature with much rain and wind.—HENRY M. HARFORD, 926 Argyle Bldg., Kansas City 6, Mo.

**Records of Sabine's Gull, *Xema sabini*, in Massachusetts.**—On May 30, 1950, I saw from the beach at the tip end of Nauset Point, Cape Cod, Mass., an adult Sabine's Gull. The bird flew directly away from me at very short range and settled in the water in the middle of the tidal channel not over 100 feet away. I had a good chance to observe it through 7 x 50 Zeiss binoculars, although the bird was easily identifiable without any such aid. This appears to be the thirteenth record for this bird along the Massachusetts coast, since the first specimen was taken in Boston harbor September 27, 1874 (Brewster), and therefore seems worthy of report.

The second report for Massachusetts (Orn. and Ool., 14: 95, 1889) reads "We have in our hands a Sabine's gull taken at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1888. The bird was in immature plumage." The place and date are not given. On August 21, 1889, G. S. Miller, Jr., reported one shot in Cape Cod Bay west of N. Truro. The fourth record for the state was by F. Seymour Hersey of two taken at Chatham, September 2, 1912; the fifth was on August 21, 1927, at Marshfield, by Allen H. Wood, Jr. and John Smith.

The 'Bulletin of New England Bird Life' and 'Records of New England Birds,' from 1945 to the present time, show the following recent records.

September 7, 1937.—One adult collected by Ludlow Griscom at sea—off Chatham, Cape Cod, specimen now mounted in Museum of Science, Boston (in breeding plumage, just starting to molt). July 27 to September 2, 1941.—One adult in winter plumage found by Ludlow Griscom at Monomoy, Chatham, Cape Cod, and present intermittently throughout that time. August 16, 1941.—C. Russell Mason and Jessie H. Mason saw one at Ellisville (near Plymouth). March 8, 1942.—One adult closely observed and well described at Gloucester by Lt. Richard Allyn. May 26, 1942.—One adult closely observed at Monomoy, by Kraus and Winslow; the bird was lame and appeared exhausted. May 20, 1944.—One seen by Ludlow Griscom at Monomoy. September 3, 1945.—One bird in second-year winter plumage observed by Ludlow Griscom and William Cottrell off Chatham. September 27, 1947.—One observed off Nauset, Eastham, Cape Cod, by Ludlow Griscom and party.—C. RUSSELL MASON, *Massachusetts Audubon Society, 155 Newbury Street, Boston, Massachusetts.*

**Method of Feeding of the Black Skimmer, *Rynchops nigra*.**—The feeding habits of the Black Skimmer have been the subject of comment by many different writers, and their accounts are not all in agreement. The earlier writers generally seem to have believed that the bird obtains its food by skimming and taking its food from the surface of the water. Arthur (1921) wrote that the food is obtained mostly by wading and catching food while afoot. Pettingill (1937) and others observed the skimming for food. Later, Murphy (1936) reviewed some of the literature on the manner of feeding and offered a number of theoretical considerations, but seemed to lean to the belief that the skimming behavior had significance other than being a simple direct way of catching food.