Occurrence of an African Cattle Egret (*Ardeola ibis ibis*) in Massachusetts. —A male of this old world species was taken in Wayland, on April 23, 1952. It represents, we believe, the first North American specimen record.

The specimen (Museum of Comparative Zoology No. 279088) has been compared with a good series in that Museum. It matches in detail the breeding plumage of *Ardeola ibis ibis* (L.), and the soft parts of the living bird corresponded to the description of that subspecies. The iris was yellow, face orange-yellow, bill orange, legs yellow-green, feet black-olive, and there was a narrow red band at the edge of the feathers at the upper end of the leg. Stomach contents consisted of a frog and a number of insects; a few bird lice were collected and preserved. The testes measured 3 x 4 mm.; we found no evidence of any pathological condition.

In the most recent revision of the species, Dr. Finn Salomonsen (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, p. 221–222, 1934) points out that the subspecies are easily distinguished in the nuptial plumage. As he says, "In the breeding plumage *coromandus* has head, neck, throat, fore neck, and the ornamental plumes on back and crop vivid golden or rusty cinnamon, whereas *A. i. ibis* has the throat and fore neck white, the crown, hind neck, and the dorsal and pectoral plumes orange to pale pinkish-buff." In this paper he describes a new subspecies, *A. i. seychellarum*, which he characterizes as follows: "The throat and fore neck are white as in *A. i. ibis*, but the crown and the dorsal and ventral elongated feathers are golden-cinnamon as in *coromandus*. . . . More striking, however, are the very small measurements of *seychellarum*." He quotes the following measurements of male birds: *A. i. ibis*, wing length, 245–265 mm.; and *A. i. seychellarum*, wing length, 230–237 mm.

The throat and fore neck of our bird are white; the crown, hind neck, dorsal and ventral ornamental plumes are a pastel pinkish-buff. This color matches perfectly that of the African series. The fore wing length of our bird, however, is 236 mm. (measured flattened). This would tend to include the bird in the small, Indian Ocean-area subspecies, *A. i. seychellarum*. The specimen in no way resembles this race in plumage, and on the basis of distribution this race is especially unlikely because it is separated from North America by the African race, *A. i. ibis*, on the west and by the east Asian race, *A. i. coromandus*, on the east. Wing measurements of 13 specimens in the Museum of Comparative Zoology from the Blue Nile area, Tanganyika, Rhodesia, and Cameroons show a variation from 241 mm. to 255 mm. and Salomonsen (*loc. cit.*) shows variation on up to 265 mm. On the basis that this character seems variable and that our bird is 5 mm. under the lower limit, we have decided that this measurement is remarkable but not of sufficient importance to throw doubt on the subspecific identification. Blake's record (Auk, 56: 470–471, 1939) of a female from Buxton, British Guiana, gives a measurement of 244 mm. for the first western hemisphere specimen. Dr. Robert Storer reports that the specimen at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, taken by Fr. Haverschmidt in Surinam, March 30, 1947, is a male with the nuptial plumes light. The wing measures 241 mm. All these measurements are below the mean and average of African specimens, but any statistical treatment of the few specimens available would be misleading, we feel.

We refer the species to the genus *Ardeola* as did Salomonsen (Bull. Mus. Hist. Nat. Paris, pp. 347–357, 1929, and *loc. cit.*) and Witherby *et al.* (The Handbook of British Birds, III: pp. 142–144, 1939). It should be pointed out that J. L. Peters (Check-list of the Birds of the World, I: 108, 1931) maintained a separate genus, *Bubulcus*, for this species after the publication of Salomonsen's article (*loc. cit.* 1929) in which the uniting of *Bubulcus* with *Ardeola* was proposed.

The question of the origin of the bird was at once raised and the suggestion made that it was an escaped bird. We knew of no other appearance of the species at the time of collection and to investigate all alternatives sent inquiries to all possible sources of escaped birds. No one had lost such a heron. Mr. Lee Crandall of the New York Zoological Park reported that they had had no Cattle Egrets since 1945; Dr. Mann of the National Zoological Park in Washington, D. C., reported no record of ever having had the species. The Franklin Park Zoo in Boston, Chase Wild Animal Farm in Egypt, Mass., Meems Brothers and Ward in Sparkill, New York, Mr. Ruhe of New York City, and Trefflich's Bird and Animal Company of New York all returned negative answers to our inquiries about the bird.

The flight feathers and long slender toe claws of the specimen are in perfect condition, indicating strongly that the bird had not been closely imprisoned or been in a screened or other than earth-floored cage. This in itself constitutes only negative evidence that the bird wandered to this continent under his own power. But it seems to us that in the last few months very positive evidence has been collecting, in the form of at least two subsequent sight records further south along the coast, and another specimen from Massachusetts. At least thirteen birds had been seen by July, 1952, when this article was submitted for publication. These records will be published without doubt, and they combine to offer evidence of a major influx of the species into North America. It would be ludicrous at this point to suggest, under the plea of caution, that these are all escaped birds.

The present invasion is a strong indication of how the species may have become established in northern South America, and it may be that they will become established on this new continent. Fr. Haverschmidt of Paramaribo, Surinam (Dutch Guiana), has discussed the occurrence of the species, its spread, and the probability of its arrival in South America by an explosive emigration (Auk, 67: 380–381, 1950). He refers to other notes in 'The Auk' on the occurrence of this bird in British Guiana and Venezuela and says that it is obvious that the bird is spreading and establishing itself in the lowlands of northern South America. Phelps (Boletin Soc. Venezolana de Ciencias Naturales, X, No. 67: 230–231, 1946) quotes from a letter from a planter, Mr. Hunter, at Versailles (on the right bank of the Demarara River), British Guiana, who has observed flocks of Cattle Egrets in that area since 1930. The bird was found by Mr. Ludlow Griscom of Cambridge who visited British Guiana in February 1937 and saw, with Mr. P. B. Peberdy and Mr. J. P. Jack, a flock of them near Georgetown. Drury, while on duty with the Navy between Trinidad and the Guianas in 1944, found the bird to be common at Paramaribo, Georgetown, and as far up the Essiquebo River as they went. The bird was so common that the local people had a common name for it—Squacco Heron—(which is used elsewhere to refer to *Ardeola ralloides*). The species had spread west to the state of Guarico, Venezuela, as reported by Phelps (Auk, 61: 656, 1944), and in 1944 Drury saw the species at Aruba, Netherlands West Indies.

The weather of the week before the appearance of our bird in Massachusetts was essentially clear with strong southwest winds all over the western Caribbean area. There was a disturbance over the southern Great Plains turning northeast over New Orleans, Louisiana. There was no storm, but a strong tail-wind for any bird starting off in a northeasterly direction and no reason for the bird to stop. It is not clear that these weather conditions contributed actively to the appearance of our bird because we do not know how long the bird had been in North America or when the other individuals since recorded arrived. It is entirely possible that there has been a steady drift of birds moving into the northern regions.—William H. Drury, Jr., Allen H. Morgan, and Richard Stackpole, *Cambridge and Wayland, Massachusetts.*