

Duck Blinds as Nesting Sites for Great Blue Herons on the South Texas Coast.—Many birds have adopted man-made structures for nesting sites. In the majority of cases these sites directly involve or are at least close to human habitation. The case related here seems to be important enough to affect the general welfare of one large bird, over several hundred square miles, but it involves a simple man-made structure, always far distant from any human habitation.

Redfish Bay on the south Texas coast is largely an area of shallow flats only a few inches deep. In winter it is frequented by several species of anatine ducks. With the ducks come the hunters and their blinds. On the Texas coast the blinds are covered with brush cut from heavy stands of the Sweet Bay (*Persea borbonica*). These stand throughout the year and some 200 or more spot the whole bay along the Port Aransas causeway, which leads across the bay to Harbor Island.

While riding in a boat across this bay with Mr. Vernon N. Johns, the National Audubon warden, on May 20, 1954, I noticed that many duckblinds had one or more Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) standing on top. I became curious about the possibility that the blinds were used as nesting sites by these big herons. All blinds are in shallow water, six inches to one foot deep and sometimes less with a low tide, and they cannot be approached closely by boats. After some searching, Johns and I found one where we could get within reasonable wading distance. Two parent birds flew away as we approached. The blind supported two nests, built on top. One was empty and the other contained two young birds, well-feathered out and about the size of their parents. They squatted down in the nest when approached. After a few moments we left.

Many other blinds with Great Blue Heron nests have been seen since then, and the use of duck blinds for nesting seems to be a common habit with this heron. Fortunately, the blinds are not easily approached by curious fishermen or predators from land. Thus, they would appear to be excellent nesting sites for all herons, but other species have not been seen using blinds for that purpose and it appears that the smaller species are more gregarious than the Great Blue Heron when it comes to nesting activity. A few thousand of these blinds spot the shallow bays of South Texas, and they are rebuilt every year. Thus it seems, that so long as the ducks and hunters last, Great Blue Herons will not suffer from lack of nesting space on the Texas coast.—GORDON GUNTER, *Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Ocean Springs, Mississippi*.

On the Reluctance of Gulls to Fly under Objects.—The causeway between Aransas Pass and Port Aransas, Texas, is bordered by telephone wires and two sets of electric lines, the so-called high lines. Pelicans and herons will occasionally fly under these lines, but gulls seldom do, so far as my observation goes. In several other instances, I have noticed the reluctance of gulls to fly under objects, even when there was ample clearance. An outstanding example happened several years ago. I have held off recording it in the hope of repeating the observation, but the opportunity has not occurred and there is no reason to defer the account further.

After making a trawl station during an ecological study in Copano Bay, I cleaned the deck by throwing the fish and shrimp overboard to the gulls. It was my habit to throw the fish in the air for the gulls to catch. Quite a flock of Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) and a few Royal Terns (*Thalasseus maximus*) gathered and followed along behind the boat as it went down the bay.

Parenthetically, it should be noted here that I have engaged in this simple pastime many times during the past twenty-four years on the Louisiana and Texas coasts and the chief followers are always Laughing Gulls and a few Royal and Caspian