

Breeding of the Least Bittern in Manitoba.—*Ixobrychus exilis exilis* has been considered of merely casual occurrence in Manitoba. Thompson (1891) listed the bird as an "accidental visitant". Seton (1909), Bent (1926), and the A.O.U. Check-list (1957) mention a few records. East of Manitoba it has been reported as common in the southern marshes of Ontario, becoming less abundant in more northerly regions around Lake Nipissing and Sault Ste. Marie (Snyder, 1951). Roberts (1932) noted that it was abundant at Heron Lake in Jackson County, Minnesota, and from there northward, where conditions were favorable, through the Red River Valley to Manitoba. Forbush (1925) regarded it as a possible breeder in the Province. The A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds (1957) listed Canadian breeding of the Least Bittern only in southern Ontario and St. John County, New Brunswick, and stated that it "wanders casually" to Manitoba.

Records of Least Bitterns have become more frequent in recent years, particularly in the extensive reed-grass (*Phragmites communis*) marshes along the southern shores of Lake Manitoba. Information on all unpublished records known to me from southern Manitoba through the summer of 1958 is presented in the table. As of this writing, two nests have been found in the Delta Marshes. The first nest was located June 8, 1949 by Peter Ward of the Delta Waterfowl Research Station. It was subsequently observed and photographed by Richard Sutton, Director of the Manitoba Museum, and H. V. Hosford. This nest contained four eggs. One was collected for the Manitoba Museum and the other three placed in an incubator at the Delta hatchery. They did not hatch, but they had been incubated prior to removal from the nest, thus indicating a full clutch. The second nest was discovered June 13, 1956 by D. P. Olson and myself. It contained six eggs, two of which were collected for the Delta Station. These were fresh, but they also were likely part of a complete clutch.

Although separated by approximately 8½ miles of marsh, the two nests were in nearly identical ecological situations. Both were located in dense reed-grass along slow-moving creeks. The nests were slightly elevated above water level and consisted of flimsy platforms of dead stems wedged among standing stalks. The eggs were scarcely contained within the shallow bowls.

I am grateful to the following Manitoba residents for information on records in the Province: O. P. Gibson, A. G. Lawrence, Harold Mossop, A. H. Shortt and Richard Sutton, all of Winnipeg; H. A. Hochbaum, D. F. McKinney and Peter Ward, Delta Waterfowl Research Station, Delta; Herman Battersby and David Hatch, Oak Lake; and Frank Robb, Brandon.

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TABLE
RECORDS OF THE LEAST BITTERN IN MANITOBA

<i>Date</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
ca. 1918	Battersby (<i>vide</i> Hatch)	one seen along Assiniboine River north of Oak Lake
Oct. 12, 1923	Smith (<i>vide</i> Lawrence) spec. in B. J. Hales Natural History Museum, Brandon	adult male found injured in Portage la Prairie
June 23, 1924	Broley (<i>vide</i> Lawrence)	one seen at a lake near Niverville
May 15, 1933	Pollock (<i>vide</i> Lawrence)	one seen near Winnipeg
Aug. 20, 1936	Chagnon (<i>vide</i> Lawrence) spec. placed in coll. of Rev. Chagnon.	one caught in trap on Sandy Bay Indian Reservation, Amaranth
June 22, 1939	Hochbaum	one seen at The Gap, Delta Marsh
June 8, 1949	Ward and Sutton	nest with 4 eggs near The Channel, Delta Village
May 17, 1955	McKinney	one seen in Cadham Bay area, Delta Marsh
May 14, 1956	Hamilton and Hays (<i>vide</i> McKinney)	one seen in Delta Marsh
June 7, 1956	Dillon and Olson	12 seen along one mile of creek channel, Cladeboye Bay area, Delta Marsh
June 13, 1956	Dillon and Olson	nest with 6 eggs along above creek channel
June 20, 1956	McKinney	one seen at The Channel, Delta Village
Aug. 1956	Gibson	one seen on three occasions in Lake Francis Marshes, Lake Manitoba
Summer, 1956	Ward	at least three (one definitely young) brought to Delta Station, having been killed by cars along road south of Delta
June 14, 1957	Gibson	one seen on Lake Francis Marshes
June-July, 1957	Hochbaum	one seen on several occasions along road south of Delta
Summer, 1957	Ward	several sightings east of Delta Station
Spring, 1958	Ward	one seen east of Delta Station
June-July, 1958	Hochbaum	one seen on several occasions along road south of Delta