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Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, May 11, 1936.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Feeding Habits of the Snowy Egret.—The Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) is a clever bird, for he is able to adapt his fishing methods to time and tide. When fishing in the shallow pools of a mudflat he employs stealth. He approaches the pool with care and caution; deliberately he lifts his feet; deliberately he puts his feet down. A successful stalk brings him to the edge of the pool without disturbing his intended victim. His head is held forward on his long stretched neck. He now presents a picture of poised alertness. He is prepared to strike, but there is no movement in the pool. Now he reaches forward with one foot and gently pats the surface of the pool. His light touch starts a fish without muddying the water. Like a flash he strikes and then with a careless toss of his head his victim is sent to a new resting place.

On January 28, 1936, at Bolsa Chica Slough a Snowy Egret was seen employing an entirely different method to get himself some lunch. He was fishing in one of the main arms of the slough and in order to insure success he must somehow contrive to get the fish into water not more than four or five inches deep. He knew the answer to this problem. His method was to walk along the mud bank at the edge of the slough until he had located a school of small fish and then, flying out over the water, he would approach from behind and by flapping his wings wildly he would herd the fish toward the shore into shallow water. This maneuver was remindful of a woman shooing flies out of the house by waving a dish-towel.

When the fish were in fairly shallow water the Egret dropped to his feet and became amazingly active, striking whenever within reach of a fish, leaping upward, leaping from side to side, fanning his wings, all efforts to keep the fish headed for the shore. This weirdly grotesque dance continued until the last fish had been taken or had escaped to sea. And to make the hunting dance more spectacular every movement of the snow-white bird was reflected in the dark still waters of the slough.—CHAS. W. MICHAEL, *Pasadena, California, February 13, 1936.*