

## Direct recovery in Alaska of California-banded Cattle Egret

Daniel D. Gibson and Norman D. Hogg

THE FIRST ALASKA record of Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis ibis*) comprised at least four birds that reached the Ketchikan area in November 1981. Two of these birds died, apparently of starvation, and they are preserved as study skins at the University of Alaska Museum (UAM). One of them had been banded in California in June 1981. The recovery site is approximately 2600 km northwest of the banding locality.

On November 11, 1981 a Cattle Egret was reported foraging on a waterfront lawn at Knudson Cove (55°28'N 131°48'W), near Ketchikan, Revillagigedo Island, southeastern Alaska, by W. Northrup and others. This report was the first of this species in the State. On November 15, one bird was seen in the same area by J.F. Koerner, who was told by a neighbor, N. Humphries, that up to three egrets had been present simultaneously there during the previous week. Two Cattle Egrets together were seen there by Koerner November 16, and one was found dead there later that day and was collected (UAM 4165, female, weight about 220 grams, no fat).

On November 18, 1981 a lone, banded Cattle Egret was captured in downtown Ketchikan (55°20'N 131°38'W) by R.E. Wood and C. Smith. It was very weak and its captors tried unsuccessfully to feed it. Late November 19, this bird was released at the Knudson Cove lawn

where the others had been seen, but November 20, it was found dead. It too was collected (UAM 4166, female, weight 208 grams, no fat). This bird was wearing aluminum U.S.F. & W.S. band #816-44940 on its left tarsometatarsus. It was banded as a 2-week-old nestling at the north end of the Salton Sea, Riverside County, California (at 33°30'N 116°00'W), June 11, 1981 by Hogg.

The colony whence this bird came included 220 pairs of Cattle Egrets among approximately 1000 pairs of nesting herons. The five other species there were Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Green Heron (*Butorides striatus*), and Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*).

The Cattle Egret's dramatic range expansion into far western North America has been chronicled in the regional columns of this journal for several decades. The species first occurred in California in 1964, in Oregon and Washington in the late 1960s, and in southern British Columbia in 1970; by 1977 there were 5000 pairs nesting in several colonies at the Salton Sea, and by 1980 the species was of regular occurrence as far north as Oregon (Roberson 1980). Foreshadowing the first Alaska record, there was a

remarkable invasion of Cattle Egrets north of the Columbia River in autumn 1980, during which one bird was found as far north as Tlell, Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia, October 8 (Hunn and Mattocks 1981). This locality is less than 200 km south of Ketchikan.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the people who enabled us to piece together this event: Robert E. Wood, Jerrold F. Koerner, David and Nancy Humphries, Walter Northrup, and Chris Smith, all of Ketchikan.

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