

**Little Blue Heron and Sandhill Crane in central New York.**— The remarkable flight of southern herons and marsh birds that occurred in eastern United States during the summer of 1948 is now a matter of record (see *Audubon Field Notes*, 1948, 2, No. 5, and 1949, 3, No. 1). I should like to mention here some noteworthy records pertaining to this flight from central New York.

Records of birds known to have occurred in the Cayuga Lake Basin go back more than 100 years, but the Little Blue Heron (*Florida caerulea*) and Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*) were unrecorded before 1948. On July 18, George Loring and I were in the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge located in Cayuga County, near the north end of Cayuga Lake. We had seen more than 30 American Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) when two distinctly smaller white herons were detected. Their grayish bills and greenish legs and feet identified them as Little Blue Herons. We saw at least one more (and possibly as many as three more) later that day in another part of the marsh. On July 30, a group of four was recorded. All of the Little Blue Herons that we saw were in the white, immature plumage.

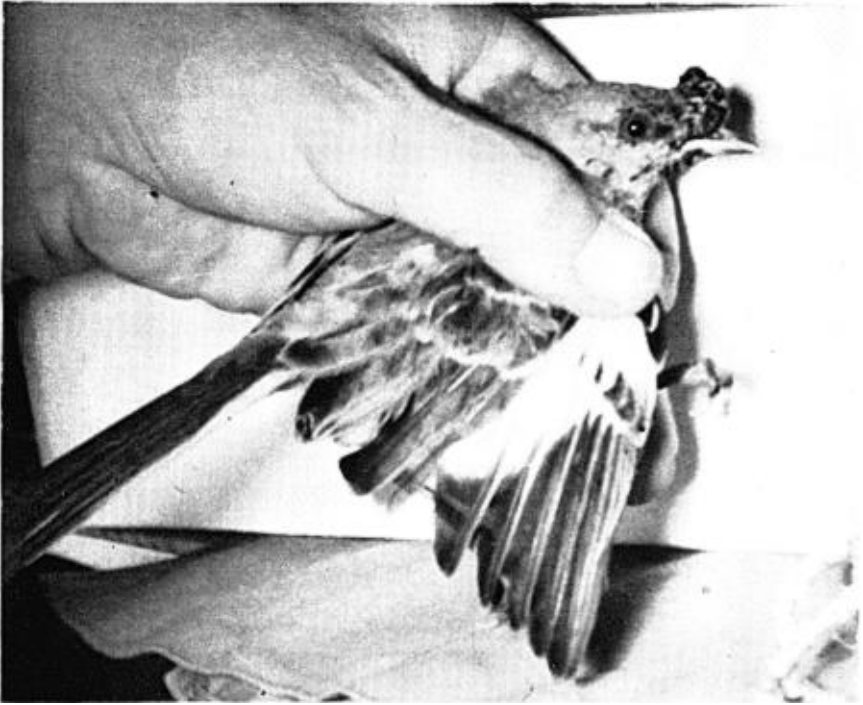
On July 30, an adult Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was frightened from its perch near the dike on the Montezuma Refuge by a group of four persons including the writer. The eagle flew out over the marsh, causing pandemonium among the numerous ducks and herons, the latter mostly Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*) and American Egrets. As the birds milled about, Edward Chalif, one of the group, saw a large gray bird which he recognized as a Sandhill Crane. The bird was approximately 200 yards away and flying to our right. When perhaps 300 yards from us, the crane reversed its direction of flight and traveled some 400 yards before disappearing in the marsh. During the minute and a half the bird was under observation, we all had an unobstructed view. The bird's neck was very long, outstretched, and drooping and the legs trailed behind; thus the back was higher than any other part. The manner of flight was unique—quick flaps in a narrow arc rather than the deep beats characteristic of the larger herons. Though only Chalif was familiar with the crane in life, we felt certain that he had correctly identified the bird.

A perusal of the literature discloses that the Sandhill Crane occurred in New York during colonial years, but has since become extremely rare, there being only two published records of 'recent' occurrences. The first of these was a bird collected near Albion, Orleans County, about 1880. The second was based also on a bird taken in Orleans County, in the town of Clarendon, on May 20, 1885 (Eaton, 1910. "Birds of New York," *New York State Mus. Mem.* 12, 1:269).

The Sandhill Crane has been equally rare in New England. Forbush (1925. "Birds of Massachusetts and other New England states," *Mass. Dept. of Agric.*, 1:349-350) who said it "may appear in New England again as an accidental straggler," listed but two records. One bird was taken in 1896 or 1897 at Wakefield, New Hampshire; the other was shot on the Connecticut River at Lunenburg, Vermont, no date given.

Since 1948, the Little Blue Heron has been seen each summer in the Cayuga Lake Basin, but I have seen no additional records of the Sandhill Crane in the East.—RICHARD B. FISCHER, *Department of Conservation, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, October 26, 1951.*

**Obstruction on the bill of a Mockingbird.**—In my bird-banding operations I occasionally have captured birds with bits of food adhering to the bill. Bills of the House



Finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), for instance, are frequently discolored by berry juices and at times dried pulp accumulates on the bill.

On September 17, 1951, at Benicia, Solano County, California, one of the two Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos*) in one of my banding traps appeared to have an abnormal growth on its forehead. This apparent abnormality, however, upon investigation proved to be an accumulation, approximately a cubic centimeter in size, of dried fig pulp firmly imbedded at the base of the upper mandible, and nearly closing the nostrils.

Most birds endeavor to maintain clean mandibles by scraping them on any available object. This incumbrance of dried fig, however, was so firmly attached that it was necessary to employ scissors to cut through the feathers at the base of the bill to remove the impediment.—EMERSON A. STONER, *Benicia, California, January 29, 1952.*

**Winter mortality of Barn Owls in central Ohio.**— In considering tolerance of the Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) for rigorous winter weather, A. K. Fisher (1893. "Hawks and Owls of the United States," p. 138) wrote: "in all probability it sometimes perishes in the northern part of its range, when overtaken by severe weather, before being able to migrate." More recently the literature records at least two instances in which Barn Owls died as a result of severe winter weather in the northern United States. In February, 1930, following a period in which the temperature dropped to a low of -24° F., Errington (1931. *Wilson Bulletin*, 43:60) found two dead Barn Owls at their roosting place near Madison, Wisconsin. Errington mentioned the presence of at least some snow on the ground prior to the time the birds were found. The digestive tracts of the birds were