

## GENERAL NOTES

**Spring migration of Common Loons from the Gulf of Mexico.**—During the past 15 years, I have spent many hours of early morning outdoors in northern Florida within 50 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico while listening intently for wild Turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) to gobble. On especially quiet mornings I sometimes heard swishing wings of Common Loons (*Gavia immer*) flying northward overhead at high altitude. The birds were easily identified with binoculars.

During the last two weeks of March and the first half of April on mornings with clear skies, a few flocks of loons usually passed overhead at an altitude I estimated to be 1,500 feet. In the approximately 60 times that I have seen this, I have not seen or heard a flock of loons earlier than one-half hour after sunrise or later than about 09:30. I have occasionally watched and listened for loons flying overhead at other hours of the day, including late afternoon, but have not seen any except in the morning. My observations are not sufficient to conclude that no loons depart northward later in the day, but I believe that most loons depart in early morning. Usually two to six loosely associated flocks of two to 15 loons were involved, headed approximately north. I have also seen this during early May, but the amount of time I have spent watching for loons in early morning after mid-April has not been sufficient to describe the seasonality of this migration.

It is doubtful that this has been seen regularly farther inland because loons are not very conspicuous at 1,500 feet. I may never have noticed them either had I not first heard their wing beats under the ideal hearing conditions of quiet spring mornings.

The ground speed of Common Loons has been clocked at about 60 mph (Bent, Life Histories of North American Diving Birds, U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 107, 55–56, 1919). Continuous northward flight at this speed during 12 hours of daylight would carry loons more than 700 miles north of the Gulf on the first day of migration, or to about the Great Lakes. The relative scarcity of surface records of loons south of Ohio (Palmer, Handbook of North American Birds, Vol. 1, Yale University Press, p. 28, 1962) indicates that they do not normally alight during the first day of migration. This may have caused overland migration to go largely undetected, while it may, in reality, be of substantial magnitude or even the rule for loons wintering on the Gulf of Mexico.—LOVETT E. WILLIAMS, JR., *Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Wildlife Research Projects Office, Gainesville, Florida 32601. 10 July 1972.*

**White Ibis nesting in the Florida Everglades.**—White Ibises (*Eudocimus albus*) usually nest on islands—either true islands surrounded by open water or islands of woody growth surrounded by marshland. In the spring of 1972 I discovered an unusual nesting colony of White Ibis in the Florida Everglades. Located at 26° 0' N latitude and 80° 30' W longitude, approximately 40 km west of the city of Hollywood, Florida, the colony is notable in several respects. It was located not in an isolated island of vegetation but within a continuous marsh composed primarily of sawgrass (*Mariscus jamaicensis*). It is the first colony reported from within the true Everglades although a number of colonies have existed on its periphery, and it is the largest nesting colony of White Ibis reported in over 20 years south of Lake Okeechobee. This area which includes the Everglades, Big Cypress Swamp, and the Florida mangrove swamps at one time supported colonies of White Ibis numbering in the hundreds of thousands of birds (see e.g., Holt,

Bird Lore, 35:372, 1933). In recent years the White Ibis population has sharply declined and years of successful nesting have been increasingly irregular (Kushlan, unpubl.).

The colony was active from March through June 1972 and near its peak held 17,800 nests. The birds fed primarily in the Everglades but also in other areas at considerable distances away from the colony. The distribution of feeding sites and the food consumed by birds breeding at this colony were studied in detail and will be discussed in a future paper.

Although a small percentage of the nests (approximately 150) were located in cattail (*Typha* sp.), most were in sawgrass. This is the first report of White Ibis using sawgrass as a nesting site and as nesting material. Nests were built within the mass of blades projecting from the base of the sawgrass plants. They were constructed primarily of sawgrass, but twigs, particularly willow (*Salix caroliniana*) and strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), were also used in small numbers. Some of these were brought from trees growing on levees up to 5 km from the nesting colony. Sawgrass blades are characterized by their sharp, spiny edges which make manipulation difficult. Nonetheless, sawgrass over the entire colony area was broken off and used in nest construction. It is of interest that some White Ibises at another colony, Rookery Branch in Everglades National Park, Florida, also nested in sawgrass during the spring of 1972. The majority of the ibises at this colony, however, nested in and under mangroves which is the usual nesting habitat for the species in extreme southern Florida.

These observations were made as part of a study of the ecology of White Ibis and Glossy Ibis in southern Florida supported by the Maytag Chair of Ornithology, University of Miami. I thank J. W. Dineen and the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District for cooperation in my study of this colony.—JAMES A. KUSHLAN, *Department of Biology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, 33124, 8 August 1972.*

**Sparrow Hawk predation on Bank Swallows.**—The Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius*) is known to be highly adaptable in its food habits, preying upon a variety of insects, small mammals, birds, and occasional reptiles. The following observations are offered as evidence that under certain circumstances Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) may be an important food item.

At 14:30 on 25 June 1972 a male Sparrow Hawk was seen attacking a Bank Swallow that was caught in a mist net placed across a Bank Swallow colony near Ellenville, New York. The hawk was not captured. The net had been in place only a few minutes, and it contained only four birds. They were all removed, banded, and released. The attacked bird, an immature Bank Swallow, was released last; it did not appear to be seriously injured, and flew quite strongly. As I watched it fly away, it was suddenly snatched from the air by a Sparrow Hawk. The hawk was flying in the same direction as the swallow; it appeared to simply overtake the swallow and grab it with its talons. Without pausing, the hawk carried the swallow some distance to the edge of a woods above the colony, where it was lost from sight.

I continued to band, using one net, and catching mostly adult birds. At 16:15 another young bird (the fifth of the day) was banded and released. As it flew away, it too was taken from the air by a Sparrow Hawk. The method of capture was the same: the Sparrow Hawk overtook the young swallow and snatched it from the air.

I took down the mist net and began to search the area for further evidence of Sparrow Hawk predation. A rock at the base of the colony was surrounded by partially sheathed flight feathers; a hawk had evidently perched there and plucked young Bank Swallows.