

The Little Blue Heron in Saskatchewan

By Dr. STUART HOUSTON, Yorkton

Joyce Gunn reported four Little Blue Herons at Good Spirit Lake, northwest of Yorkton, on May 24, 1956. This constituted the first sight record of this species for Saskatchewan. (BLUE JAY, XIV, Sept. 1956, p. 90).

On Sept. 9, 1956, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. McDonald and Betty McDonald of Yorkton reported a white bird resembling an egret, wading in the marsh just east of Number 9 Highway at Crescent Lake, about 16 miles south of Yorkton. They noted it again on Sept. 14, when it was also seen by Cliff Shaw of Yorkton and B. W. Cartwright, chief Naturalist of Ducks Unlimited. On Sept. 15, it was seen by Mary Houston. On Sept. 16, Stuart and Mary Houston watched it for a total of five hours, and good views were obtained with 7x and 10x binoculars at 20 yards and with a 40x telescope at greater distances. Several photographs were taken with a borrowed telephoto lens.

The bird was definitely smaller than the bitterns which would land beside it. The feet and legs were a greyish green. There was no yellow on the toes. The bill was bluish grey and black at the tip. The plumage was uniformly white, with no bluish or buff. This could only be the juvenile plumage of the Little Blue Heron. Dr. R. W. Nero of the Saskatchewan

Museum of Natural History phoned, and he came up and observed the bird but did not collect it. It was then absent until Sept. 19, when it was again reported by the McDonalds. On Sept. 20 it was again seen by the Houstons. It was first seen on Sept. 21 by Mary Houston.

Pough, in the AUDUBON BIRD GUIDE, states: "In inland freshwater marshes of the South the Little Blue is generally the commonest heron. . . . After the breeding season it wanders north in greater numbers than any other southern heron except the egret. Most individuals encountered in the North are the pure white young of the year; as a result they are often mistaken for egrets or snowy egrets."

These exotic southern birds are a welcome addition to the Saskatchewan bird list. Saskatchewan bird watchers should be on the lookout for the American Egret, Snowy Egret and Little Blue Heron. If the trend continues, who knows but that the Green Heron and Cattle Egret may yet be seen within our borders?

EDITOR'S NOTE: The President has passed on to us an observation from Mr. McLellan, Arcola, dated Aug. 10, 1956. Mr. McLellan's note reads, "A pair of Little Blue Herons (*Florida caerulea*) are nesting but I have not found the nest. I am sure there is a group of 20 or more about 20 miles north of Kisbey. They have not previously been seen here."



Kodachrome telephoto by Dr. S. Houston
IMMATURE LITTLE BLUE HERON