

FIRST CONFIRMED GREEN HERON IN SASKATCHEWAN

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At approximately 11:35 a.m. on May 20, 1975, as I was working on my Ascania Waterfowl Park Nesting Survey, I approached the Regina powerhouse "Spillway" on Goose Island and suddenly saw a small (19± inches), strikingly marked, bittern-shaped heron. It was no more than 30 feet away when I stopped. It studied me as carefully as I studied it. The bird had a dark green vest, deep chestnut brown neck with a white line of feathers running down the middle; its descent blue-green back shone even on that cloudy day and its wings and tail had a green-brown tinge compared to the blue back. The bird had grayish underparts. From the black-tipped yellow bill and yellow eyes to the bright orange legs it was one of the most beautiful birds I had ever seen. After about half a minute, it raised its crest, flicked its tail, quatted, spread its wings and took flight. It flew over the spillway and landed far out on North Goose Island among some willows.

I then rushed to phone Fred Bard, described it to him and he agreed it was a Green Heron. I then contacted Ed Lahrman, Frank Brazier and Peter Fox, who came out immediately. We found the bird on North Goose Island. A few minutes later it flew from island to island over the marsh. It appeared all dark except for the shining bright orange legs. The flight is quite rapid with its broad 3-foot wings beating slowly, about the same as a crow, but with more arched wingbeats. That afternoon Dwayne Harty and I went down to photograph the bird. We took three pictures, but only one shows the markings well enough to identify it as a Green Heron, the first confirmed record for Saskatchewan.

It was seen through the rest of May and by one other observer, Thomas Veridge. It seemed to favour the spillway pipes for shelter. The last



Green Heron

Dwayne Harty

My observation was on the 31st by myself. It was found again on June 21 and August 17. In August its legs were a greenish-yellow rather than a bright orange and its plumage was a bit duller. I thought it might be a different bird, but all my birdbooks state that the legs turn a greenish-yellow in the fall and winter. A Green Heron was seen again on September 6 and 7.

Green Herons breed regularly on the west coast and across the south-central United States and from Ontario south through Central America.³ They have not been reported from Alberta, their status in Montana is uncertain, they breed sparingly in North Dakota, and in Manitoba, apparently the only recent record is of one at Delta in June, 1967.^{6 7 8 2}

The Green Heron is listed as a hypothetical straggler for Saskatchewan and the only two records are for one near Radville, 80 miles southeast of Regina, on June 22, 1966, and one by Frank Brazier just south of Regina on June 12, 1971.^{1 5 4}

I would be interested in hearing of any other Green Heron records for Saskatchewan.

- ¹Anonymous. 1969. Field check-list of Saskatchewan birds. Saskatchewan Mus. Nat. Hist., Regina. 4 p.
- ²EVANS, R. M., and R. W. NERO, 1967. Sight record of Green Heron at Delta, Manitoba. *Blue Jay* 25:184.
- ³GODFREY, W. E. 1966. The birds of Canada. *Nat. Mus. Canada Bull.* 203. 428 pp.
- ⁴HOUSTON, C. S. 1971. Northern Great Plains Region. *Am. Birds* 25:869-872.

- ⁵MATTHEWS, C. A. 1967. Possible of a Green Heron. *Blue Jay* 25:184.
- ⁶SALT, W. R., and J. R. SALT, 1967. Birds of Alberta. Hurtig, Edmonton. 498 pp.
- ⁷SKAAR, P. D. 1969. Birds of the Bismarck Plateau. Pub. by author, Bozeman, Montana. 132 pp.
- ⁸STEWART, R.E. 1975. Breeding birds of North Dakota. Tri-College Center for Environmental Studies. Fargo, N.D. 295 pp.

LOUISIANA HERON IN MANITOBA

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On April 18, 1976, a Louisiana Heron was discovered by George Nykulaik in a ditch near the south end of Lake Winnipeg at Patricia Beach, Manitoba. Subsequently, the bird was seen and photographed by many observers, and was last reported in the same area on April 25.

In the late afternoon of April 19, the heron was observed as close as 15 m away, for about 45 minutes by Rudolf Koes, Paul Goossen, Brain Knudsen, Linda Guse, and myself as it foraged in open water in the ditch. During this time, it was seen to catch two leeches (see figure 1), one of which was apparently taken inside a culvert that the bird frequently entered. It was also reported as striking a partially stranded Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) on April 18, without actually being seen to eat any of the fish.

This sighting is the first verified record of a Louisiana Heron in Manitoba. Previously, there were three sightings for the province: at Nettley Lake on September 6, 1924¹, at Clandeboye Bay, Delta, on July 10, 1966², and near Ross on May 19, 1971³, but these records were not substantiated by specimen or photograph.

I thank Herbert W. R. Copland for information on the three sightings prior to 1976.



Richard W. Knapton
Fig. 1. Louisiana Heron with leech in beak. April 19, 1976, Patricia Beach, Manitoba

- ¹LAWRENCE, A. G. 1924. *Chickadee Notes*, 183. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, September 25, 1924.
- ²MOSSOP, H. 1966. *Chickadee Notes*, 601. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, July 23, 1966.
- ³MOSSOP, H. 1971. *Chickadee Notes*, 850. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg, June 19, 1971.