

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON IN MANITOBA, WITH A NOTE ON SUNBATHING

RICHARD W. KNAPTON, 337-99 Dalhousie Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 3M2.

On 16 August 1978, Lorence Gesell, a government employee from Teulon, told Brian Knudsen and me of an unusual heron along Wavy Creek, Oak Hammock Marsh Wildlife Management Area, Manitoba. We located this bird, an immature Yellow-crowned Night Heron, at noon along the creek, photographed it, and observed it for about 20 minutes. During this time, it foraged for about 5 minutes, without catching any prey, and then sunbathed by directly facing the sun, opening its wings halfway and letting them droop in front of its legs (Fig. 1). It held this pose without moving for several minutes. It flew after it was disturbed, clearly showing the long tarsus and feet extending beyond the tail. The bird alighted close to an immature Black-crowned Night Heron, affording a direct comparison of such distinguishing features as its grayer plumage, more erect stance, and thicker, shorter bill. It remained along the creek until 9 September 1978, and was seen by many observers.

It is of interest that this individual, a vagrant north of its usual range, should engage in sunbathing. This behavior has not been reported previously in Yellow-crowned Night Herons.⁶

This record constitutes the eighth time that Yellow-crowned Night Herons have been reported in Manitoba. The first, an adult, was found dead at St. Francis Xavier on 7



Yellow-crowned Night Heron sunbathing.
Richard W. Knapton

May 1959 (specimen 1.2-2386, Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature).¹ Subsequent sightings have been an adult photographed at Assiniboine Park, Winnipeg, on 15 May 1963,⁷ one at Delta on 9 June 1963 and for a few days thereafter,⁸ an adult along Parks Creek, St. Andrews Bog (now Oak Hammock Marsh) on 22 May 1965,⁸ an adult along the La Salle River, La Barriere Park, St. Norbert, on 14 June 1977,⁴ and three more records at Oak Hammock Marsh, an adult on 28 July 1977,⁵ an immature on 24 August 1977,² and an adult from 14 to 17 May 1978.³

I thank H. W. R. Copland and R. F. Koes for information on records.

- ¹GODFREY, W. E. 1966. The birds of Canada. Nat. Mus. Canada Bull. 203. 428 pp.
- ²HORCH, P. 1977. Bull. Manitoba Natur. Soc. 1(2):6-7.
- ³KOES, R. F. Personal communication.
- ⁴KYLE, W. D. Personal communication.
- ⁵LINDSAY, A. Personal communication.
- ⁶MEYERRIECKS, A. J. 1960. Comparative breeding behavior of four species of North American herons. Publ. Nuttall Ornithol. Club 2. 158 pp.
- ⁷MOSSOP, H. 1963. Southern heron in Manitoba. Chickadee Notes 436. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg. May 25, 1963.
- ⁸MOSSOP, H. 1965. Four uncommon visitors. Chickadee Notes 544. Winnipeg Free Press, Winnipeg. June 19, 1965.

FIRST RECORD OF KING EIDER NESTING IN MANITOBA

KENNETH F. ABRAHAM and FRED COOKE, Department of Biology, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6.

The King Eider nests extensively in the North American arctic north of 60°N latitude and as far south as the Belcher Islands, N.W.T., and Cape Henrietta Maria, Ontario. No nesting records exist for Manitoba.^{2 4} Regular nesting along the Hudson Bay coast of Manitoba would complete the rather disjunct nature of the breeding distribution in this southernmost part of the species' range. Jehl and Smith suggested that a few pairs might be found nesting in the Cape Churchill region of Manitoba, however Cooke *et al.* listed the King Eider as a rare migrant in the tundra area of Cape Churchill and La Pérouse Bay.^{2 1}

A female King Eider was found on 30 June 1977 on a nest at La Pérouse Bay, Manitoba (58°45'N, 94°30'W) in a colony of Common Eiders. The nest was located 50 cm above the level of the Mast River in fairly dense cover of *Salix planifolia* and *Betula glandulosa*. The nests of four Common

Eiders and one Lesser Snow Goose were within 4 m. The King Eider nest contained five King Eider eggs and one Common Eider egg and was visited daily until all six ducklings were hatched (10 July). Photographs of the female and nest were taken and the female was caught and banded. There is little doubt that this female was mated to a King Eider male as one was seen on 16 and 18 June and a pair was seen on 12 and 17 June in the immediate vicinity of the nest. Furthermore, the egg dimensions agree very closely with those given by Palmer for King Eiders (mean of our 5-egg clutch: length 64.4 ± 1.9 mm; width 42.5 ± 0.1 mm).³ The Common Eider egg in the nest was quite likely the result of parasitic egg laying by that species (in 1976 and 1977 Common Eider eggs were also found in Snow Goose nests). Although the parasitic egg hatched, it was the last to do so and the duckling was still damp and