

BRIEF NOTE

CATTLE EGRET NESTING IN WESTERN LAKE ERIE¹

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The incursion and spread of the Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) in North America has been recorded for some time (Sprunt 1955; Davis 1960). In addition to others, Buerkle and Mansell (1963) reported nesting Cattle Egrets in Ontario, Canada but none of this species have been recorded for the islands of western Lake Erie.

On July 11, 1975 I located an active breeding group of Cattle Egrets on Pelee Island, Canada. They were situated in a marsh on the east side of Fish Point where we had known of Black-crowned Night Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Green Herons (*Butorides virescens*), Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), and Common Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*) nesting for over 30 years.

Observation of this colony was continued in the summer of 1976. Estimates of the number of nests were made with a 25 power telescope, and there were at least 15, perhaps 20, nests utilized during the season. The nests were from 3 to 10 feet above the water and mostly in Button bush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), as were those of the Black-crowned Night Heron. There have been 100 or more nests of Black-crowns during the past 2 years. The Great Blue Herons and Common Egrets which nest in the

marsh appear on its circumference in larger trees usually more than 20 ft. above the ground. These observations agree with nest heights found by Buerkle and Mansell (1963). Two observations were made in 1975 and 3 in 1976; on our final visit to the marsh (Aug. 4) there were large young Cattle Egrets still being fed by adults at 2 nests.

Pelee Island is one of a group of islands in western Lake Erie. It is well-isolated from the mainland and while some agriculture is practiced, livestock is not kept to any extent. The situation is thus attractive for study of the behavior of the Cattle Egrets and the relationship with previously existing populations, especially the Black-crowned Night Herons among which they presently live. We expect to continue the observations of this situation.

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LITERATURE CITED

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