



Photo of Western Kingbird taken 19 June 1995 in Springfield by Dennis Oehmke.

were sitting on a bare branch and intermittently being fed by adults. At least the adults were trying to do so. The adults, when they approached their young, were chased off by a Western Kingbird. I always thought the Eastern and Western Kingbirds were the same size – but the Western looked bigger and somewhat more robust, and the tail was definitely longer and fuller. This chasing went on for about 15 minutes and the young Eastern Kingbirds were not getting fed. We backed away so as not to interfere. Finally the Western landed near one of the young Eastern Kingbirds and fed it! At this point Beckie and I went back to see if both Western adults were still with their young and found that they were. At this time two Eastern adults came into that tree and caused a stir, but were chased off by

the Westerns. None of the adult kingbirds of either species were seen to physically harm the young of the other species. A high count of six Western Kingbirds was tallied on 12 July.

So there were still three adult Western Kingbirds in the area one of which I assume is unmated and maybe trying to be a “helper at the nest.” However, it seems to have chosen the Eastern young to attend and was chasing the Eastern adults. It is difficult not to anthropomorphize but that is my interpretation of the events we witnessed. With two nests being so close together, the two species of kingbirds are bound to be in some conflict. Also in the same area was an Eastern Wood-Pewee with its young, but there did not seem to be any conflict with either Kingbird species.

On 14 and 21 July we again no-

ticed the unmated Western Kingbird sitting with the young Eastern Kingbirds and also chasing the adult Eastern Kingbirds. On the latter date it seemed to be more content to sit on a wire near the young. On 29 July two of the hatching year Western Kingbirds were seen at the north end of Lake Springfield, which is well over a half-mile north of the nest. That was the last sighting of the Western Kingbirds even though we checked the golf course a couple of times in early August.

This is the first and second nestings of Western Kingbirds in Sangamon County. With the fledgling of three young there may be more the summer of 2000.

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First Breeding Record of Little Blue Heron for Northeastern Illinois

by Walter Marcisz

It finally happened. After having been teased for several years with “possible” and “probable” breeding evidence, I am delighted to report that Little Blue Herons have at last been confirmed to be breeding in northeastern Illinois!

The details: On 20 and 29 May, and 19 June 1999 I observed an adult Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) in the Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) nesting colony at Indian Ridge Marsh North, located in the Lake Calumet region on the far southeast side of Chicago (Cook County). On 30 June, Doug

Stotz, Conservation Ecologist/Ornithologist at the Field Museum of Natural History, E-mailed me, stating he had just observed adult Little Blue Herons carrying twigs into the reeds in two different locations at the Indian Ridge night-heron colony.

Unlike many heron species, Calumet area Black-crowned Night-Herons commonly nest just above water level in stands of common reed (*Phragmites australis*), rather than in tree colonies. Stotz had definitely observed three adult Little Blues on the 30th, but he believed two pairs of adults were actually present. On 5