

July, I had an opportunity to investigate the colony where I observed a pair of adult Little Blues flying to the closer of the two locations previously reported by Stotz (reeds near 116th Street and the Norfolk & Southern railroad tracks). One of the adults "dive-bombed" me and scolded me with its rather quiet version of a "quawk" call. Before then, I had never heard a Little Blue Heron make any type of sound. After observing this display, I quickly left the site to prevent further disturbance.

On 25 July 1999 I again revisited the site, where I soon observed an adult Little Blue fly into the reeds far back in the marsh, in the vicinity of the farther location where Stotz had reported nest-building behavior. Shortly afterward, the same (or another) Little Blue flew out of the marsh. Then a juvenile Little Blue Heron flew over the railroad track site and eventually landed on a tree stump at the north end of the marsh. I recall assuring myself that the juvenile was probably just a late summer wanderer from one of the downstate heron colonies, when I was suddenly shocked back to reality by an adult Little Blue Heron that rose from the marsh near the railroad track site. The adult Little Blue proceeded to fly around me, scolding me with soft "honking" or "quawk" notes.

Then things really began to happen. A second juvenile and another adult rose from railroad track site. The second juvenile alighted beside

the first one on the same stump, with the two adults perched nearby. The two juveniles began engaging in typical sibling horseplay ("sword fights" with their bills), and as they did I observed they still had down feathers on their heads, forming shaggy crests on both birds. Clearly, as of this date, the closer of the two nesting locations had fledged at least two young, and the farther of the two nesting locations was still active.

In all of the above observations, the adult Little Blue Herons were night-heron sized birds, but slimmer, with proportionately longer legs and necks. The head and neck were deep maroon, and the body plumage was uniform dark slate blue. The thick, stout bill was blue basally with a blackish tip, and the legs were greenish. Both of the juveniles observed had entirely white body plumage except for the obvious, clear-cut, slate blue wing tips. The thick, stout bills of the juveniles were grayish basally with a blackish tip, and the legs were greenish.

A search through the literature revealed that Ford (1956), Bohlen (1978 & 1989), and Mlodinow (1984) do not list any Little Blue Heron nesting records for northeastern Illinois. Events that have transpired over the last few years, however, suggest Little Blues have been nesting in northeastern Illinois for several years now, but there has never been sufficient evidence to prove it beyond a doubt. In June 1996, I saw an adult Little Blue

Heron carry a weed stalk into the reeds at Lake Calumet's Big Marsh. In DuPage County, Jack Pomatto (pers. comm.) believes a pair of Little Blues was likely to have nested at Pratts Wayne Woods Forest Preserve in 1996. During 1998, at least two pairs of adult Little Blue Herons summered in the Calumet region of Chicago. A juvenile (being chased around by an adult), which I observed at Lake Calumet's Hegewisch Marsh in July 1998, was believed to have come from a local nest, but again was best regarded as probable nesting since it could not be confirmed.

Literature Cited

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