

shrubs were defoliated and 8 percent were dead. The great damage done to the shrubs and vegetation caused the density of nests, that is, the number of nests per square meter, to decline by about two-thirds during the third year. In the affected areas, blueberry bushes failed to produce fruit. The quality of the underlying soil also deteriorated as a result of nesting. The PH count (acidic content) increased sharply as did the amount of chemicals and salts.

A heronry is a place of ordered chaos, of seasonal beginnings that are timeless, a place where birds, often not of a feather, create a gathering of strangers year after year. These remarkably flexible birds adapt to changing environments. They have withstood many crises ranging from their wholesale slaughter in the last century because of the demand for their plumes to hurricanes to motorboats, planes, and humans disturbing their nests.

Their awkward elegance at the nest and in the air is matched by their tenacity for life.



*Moskoff, Hollender  
Professor of Economics,  
Lake Forest College,  
555 N. Sheridan Rd.,  
Lake Forest, IL 60045*

### Literature Cited

Beaver, Donald L., Ronald G. Osborn and Thomas W. Custer. 1980. Nest-site and Colony Characteristics of Wading Birds in Selected Atlantic coast Colonies. *Wilson Bulletin*. Vol. 92, no. 2, pp. 200-220.

Brown, Charles R., Bridget J. Stutchbury and Peter D. Walsh. 1990. Choice of Colony Size in Birds. *Tree*, vol. 5, no. 12, pp. 398-403.

Burger, Joanna. 1978. The Pattern and Mechanism of Nesting in Mixed-species Heronries. *Wading Birds*, Research Report No. 7. A. Sprunt, IV, J. C. Ogden, and S. Winkler, editors. New York, pp. 45-58.

Davis, William E. Jr., 1986. Effects on old nest-site selection in Black-crowned Night Herons and Snowy Egrets. *Wilson Bulletin*. Vol. 98, no. 2, pp. 300-303.

Davis, William E. Jr. and Katharine C. Parsons. 1982. The Clark's Island Heronry. *Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts*. Vol. 10, pp. 125-131.

Draulans, Dirk. 1988. The Importance of Heronries for Mate Attraction. *Ardea*, Vol. 76, pp. 187-192.

Ehrlich, Paul R., David S. Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye. 1988. *The Birder's Handbook*. New York,

Simon and Schuster. p. 173.

Gibbs, James P. 1991. Spatial Relationships Between Nesting Colonies and Foraging Areas of Great Blue Herons. *The Auk*, vol. 108, pp. 764-770.

Gibbs, James P., Susan Woodward, Malcolm L. Hunter, and Alan E. Hutchinson. 1987. Determinants of Great Blue Heron Colony Distribution in Coastal Maine. *The Auk*, vol. 104, pp. 38-47.

Irion, Robert. 1994. Killer Sibblings. *International Wildlife*, March/April, pp. 42-47.

Laubhan, Murray K. and Frederic A. Reid. 1991. Characteristics of Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nests in lowland hardwood forests of Missouri. *Wilson Bulletin*, vol. 103, no. 3, pp. 486-491.

McDonald, Cathryn Steed Adams McDonald. 1971. Some Ecological Aspects of a Nesting Colony of Herons, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Auburn University.

Meanley, Brooke. 1955. A Nesting Study of the Little Blue Heron in Eastern Arkansas. *The Wilson Bulletin*. vol. 67, no. 2, pp. 84-99.

Mock, Douglas W. 1985. Knockouts in the Nest. *Natural History*, vol. 94, no. 5, pp. 54-60

Rand, Austin L. 1956 *American Water & Game Birds*. New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., pp. 70-71.

Wiese, Jochen H. 1978. Heron Nest-site Selection and Its Ecological Effects. *Wading Birds*, Report No. 7, A. Sprunt, II, J. C. Ogden, and S. Winkler, editors, New York, pp. 27-34.

Wilder Rachel. 1984. Murder in the Nest. *Science Digest*, vol. 92, May, pp. 99, 104.

### Endnotes

1. A number of these birds have been known to breed in solitary circumstances.

2. James Weland of the Lafayette Natural History Museum supplied the list of birds breeding in the heronry. Anhingas were also breeding in this area.

3. A recent article raises some important questions regarding the size of colony question. See Joanna Burger and Michael Gochfeld. 1993. When is a Heronry Crowded: A Case Study of Huckleberry Island, New York, U.S.A. *Journal of Coastal Research*. Vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 221-228.