

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

US Fish & Wildlife Publications

US Fish & Wildlife Service

1977

Yellow-crowned Night Herons Sighted in North Dakota

Dennis G. Jorde

University of North Dakota

Gary L. Krapu

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Robert K. Green

University of Minnesota

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usfwspubs>



Part of the [Aquaculture and Fisheries Commons](#)

Jorde, Dennis G.; Krapu, Gary L.; and Green, Robert K., "Yellow-crowned Night Herons Sighted in North Dakota" (1977). *US Fish & Wildlife Publications*. 252.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/usfwspubs/252>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the US Fish & Wildlife Service at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in US Fish & Wildlife Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

Yellow-crowned Night Herons Sighted in North Dakota

Dennis G. Jorde
Department of Biology
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202
and

Gary L. Krapu
Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jamestown, North Dakota 58401
and

Robert K. Green
Department of Entomology, Fisheries and Wildlife
University of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

Yellow-crowned night herons (*Nyctanassa violacea*) sighted at four locations in North Dakota during 1976 appear to be the first observations of this species for the State. We sighted a single individual about 8 km south of Medina, North Dakota in western Stutsman County during several visits in June and July 1976. The bird was first seen on 23 June standing in a pasture adjoining an 8.5 ha semipermanent marsh. On following visits, the heron usually was seen perched in trees at the edge of the wetland. A single yellow-crowned night heron was sighted on the same wetland on three separate occasions in June 1977. It is not known whether this was the same individual that was seen in 1976. The wetland contains dense stands of cattail (*Typha* spp.), hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*), and reed (*Phragmites communis*), and is bordered by open stands of cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) and peach-leaved willow (*Salix amygdaloides*). Several black-crowned night herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) also were observed at the marsh during 1976 and 1977. Herons may have been attracted to the wetland by the presence of large numbers of leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*). No yellow-crowned night heron nests were found during nest searches of the wetland in 1976 and 1977.

Other yellow-crowned night heron sightings in 1976 were reported at Bismarck and in Richland County (*American Birds* 30(4):855, 1976) and at J. Clark Salyer NWR (*American Birds* 30(5):969, 1976). A sighting on 8 May 1963 that was listed for Glyndon, North Dakota (*American Birds* 17(4):413, 1963) actually refers to a Glyndon, Minnesota location. Stewart (1975) did not list the yellow-crowned night heron as breeding in North Dakota, nor was the species reported by Judd (1917). In southern Manitoba, Godfrey (1966) considered the species a rare wanderer. The yellow-crowned night heron was first reported breeding in southern Minnesota in 1955 and several additional records

have since been reported but the species is still considered accidental in northern Minnesota (Green and Janssen 1975). Several sightings of yellow-crowned night herons have been reported in South Dakota (*Audubon Field Notes*). Bent (1963:219) reported early sightings at Council Bluffs, Iowa (2 May 1843) and Beatrice, Nebraska (19 July 1901).

Several species of herons and egrets have expanded their ranges northward in recent years; the first breeding records of the cattle egret (*Bulbulcus ibis*) and little blue heron (*Florida caerulea*) were recorded in North Dakota in 1976 (*American Birds* 30(5):969, 1976). It appears probable that the yellow-crowned night heron will be seen in North Dakota with increasing frequency in the future.

We thank John Lokemoen, Robert E. Stewart, and Dr. Richard Crawford for critically reviewing the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

- Bent, A.C. 1963. Life histories of North American marsh birds. Dover Publications, Inc., New York. 392 pp.
- Godfrey, W. E. 1966. The birds of Canada. Natl. Mus. Canada Bull. 203, Biol. Ser. No. 73. 428 pp.
- Green, J.C., and R. B. Janssen. 1975. Minnesota birds. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 217 pp.
- Judd, E. T. 1917. List of North Dakota birds found in the Big Coulee, Turtle Mountains and Devils Lake Region. Published by the author. Cando, North Dakota. 29 pp.
- Stewart, R. E. 1975. Breeding birds of North Dakota. Tri-College Center for Environmental Studies. Fargo, North Dakota. 295 pp.