Carolina, is characterized by having an acute bifid spatha, an erect funnel-shaped corolla of a pale rose-colour or pure white, with a short tube at the base, the segments nearly equal, as are the declinate stamens. It flowers in June and July, and attains a height of from eight inches to a foot.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.

+ARDEA VIOLACEA, *Linn.*

PLATE CCCLXIV.—ADULT AND YOUNG.

The Yellow-crowned Heron, which is one of the handsomest species of its tribe, is called "Cap-cap" by the Creoles of Lower Louisiana, in which country it is watched and shot with great eagerness, on account of the excellence of its flesh. It arrives about New Orleans toward the end of March, and departs in the middle of October. On arriving, they throw themselves among the thickets along the bayous, where they breed. Like the Night Heron, this species may be enticed near by imitating its cries, when it approaches, cutting many curious zigzags in the air, and alights close by. It is a curious circumstance that when passing over several gunners placed on the watch for them, they dive toward the ground if shot at and missed, and this they do several times in succession, according to the number of shots. It is in the evening and at dawn that they are chiefly obtained. They are said not to travel in boisterous weather, or when there is thunder; and I have heard the same stated with regard to the Night Heron.

In some parts of the Southern States, this species is quite abundant, while in the intermediate tracts it is seldom or never met with. Thus, in the Floridas, I found great numbers on a bayou near Halifax river, but afterwards saw none until I reached one of the keys, more than two hundred miles distant, and farther south, where it was breeding in society. The first of these flocks I saw in winter, the other on the 22nd of May. Again, while proceeding toward the Texas, we saw a few on an island in Bay Blanche, but met with none afterwards until we reached Galveston Island, where they were plentiful. They seldom advance eastward far beyond

North Carolina, and I am not aware of any having been seen farther than New Jersey. On the other hand, they are not generally found on the Mississippi beyond Natchez, although stragglers may sometimes be seen farther up.

This species is by no means entirely nocturnal, for I have seen it searching for food among the roots of mangroves at all hours of the day, and that as assiduously as any diurnal bird, following the margins of rivers, and seizing on both aquatic and terrestrial animals. Whilst at Galveston, I frequently saw a large flock similarly occupied. When they had satisfied their hunger, they would quietly remove to some safe distance toward the middle of an island, where, standing in a crouching posture on the ground, they presented a very singular appearance. That they are able to see to a considerable distance on fine clear nights, I have no doubt, as I am confident that their migratory movements are usually performed at such times, having seen them, as well as several other species, come down from a considerable height in the air, after sun-rise, for the purpose of resting and procuring food.

The flight of the Yellow-crowned Heron is rather slow, and less protracted than that of the Night Heron, which it however somewhat resembles. When in numbers, and surprised on their perches, they usually rise almost perpendicularly for thirty or forty yards, and then take a particular direction, leading them to some well-known place. Whenever I have started them from the nest, especially on the Florida Keys, they would sneak off on wing quite low, under cover of the mangroves, and fly in this manner until they had performed the circuit of the island, when they would alight close to me, as if to see whether I had taken their eggs or young.

When on the ground, they exhibit little of the elegance displayed by the Louisiana, the Reddish, the Blue, or the White Herons; they advance with a less sedate pace, and seldom extend their neck much even when about to seize their food, which they appear to do with little concern, picking it up from the ground in the manner of a domestic fowl. Nor are they at all delicate in the choice of their viands, but swallow snails, fish, small snakes, crabs, crays, lizards, and leeches, as well as small quadrupeds, and young birds that have fallen from their nests. One which was killed by my friend EDWARD HARRIS, Esq., on the 19th of April, 1837, on an island in the Bay of Terre Blanche, about 4 o'clock in the evening, was, when opened next morning, found to have swallowed a terrapin, measuring about an inch and a half in length, by one in breadth. It was still alive, and greatly surprised my companions as well as myself by crawling about when liberated.

This species places its nest either high or low, according to the nature of

the place selected for it, and the abundance of food in the neighbourhood. In the interior of swampy woods, in Lower Louisiana, I have found the nests placed on the tops of the loftiest cypresses, and on low bushes, but seldom so close together as those of many other Herons. On the Florida Keys, where I have examined more of these tenements than in any other part, I found them either on the tops of mangroves, which there seldom attain a greater height than twenty-five feet, or on their lowest branches, and not more than two or three feet from the water. In the Carolinas, they usually resort to swamps, nestling on the bushes along their margins. The nest is similar to that of other Herons, being formed of dry sticks loosely put together, and a few weeds, with at times a scanty lining of fibrous roots. The eggs are generally three, never, in as far as I have seen, more, of a pale blue colour, inclining to green, thin-shelled, and averaging two inches in length by an inch and three and a half eighths in their greatest breadth. The young seldom remain in the nest until able to fly, as is the case with those of some other species, but usually leave it to follow their parents along the shores. If scared from the nest, they scramble along the branches with considerable agility, and hide whenever an opportunity occurs. I have given the figure of a young bird procured in October.

The differences between the periods at which this bird breeds in different latitudes, correspond with those observed with respect to other species of the same tribe. Thus, eggs and young may be procured on the Florida Keys six weeks sooner than in South Carolina, although two broods are usually raised in both districts, the birds frequently removing from one place to another for the purpose. The beautiful slender plumes on the head and back generally fall off soon after incubation commences, although I have on a few occasions found the male still bearing these ornaments when the female was sitting on her second set of eggs. When the young are just able to fly I have found them good eating, but the old birds I never relished.

When wounded, the Yellow-crowned Heron defends itself vigorously with its claws, the scratches inflicted by which are severe, and also strikes with the bill. If not brought to the ground, in a place where the trees are close and thickly branched, it is difficult to obtain them without a second shot, for they scamper quickly from one twig to another, and are very soon out of reach.

WILSON complains that the name "Yellow-crowned" should be given to this species, and this would almost induce me to suppose that he had never seen one in the breeding season, when the white of the head is strongly tinged with yellow, which however disappears at the approach of autumn, when the bird might with all propriety be named the White-crowned Heron.

The adult bird represented in the plate was shot by my friend Dr. BACHMAN, a few miles from Charleston, while I was in his company; and the drawing of the plant was made by his amiable sister-in-law, Miss MARTIN.

YELLOW-CROWNED HERON, *Ardea violacea*, Wils. Amer. Orn., vol. viii. p. 26.

ARDEA VIOLACEA, Bonap. Syn., p. 306.

WHITE-CROWNED HERON, Nutt. Man., vol. ii. p. 52.

YELLOW-CROWNED HERON, *Ardea violacea*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 290.

Adult, $23\frac{1}{2}$, $43\frac{1}{2}$. Young in October $23\frac{1}{2}$, 40.

A few spend the winter in Florida. Migrates in spring as far as New Jersey, up the Mississippi to Natchez. Never goes far inland. Not very abundant. Migratory.

Adult Male in spring plumage.

Bill a little longer than the head, strong, straight, moderately compressed, tapering. Upper mandible with the dorsal line slightly arched and declinate, the ridge broad, convex, the sides bulging, the edges sharp and overlapping, the tip slender, with a distinct notch. Nasal depression wide, with a broad shallow groove extending towards the end of the mandible; nostrils basal, oblong, pervious. Lower mandible with the angle very long and narrow, the dorsal line straight and sloping upwards, the sides sloping outwards and flat, the edges sharp, obscurely serrulate, the tip slender.

Head large, oblong, compressed. Eyes large. Neck long. Body slender, much compressed. Feet long, moderately stout; tibia bare at its lower part, with reticular angular scales; tarsus covered anteriorly for more than half its length with scutella, over the rest of its extent with angular scales; toes long and rather slender, with numerous scutella above, flat beneath, marginate; hind toe stout, fourth a little longer than second, third much longer. Claws of moderate size, arched, compressed, acute, that of middle toe beautifully pectinate on the inner edge.

Plumage loose, soft, and blended; feathers on the upper part of the head lanceolate and acuminate, those on the occiput very long, linear, forming a pendant crest, which however is capable of being erected; on the sides of the neck oblong, and directed obliquely backwards; on the fore part of the back ovate-oblong; on the lower part generally very long and loose. Between the scapulæ are two longitudinal series of very elongated feathers, with loose margins, the longest extending far beyond the end of the tail. Wings long, of great breadth, rounded; the primaries broad and rounded, the third longest, the second and fourth nearly equal, the first half an inch shorter than the longest, the rest slowly graduated; secondaries very broad, rounded, the inner elongated, some of them nearly as long as the outer primaries

when the wing is closed. Tail short, even, of twelve broad, rounded feathers.

Bill black. Iris reddish-orange; margins of eyelids and bare space in front of the eye, dull yellowish-green. Tibia, upper part of the tarsus, its hind part, and the soles, bright yellow; the scutella and scales, the fore part of the tarsus, the toes, and the claws, black. Upper part of the head pale reddish-yellow in front, white behind, of which colour are most of the elongated crest feathers, as well as an oblong patch extending from the corner of the mouth, beneath, to behind the ear. The rest of the head, and a small portion of the neck all round, bluish-black; that colour extending nearly half-way down the neck behind. The rest of the neck all round, as well as the upper and lower surface of the body, light greyish-blue; the feathers of the fore part of the back, and wings, having their central parts bluish-black, which is also the case with the elongated loose feathers, the dark part margined with bluish-white. Alula, primary coverts, and primary quills, dark bluish-grey; secondaries and tail-feathers of a lighter tint.

Length to end of tail $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to end of wings 25, to end of loose feathers 30, to end of claws $30\frac{1}{4}$, to carpal joint $12\frac{1}{4}$; extent of wings $43\frac{1}{2}$; bill along the ridge $2\frac{7}{8}$, along the edge of lower mandible 4; width of gap $1\frac{1}{4}$; depth of bill at base $7\frac{1}{8}$; wing from flexure $12\frac{1}{2}$; bare part of tibia $2\frac{1}{4}$; tarsus $4\frac{1}{8}$; middle toe $2\frac{1}{2}$; its claw $\frac{3}{8}$; outer toe $1\frac{7}{8}$, its claw $2\frac{1}{8}$; inner toe $1\frac{3}{4}$, its claw $2\frac{1}{8}$; hind toe 1, its claw $\frac{5}{8}$; tail 5. Weight 1 lb. 9 oz.

The Female resembles the male, but is somewhat smaller.

The Young in October.

Bill greenish-black, the lower and basal part of the lower mandible greenish-yellow, as are the eyelids and bare space before the eye. Iris pale orange. Legs and feet dull yellowish-green, the scutella and scales in front, as well as the claws, dusky. Upper part of head and hind neck, black, longitudinally marked with somewhat triangular elongated white spots; sides of the head and neck pale dull yellowish-brown, streaked with darker; the upper parts light grey, tinged with brown, the feathers edged with yellowish-white, and tipped with a triangular spot of the same; the primaries and their coverts with the tail darker, margined with dull white. The fore part of the neck, and all the lower parts, dull yellowish-grey, each feather with its central part dark greyish-brown; lower tail-coverts unspotted.

Length to end of tail $23\frac{1}{2}$, to end of claws $29\frac{1}{2}$; extent of wings 40. Weight 1 lb. 7 oz.

Adult Male from South Carolina.

The upper mandible is slightly concave, with a median prominent ridge; the palate convex, with two ridges; the posterior aperture of the nares linear,

with an oblique papillate flap on each side; the lower mandible deeply concave. The tongue is of moderate length, measuring $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches, emarginate at the base, trigonal, flat above, tapering to a point. The œsophagus, which is 12 inches long, gradually diminishes in diameter from $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches to 1 inch. The proventriculus is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, its glandules cylindrical, forming a complete belt, the largest 3 twelfths long. The stomach is roundish, 2 inches in diameter, compressed; its muscular coat thin, and composed of large fasciculi; its tendinous spaces nearly 1 inch in diameter; its inner coat even, soft, and destitute of epithelium. There is a small roundish pyloric lobe, 4 twelfths in diameter; the aperture of the pylorus is extremely small, having a diameter of only half a twelfth. The intestine is long and very slender, 6 feet 3 inches in length, its diameter at the upper part 3 twelfths, diminishing to $2\frac{1}{4}$ twelfths, for about a foot from the extremity enlarged to 5 eighths; the rectum $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches long; the cœcum 5 twelfths long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths in diameter at the base, tapering to 1 twelfth, the extremity rounded. The stomach contained fragments of crustacea.

The trachea is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, cylindrical; the rings 154, and ossified; its diameter at the top $5\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths, diminishing in the space of an inch and a half to 3 twelfths, and so continuing nearly to the end, when it contracts to $2\frac{1}{2}$ twelfths. The last rings are much extended, and divided into two portions, the last transverse half ring arched, and 5 twelfths in length. The bronchi are in consequence very wide at the top, gradually taper, and are composed of about 25 half rings. The contractor muscles are very feeble; the sterno-tracheal slender; a pair of inferior laryngeal muscles inserted into the first bronchial ring.

AMERICAN BITTERN.

†ARDEA LENTIGINOSA, *Swains.*

PLATE CCCLXV.—MALE AND FEMALE.

It never was my fortune to have a good opportunity of observing all the habits of this very remarkable bird, which, in many respects, differs from most other Herons. It is a winter resident in the Peninsula of the Floridas, as well as many of the keys or islets which border its shores. But the

Yellow Crowned Night Heron.

Audubon, John James. 1843. "Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, *Ardea violacea*, Linn. [Pl. 364]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 6, 89–94. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319478>.

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