

INTER DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

(PLEASE CONFINE TO ONE SUBJECT)

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION - DES MOINES, IOWA

TO Richard Bishop DATE 27 July, 1979

FROM Carl Priebe

SUBJECT: Nesting colony of Black Crowned Night Herons

RECEIVED BY

JUL 30 1979

Rich,

FISH & WILDLIFE

I have discovered a colony of Black-Crowned Night Herons nesting in a farm windbreak northwest of Beeds Lake in Franklin County. The windbreak has one row of Arborvitae, one row of White Pine, and three rows of Black Hills Spruce. All the trees in the windbreak are mature, probably about 50 years old. There are a minimum of 14 nests in the windbreak. It is very difficult to see the nests in the top of the spruce trees so I may have missed one or two. Judging by the droppings below the trees it appears that eight of the nests were successful. I would have to guess there are 10 to 15 young herons hopping back and forth in the tops of the trees.

Mr. Brady, landowner, indicated that these birds have been coming to his grove for five to six years. The first year they remained only a short time. The second year they stayed longer and did raise a few young. He said that last year he did not think the birds raised any young because they left early in the summer. On successful years the birds arrive in late May and leave when the young can fly in late July or early August. At the present time some of the young birds can fly and others only hop from the top of one tree to the next.

Banding of the young appears to be possible if that is considered important in the future. It would take a little work but most of the trees could be climbed all the way to the nest. This would probably have to be done either in late June or early July. Mr. Brady said it would be fine with he and his family if we wanted to attempt to band some of the birds in the future.

The nesting colony is located on the farm owned by Delmar Brady. The farm is located in the NW¹/₄ Sec. 29 T-93N R-21W in Franklin County. It is six miles north and six miles west of Beeds Lake where most of the birds seem to be feeding.

Sincerely,

