

A BLACK CROWNED NIGHT HERONRY AND NEED OF ITS PROTECTION.

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About a mile and a half from the old Worth race track and some fifteen miles from the down-town district of Chicago is a rookery of black-crowned night herons. This heronry is situated on a "tree island" of about four acres in what is known as the "Sag," the outlet of old Lake Chicago. Surrounding it on three sides is farm land and on the fourth is a large marsh.

The number of birds using the heronry has been estimated from 600 to 1,000. Although it is located in a secluded place it happens to be within the confines of a Chicago gun club and each year increasing numbers of men are learning of its location. At present no permanent means of protection is afforded this valuable natural asset. That such protection is needed is shown by the fact that in frequent trips there in the last three years during the breeding season, I have never failed to find birds apparently shot. On one occasion, R. Chaney of the University of Chicago and myself found a pile of about 20 birds both adults and immature. A unique "hunting match" is reported to have been held there a few years ago in which the farmer sportsmen of the community stationed themselves at the edge of the grove and killed the birds as they were scared out by the boys.

That this bird is rare is known by most of us and is shown by Barrows (Michigan Bird Life, 1912) who quotes the following from Swales, "It is now a rare bird and seldom recorded. In 1904, May, 5, one was taken at St. Clair Flats, and on July 16, I saw one near the River Rouge."

Because of the flats, farm land and marsh surrounding it, because of its size and because of its isolation the place lends itself to protection. Because the birds are wantonly killed and because they are rare they deserve our protection. It is with the hope that this society might see fit to take a hand in the conservation of this rare natural phenomenon that this paper is presented.