

Double-crested Cormorants Breeding at Fishers Island: For many years the Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) has been reported as a summering non-breeder in varying numbers on eastern Long Island. During the spring of 1977 evidence of nesting was obtained off Fishers Island, Suffolk County; this represents the first known breeding in the coastal waters of New York State. The only prior breeding records for New York are from two small islands in extreme eastern Lake Ontario (Bull, 1974, *Birds of New York State*, p. 69; 1976, *Supplement to Birds of New York State*, p. 5).

On 2 June 1977, Noble Proctor (pers. comm.) of Branford, Connecticut, and Fred Sibley of New Haven flew over the north shore of Fishers Island in a helicopter and, on three nearby islets known as the Pine Islands, discovered about 40 nests with eggs. This record antedates by one year the supposed first breeding there reported by Paul A. Buckley (1978, *American Birds*, vol. 32, no. 6, p. 1142). During a visit to Fishers Island in early October 1980, I obtained more recent information from Mr. Edwin Horning, Curator of the Henry L. Ferguson Museum on the island. Mr. Horning was kind enough to furnish me with the details presented here.

Fishers Island lies considerably to the northeast of the tip of Orient Point, and actually much closer to the coast of Connecticut near the Rhode Island border. The three small islets, each of no more than several acres, are misnamed, as there is not a single pine tree on them now, although there might have been some at one time. In fact, there are no trees or shrubbery on these islands, the vegetation consisting of some herbaceous, salt-tolerant plants, and patches of *Spartina alterniflora*. The ground is covered with gravel and many rocks, some of which are boulder-sized. The cormorant nests are situated on the ground among the rocks, but not in the grassy areas. These ground nests are in striking contrast to those of the birds breeding on Lake Ontario, which nest in trees.

On 6 August 1977, Mr. Horning and his son photographed a nest containing three young nearly ready to fledge, near another nest of a recently fledged individual. One nest was located on some wood planking, and still another within an old automobile tire. Most nests were built chiefly of stems and bits of dried seaweed and grasses, a few directly on the rocks and others in the crevices between. According to Mr. Horning, the colony increased in size from 40 nests in 1977 to nearly 100 nests in 1979, with at least 150 pairs present in 1980. Although exact dates were not recorded, the earliest time for eggs were from late April to early June, for nestlings late May, all of June, and exceptionally into July, and for fledglings as early as the middle of July and as late as the first week in August.

Although Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls (*Larus argentatus* and *L. marinus*) are present on the island, there is no evidence of nesting. The possibility of predation by these gulls on eggs or young of the cormorants should be investigated.

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