

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**Attrition Of Nests From An Abandoned Great Blue Heron:** Since the summer of 1984 I have been observing the activity of a Great Blue Heron at King's Bay State Game Area along Lake Champlain in northern Clinton County. Permission was granted in 1984 from the N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation to place numbered aluminum tags on each of the trees used by the herons in the heronry. This facilitated monitoring the heronry. As it turned out, the summer of 1984 was the last nesting season in which the heronry was fully active. Nesting at the heronry was disturbed by Great Horned Owl predation during the 1985 and 1986 nesting season (see *The Kingbird* Winter 1987, page 6). The heronry essentially has been abandoned since the end of the 1984 nesting season. Even though the heronry has been abandoned I have continued to monitor it. Each winter a complete survey of the remaining nests is conducted by me. How fast did this heronry deteriorate once abandoned? The graph below answers the question quite nicely. This heronry lost 25.8% of its nests each year. In other words it took fully four years for all traces of the heronry to disappear. The data fits a linear model for loss of nests with time amazingly well. The graph shows the least squares line for the data. I am not prepared to interpret the meaning of this linear decay. Obviously the loss of nests with time is site specific. However, these results may be a good first approximation of nest attrition for any heronry on the western shore of Lake Champlain. The yearly loss of nests is only one element in understanding the dynamics of a heronry.

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