

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Second attempted nesting of Double-crested Cormorant in the Niagara Frontier Region: Double-crested Cormorant made a second attempt to nest on the water diversion weir at Buckhorn Island State Park in 1993. This is only the second attempted nesting of this species in western New York (*Kingbird*. 43:88-93; 1993). The first attempted nesting activity was observed last year between 8 and 28 May 1992. This year cormorant numbers increased to 51 on the weir by 4 May 1993, with one cormorant possibly incubating and another sitting on a nest. On 13 May, four cormorants possibly were incubating, while a fifth was standing on a nest. On 29 May, four or five cormorants were sitting on nests. On 3 June, four (and possibly a fifth) cormorants were observed in incubating position. Since last year the nests were abandoned sometime between 28 May and 9 June, any nesting after these dates would represent new nesting dates for Region 1. On 10 June, five cormorants were in incubating position, while two other cormorants appeared on nests in possible incubating position. On 19 June, ten cormorants were in the nesting trees and a total of 65 cormorants was perched in two of the Niagara Mohawk electrical towers. Four cormorants (and possibly a fifth) appeared to be incubating. Although they had set a new nesting endurance record for Region 1, the number of incubating cormorants started to decline. Between 9:45 and 11:00 on 26 June only three cormorants were on nests in incubating positions. Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, and as many as nine other cormorants roosted in the nesting trees with the three incubating cormorants. By 30 June between 4:50 and 5:10 only one Double-crested Cormorant was still incubating. At 7:00 PM on 3 July all the cormorant nests were empty. Although 145 were on the nearby electrical towers, no Double-crested Cormorant was in the nesting tree. Again the nesting was unsuccessful, but this time the cormorants remained on their nests more than a month longer than in the previous attempt. Several observations suggested that gull predation may be a factor causing the abandonment of the colony. Although no direct aggression between gulls and cormorants was observed, both Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were observed in the nesting trees. The number of gulls in the nesting tree was greater during the period when cormorants were incubating, and the nesting tree contained more gulls than other trees on the island during the period cormorants incubated. Non-incubating cormorants positioned themselves near the nest and gulls seemed to keep at a respectful distance. However, when these cormorants left, the gulls would gradually move closer to the cormorant nests. On one occasion a Ring-billed Gull was seen picking at material in a recently abandoned cormorant nest. Gulls were even observed sitting on cormorant nests. A Ring-billed Gull was sitting on a nest 13 April, while on 30 June a Herring Gull was observed sitting on a nest that had been occupied by a cormorant as recently as 26 June. These observations suggest that gulls were waiting for incubating cormorants to leave the nests, so that the gulls could feed on eggs or young chicks.

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