

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

**First successful nesting of Double-crested Cormorant in the Niagara Frontier Region:** During the 1994 breeding season Double-crested Cormorant produced nestlings at two different colonies in the Niagara Frontier Region. This represents the first documented nestlings of this species in this area. Although the colony at Buckhorn Island State Park was studied weekly from 14 April to 10 July and on 29 May as many as 38 adults were observed sitting on 38 of the 46 nests studied, no evidence of any young was observed and weekly observations were terminated by the author when the colony appeared to be abandoned on 10 July. On 16 June, Senior Wildlife Biologist Mark Kandel of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation investigated the contents in ten of 52 nests. Although two of the nests were empty, the other eight nests contained twelve eggs and eleven chicks. The author believes that none of the chicks lived beyond 10 July, and that further study is needed to determine why a colony of this size did not produce viable offspring. The NYS DEC recorded 3,436 pairs of Ring-billed Gull nesting on the same water diversion weir as the cormorants. At the Reef Lighthouse, between Lake Erie and the source of the Niagara River, an adult Double-crested Cormorant was observed in incubating position on one of two nests on 11 August and 22 August. Each of these nests was located at the intersection of three steel beams of this manmade structure. On 31 August and 5 September, three nestlings were observed on the nest. Food begging rituals were observed on or near the nest 18 September and 1, 8, and (briefly) 18 October. The most interesting performance was noted on 8 October, when, after an adult landed near the nest, a young cormorant approached it and prodded its bill back and forth across the pouch of the adult. The adult typically evaded the young cormorant's prodding with a sinuous winding snake like action of its neck. This time, however, the adult stretched its neck as far to the right as possible to avoid the advances of the tenacious young, which powered itself with its wings up the back of the adult and continued to poke at the pouch of the adult. After about two minutes of this activity, the young finally turned the adult around and thrust its head down the adult's throat for food. The young cormorant then returned the nest where it met another young cormorant on the nest. The young cormorant on the nest then poked back and forth across the pouch of its sibling, but did not appear to be successful in obtaining food. The author believes that these birds fledged successfully. These observations represent the first documented successful nesting of Double-crested Cormorant in the Niagara Frontier Region. The Reef Lighthouse nesting is extraordinary in that it was very late. Dates for unfledged juveniles in New York State should be extended to June 16 and October 8 based on the observations at Buckhorn Island State Park and the Reef Lighthouse.

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