

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A HERON SWIM??

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In July of 1999, while birding in Cow Meadow Park, Freeport, Nassau Co.in the company of Sy Schiff, and Al Wollin, the three of us were puzzled by the sight of a "strange" bird in the middle of the man-made pond. It took us a couple of minutes to realize that it was an immature

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Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, which was *swimming* across the pond, not walking in the water. The fact that it was swimming was readily apparent from the movement of the body as distinctly different from the movement had it been walking on the bottom. At this point the pond is some one hundred yards wide and the heron was midway across. Unfortunately we were then distracted by some shorebirds flying in front of us (we were searching for a Ruff seen there earlier) and by the time we turned back to the heron, it had already clambered up on shore.

Though the combined years of birding experience for the three observers was 150 plus (all three of us being "long in the tooth"), we could not recall ever seeing a swimming heron previously. I have since asked many other longtime birders about this phenomenon and have yet to find any one who has witnessed a swimming heron.

However, in searching the literature I find that *all* authors mention that herons do swim !!!