

AN ADULT *ARDEA HERODIAS WARDI* FROM THE NORTHEAST

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Northward, postnesting, dispersal of immatures of the southeastern nesting subspecies of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias wardi*) was recently demonstrated (Dickerman 1992). Unfortunately through *lapsus* (both the author and editor take responsibility) in the table of measurements presented, the measurements of adult females were repeated for adult males. That error is corrected here (Table 1). It must be stressed that the maximum measurements for immature *herodias* from the northeast undoubtedly represent wandering *wardi* for which no one measurement was diagnostic, and so they could not be ruled out of the series. Immatures do not differ in color the extent that adults do, and so that character can not be used in the identification of migrants.

The last American Ornithologists' Union checklist that included subspecies (1957), cited five subspecies for the United States and Canada. Later Payne (in Mayer and Cottrell 1979) reduced this to two, lumping the three pale southern and western subspecies (*wardi*, *treganzi* and *hyperonca*) into *herodias*. I believe this does not recognize the distinctiveness of those populations, and have recommended that they be recognized as *wardi* (Dickerman mms.) They vary slightly in size, with those of the southeast being the largest. Among the Great Blue Herons received by the American Museum of Natural History from the New Jersey Raptor Trust in 1993 were three birds that can only be identified as of the southeastern population (Table 2). These are the first specimens of *wardi* from New Jersey, and the first adult from the northeast. The later is noteworthy for the early date, 9 June. Nesting in Florida is in the late winter to early spring (Stevenson and Anderson 1994). This adult demonstrates the need for caution in assuming that "nesting season" birds represent the local nesting population! All other records of *wardi* from the northeast are of immatures, their dates are from 28 July to 5 January, with eight of the eleven being from August to October. No two previous records have been from the same year, but that was perhaps because they were not searched for. It should be noted that tarsal length appears to be the best measurement character for separating *herodias* from southeastern *wardi*.

Acknowledgments

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Literature Cited

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Table 1. Measurements in millimeters of adult, mostly nesting season, Great Blue Herons from the northeastern states (*Ardea h. herodias*), and from Florida (*A. h. wardi*), and of immature birds of the northeastern population, with range, mean and standard deviation (SD).

Wing chord	Culmen	Tarsus	Tail
Females			
Adult <i>herodias</i>			
431-480 (452.8) n=34 SD=9.2	124-145 (134.5) n=32 SD=5.0	150-175 (166.5) n=19 SD=7.3	161-188 (171.0) n=34 SD=6.0
Immature <i>herodias</i>			
425-460 (442.4) n=30 SD=9.4	112-135 (124.6) n=31 SD=6.7	140-173 (159.6) n=25 SD=9.5	150-172 (164.4) n=31 SD=5.2
Adult <i>wardi</i>			
452-505 (476.2) n=19 SD=16.5	138-157 (144.0) n=20 SD=6.6	181-226 (193.8) n=21 SD=13.4	169-194 (178.4) n=20 SD=6.2
Males			
Adult <i>herodias</i>			
441-496 (470.3) n=35 SD=12.6	128-155 (144.1) n=33 SD=6.1	169-188 (179.8) n=24 SD=5.7	165-192 (177.9) n=32 SD=5.8
Immature <i>herodias</i>			
435-480 (452.8) n=27 SD=10.5	123-144 (132.7) n=28 SD=6.1	157-181 (173.5) n=22 SD=7.1	168-180..(169.2) n=27 SD=5.7
Adult <i>wardi</i>			
470-533 (493.0) n=28 SD=13.8	140-172 (154.6) n=27 SD=8.5	180-223 (202.8) n=18 SD=14.6	171-195 (182.7) n=22 SD=5.6

Table 2. Data and measurements in millimeters of three additional northeastern specimens identified as *Ardea herodias wardi*. Measurements more than one standard deviation above the maximum measurement for age/sex of *Ardea herodias herodias* are in **boldface**, and measurements larger than the maximum are in *italics*.

Specimen	Locality	Wing chord	Culmen	Tarsus	Tail
AMNH 21432 (skeleton) Adult female	New Jersey: Somerset Co. 9 June 1993	474	137	18	184
AMNH 831278 (skin) Immature male	New Jersey: Hunterdon Co. East Amwell 6 August 1993	<i>481</i>	143	198	175
MSB 18921 (skeleton) Immature male	New Jersey: Hunterdon Co. Clinton 15 September 1993	464	<i>148</i>	197	167

Museum initials:

AMNH – American Museum of Natural History

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