

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

AT LEAST 12 COMMON EIDER NESTS ON SOUTH DUMPLING ISLAND, SUFFOLK COUNTY

On 15 May 2008, I visited South Dumpling Island, Town of Southold, Suffolk Co., with Project Oceanology. During this annual assessment of breeding waterbirds, we saw approximately 50 Common Eider and found 12 nests with between two and five eggs each (Fig. D, p. 262). No hatched young were present yet. There were certainly additional nests present, as we did not actively search all areas of *Phragmites* and other flora resembling those where the observed nests were hidden. I believe that this is the highest number that we have found. We follow the same procedure each year so I think we are seeing a genuine increase in eider nests despite a decrease in island vegetation each year.

Double-crested Cormorant nest numbers are increasing, while Great Egret, Snowy Egret, and Black-crowned Night-Heron nests seem to be in decline. Great Egrets are nesting on the ground more than in the past. No Glossy Ibis were present. There were two pairs of nesting American Oystercatchers on nearby Flat Hammock Island.

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A MISSISSIPPI KITE AT BASHAKILL, SULLIVAN COUNTY

On 25 May 2008, at 10:25AM, I discovered an adult Mississippi Kite at the Bashakill WMA, Sullivan County, while birding with Bob May and Bobby Rosetti. The bird was soaring in the distance, to the northeast from a small field north of the main parking lot. Although distant, the distinctive shape and gray color were visible to all three of us. I called Arie Gilbert and John Haas to let them know, but only got voicemail. Remarkably, about an hour later Bob May spotted it from the bridge on Haven Road soaring against the hills to the northeast. We lost it for a minute, relocated it, and managed to get our scopes on it. After a couple of minutes it became tough to scope because it soared almost directly over our heads heading southwest. John Haas' crew and Arie's group arrived just in time to see it soar across the road at close range, and they snapped off a couple of photos (Fig. D, p. 262). This time the white secondary patch on the upperwing along with the short outermost primary could be clearly seen, and the reduced white on the head indicated an adult female. We later learned that another Mississippi Kite was seen earlier that day in Manhattan and another at Derby Hill at the same time—a great day for those lucky few who were at the right place at the right time.

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