

[Page 40 - Great Blue Heron](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 17](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/8/1

V>ll "Cll. ?? *"'?~' | |' |' | o'-iixxi'iur.jj rAui??i xi'ioxur. rnmxr uuvan -'J
 Stick-transfer. '. J Howling, and firmer;the accumulated filth helps to ceipent the
 material together." It is the male who is attached to the nest or nesting site. He
 spends a good deal of time there arranging the nest or posturing and displaying
 himself, often standing still high in the treetops or lying out across the nest as if
 covering eggs • trying to at? tract a female. And "once the heron claims it," write
 the Cottrilles, "the nest be? comes a target for a certain amount of at? tack by other
 herons in the vicinity. Any move toward a nest is warded off by the occupant with a
 startling threat display: plumes erect, neck thrust over the edge of nest, bill jabbed
 at intruder • emphasized by a loud clap of the mandibles and/or a vocal 'bark.' Early
 in the season this re? action seems to be directed toward intrud? ing birds of both
 sexes." This is apparent? ly common in species where both sexes look alike, and
 Verwey adds that the habit of solitude is still not overcome • the urge to mate is
 still in conflict with the urge to defend territory. Verwey reads the males actions at
 the nest as a ceremony of invi? tation. The Cottrilles call it "howling" and Lowe
 describes it this way: "Firmly grasping the nest or.branch with his claws, the bird
 stretches his head and neck vertically upwards to the fullest ex? tent, then lowers
 his neck over his back with the bill still pointed skywards, and finally, by flexion of
 the legs, lowers Burland Murphy with a fallen nest. his body into the nest....When he
 has ex? tended himself to the utmost he calls hoo and continues to gurgle -oooo as
 his head is brought downwards and backwards: if a female comes close he
 continues his pos? turing but stops calling. (A variant pat? tern, when the female is
 quite near:) the head is lowered in front of the bird and the mandibles snapped
 audibly together. Should the female stay he may snap and thrust his bill towards
 her, but if she flies off he begins to display again with unabated vigour." If the
 female returns a- gain and again, his attacks at her are less and less determined
 and they end up at the nest, nibbling each others' mandibles. Thus the male
 attracts, the female selects, the male wards her off and eventually accepts her.
 Cottrilles: "When a mate has been accepted by the occupant of a nest, the pair
 begin to perform a variety of 'courtship rituals': Erecting plumes and crest; shaking
 head frx3m side to side; walking around each o- ther in the nest; clapping mandible
 to? gether (loud hollow sound); Grasping each other's mandibles and seesawing
 back and forth; howling; shaking stick in nest; preening (individual and mutual); one
 bird stroking the other with bill on throat, nape and back." Lowe: "With the
 acceptance of a mate an entirely new phase begins and the ritual changes. The
 male becomes the stick-ga- Newly Renovated Grill at Sydney River| Town and
 Country RBSTAXJRANT Red ond White P0(??> STORES Baddeck Port
 Hawkesbury .A. ' Sydney River & Glace Bay Fort Havfkesbury PHARMACY operated
 by Mansons Prug' Ltd? OLD AS 1903: siill offering the sane old ficishion quality
 service tb Cape Breton* mw AS 19771 offering Drug fltns, Charge Cards?? Delivery,
 Mail-Order and nost liiti?6rt?nt