

FIRST RECORD OF A GREEN HERON ON P. E. I.

(Rosemary Curley, P. E. I. Fish and Wildlife Division)

In the spring my duties at work include waterfowl surveys, and so at 8:15 a.m. on May 18, 1979 I found myself sitting in a blind in a spruce tree at the mouth of Cow Creek*. Our surveys call for one hour of observation, but in the first half hour that morning I had already seen all the ducks there were on the pond: one female Blue-winged Teal and five non-breeding Black Ducks.

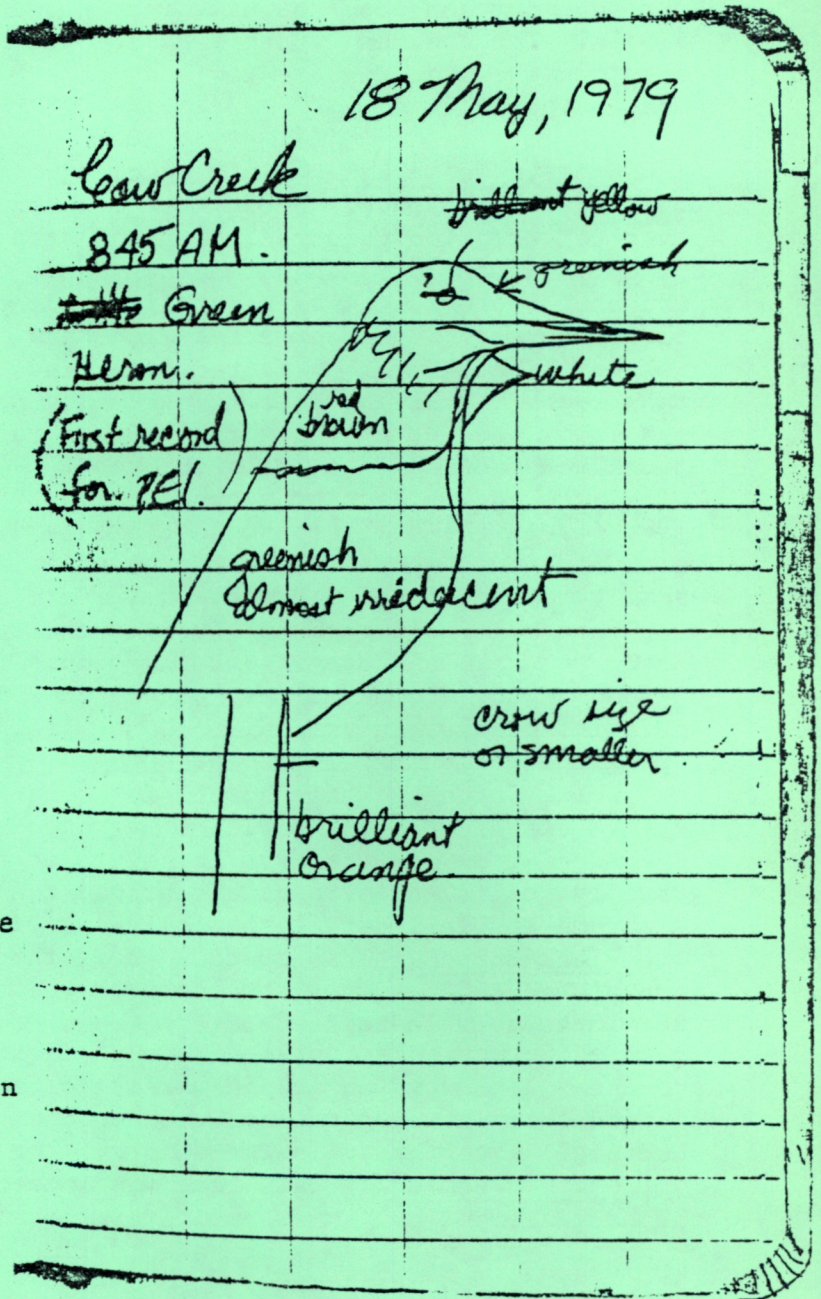
An hour of observation can seem like a day when there is nothing to observe, so I took more than passing notice when at 8:45 a pair of blazing orange legs whipped past my field of vision. The legs, with a bird attached, landed on a log to the right of my blind and stayed there about a minute, just long enough for me to make a sketch of the bird, all except for the tail.

I knew it had to be a heron, either a Little Blue or a 'Little' Green, but its behaviour was most unheron-like. Instead of the stalk employed by the Great Blue, it skittered back and forth from the log to the shallow water in active foraging.

When I returned to my car I checked in my field guide, which revealed the bird to be just a plain Green Heron, albeit an adult in breeding plumage. (Little Blues are 'little' as opposed to the Great Blue Heron we see all the time. Green Herons are certainly 'little' too but there is no 'Great' Green Heron, and hence no 'Little' Green.)

The P. E. I. Field Checklist of Birds does not list Green Herons so I presume this is a first record of the species here. Green Herons occur as stragglers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and there are even old records of nesting in New Brunswick.

The desirability of having more Green Herons on P. E. I. should be recognized. Although its tail is not at all memorable, it has the nicest set of legs imaginable on a bird. (To get an idea of the complete bird, try to picture in your mind the tail of a Great Blue Heron.)



* (Cow Creek is located in the eastern part of the Island near Naufrage.)