

**Article VIII.—A NEW RACE OF THE GREAT BLUE
HERON, WITH REMARKS ON THE STATUS
AND RANGE OF *ARDEA WARDI*.**

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An ethnological collection brought to the American Museum of Natural History from Queen Charlotte Island, B. C., by Dr. Franz Boaz, in 1888, contained the heads and necks of two Great Blue Herons so remarkable in their intensity of color as to suggest that the Great Blue Heron, like many other Northwest coast birds, had been affected in color by the humid climate of that region.

Since the date named, therefore, a complete specimen of the Great Blue Heron from the Northwest coast has been a desideratum which we have tried, until the present time, to secure in vain. In April, 1900, however, Mr. John Fannin, the well-known Curator of the Provincial Museum at Victoria, presented the Museum with an adult Great Blue Heron from Vancouver Island, but as this bird, on comparison with the Queen Charlotte Island heads and necks, evidently did not represent the extreme development of the Northwest coast form, it was deemed advisable to await the receipt of further material before attempting to characterize a new race. This material has now been received in the shape of an adult specimen collected in February, 1901, at Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Island, by John R. Swanton, of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition, whose services in this connection were enlisted through the kind coöperation of Dr. Boaz. This specimen fully confirms the suspicions aroused by the heads and necks previously mentioned, and, together with them and the Vancouver Island example, shows the Great Blue Heron of the Northwest coast region, from at least Victoria northward, to be a strikingly differentiated form, which, in recognition of Mr. John Fannin's services to the zoölogy of the region it inhabits, I propose to name

***Ardea herodias fannini*, subsp. nov.**

NORTHWEST COAST HERON.

Chars. subsp.—Similar to *Ardea herodias* Linn., but with a shorter tarsus and with the plumage throughout much darker, the upper parts being bluish slate-black instead of bluish gray; tibiæ more feathered.

Description of Type.—Am. Mus. No. 74,294, Skidegate, Queen Charlotte Island, February, 1901, John R. Swanton.—Forehead and anterior part of the crown blackish, the feathers basally whitish gray, passing into deep black on the sides of the head and occiput, where the feathers are much lengthened; centre of the crown with elongated white feathers about half of which are laterally speckled or marked with black; a narrow dusky whitish line from the culmen to above but not, extending behind, the eye; postocular region, cheeks, chin, and throat white, passing into dark slate-gray¹ of the neck all around, except on the anterior median line, which is variegated with bright cinnamon-rufous and black; lanceolate lower neck plumes smoke-gray; back and rump bluish slate-black, the lanceolate interscapulars only slightly grayer, and therefore much darker than in *herodias*; tail somewhat grayer than the back; primaries and secondaries bluish black, tertials like the back; greater coverts slate-gray, median coverts like the back; lesser coverts much darker than the back, almost black in color; primary coverts like the primaries; border of the wing from the elbow to the wrist lightly marked with chestnut which increases in amount on the bend of the wing and extends down its outer edge to a point opposite the end of the longest primary covert; under wing-coverts similar in color to median upper coverts; jugular tufts black, each with four to six feathers medianly white; breast white, the outer half of the outer vane of the feathers black; abdomen black, many of the feathers striped laterally or medianly with white, crissum slate-gray, under tail-coverts white with blackish terminal spots and traces of rufous; sides and flanks similar to under and median wing-coverts; tibiae feathered to within one inch of heel, outer sides similar in color to the sides but more or less washed with bright cinnamon-rufous, inner sides cinnamon-rufous; tarsi black.

Measurements.—Wing, 17.50; tarsus, 5.38; middle toe and claw, 4.10; exposed culmen, 5.90; depth of bill at angle, .76 in.

An adult male collected by Mr. John Fannin, at Sooke Lake, near Victoria, B. C., March 26, 1900, while evidently referable to the form above described, shows an approach to *herodias* in its somewhat lighter coloration and indicates the intergradation of *fannini* with *herodias* at a point further south.

REMARKS ON THE STATUS AND RANGE OF

Ardea wardi.

The comparison of material incident to the foregoing description of *Ardea herodias fannini* gives occasion to formulate and present the opinion, long entertained, of the impropriety of according specific rank to the resident Great Blue Heron of Florida, and of the necessity of extending the range of this bird

¹ Cf., throughout, Ridgway's 'Nomenclature of Colors.'

to, at least, Corpus Christi, Texas. The Florida bird, to which the name *wardi* is applied, is to be distinguished from northern specimens of *herodias* by its generally lighter colors, larger size, longer tarsus, thicker and longer bill. There is nothing in its characters to indicate specific distinctness and, indeed, they are subject to sufficient variation to make it difficult to separate some Florida specimens from those from other parts of the United States. (See in this connection, Scott, Auk, Vol. VI, 1889, p. 17.) Corpus Christi examples, for instance, in the collection of the late George B. Sennett, are practically identical with the *A. wardi* of Florida, and are so labelled by Mr. Sennett.

Nine adults collected by Dr. E. A. Mearns, at Fort Verde, exhibit an evident approach to *wardi* in their lighter color, but agree with *herodias* in size, as the appended table of measurements of adult specimens shows. In short, there seems to be no reason for believing that Ward's Heron is anything more than a southern representative of *Ardea herodias*, with which it intergrades, and that consequently it should be known as *Ardea herodias wardi* (Ridgw.). In proposing to extend the range of this form to the coast of Texas, I am well aware that specimens from further south—the coast of northern South America, for instance—have been referred to *Ardea herodias*. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the facts in the case shown by specimens, leaving the exact status of the Great Blue Heron of the American tropics to be determined later.

