

Janet Greer,

On May 22, 1974, standing at the end of a finger of land which stretched into a small lake along I-29S near Pacific Junction, Iowa, was a small white heron. In the noon light of a sunny day, the plumage was an immaculate white. The legs of the bird which could be seen above the water were jet black. The bill also was black and much more slender and needle-like than in any heron I had heretofore observed. The base of the bill had a yellow appearance. I could not observe the color of the iris.

Presently, the bird moved from the water and joined a group of five mallards resting on a somewhat larger neck of land. The feathers of the back did not droop exceedingly from the body of the bird, but viewed from behind, the body appeared to be fringed with long soft feathers which flowed against the sides of the body or wafted away from the body as the breeze dictated.

As the bird was standing on the lake side of the land, I attempted to get the bird to move in order to observe the color of the feet. The bird was extremely alert and reacted to noises from my car without getting unduly alarmed. As I drew closer to the bird, the mallards were alerted and rose to mill about the heron. They were half as high, or slightly more than half as high, as the bird being observed. When the mallards took flight, the bird rose silently with them and yellow on the feet was evident.

Circling the lake, it presented a peculiar characteristic in putting its head rather solidly back on its shoulders as it flew. It alighted briefly at the south end of the lake but before really settling took off again, fling over the interstate toward the bluffs.

The over all appearance of the bird was delicate.

Janet Greer