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Green-backed Herons Feeding on Decaying Acorns

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All of the nesting sites we found were artificial, having been created by the deposition of dredge spoil. Management of these species would require the annual discovery and protection of their chosen sites. This effort would be made especially difficult by the transient nature of most of the construction sites used by Least Terns. It is feasible, however, for suitable sites to be constructed and maintained on the several parks and wildlife refuges in the area. It is likely that the terns would use these sites, thereby assuring the continued nesting of these terns on the Florida Keys.

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Green-backed Herons feeding on decaying acorns.—In March and April 1972 I daily visited Lake Sylvan, Winter Park, Orlando, Orange County, Florida. Sometimes one or two Green-backed Herons (*Butorides striatus*) used the horizontal boughs of live oaks (*Quercus virginianus*) near the lake to roost during the day, for an hour or more on occasions. However, they would individually fly down to feed, during which I noticed they sporadically fed on the decaying and fairly soft acorns that had fallen from the oak trees. When a Green-backed Heron found some of these among the short grass they were taken to the water's edge and forcefully softened and broken open with bill-jabbing movements. Pieces were then swallowed. Those found in shallow water were also taken to the shore line and summarily dealt with as described. On a single occasion a Green-backed Heron was seen to pick over decomposed remains of a piece of grapefruit, some which was eaten.

Neither Palmer (1962, *Handbook of North American birds*, Vol. 1. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press) nor Hancock and Kushlan (1984, *The herons handbook*. New York: Harper & Row) include the type of food I have mentioned in the diet of the Green-backed Heron.—**Bernard King** Gull Cry 9 Park Road, Newlyn, Penzance. TR18 5DZ, Cornwall, England.