

Pig's Eye Heron Colony
Summary of 1982 Nesting Survey

A survey of the Pig's Eye Heron Colony was conducted by MDNR personnel during the 1982 summer field season. The purpose of the survey was two-fold:

1. To tag each nest tree in the colony with a numbered aluminum tag. Tagging each tree will aid us in conducting a more complete and efficient survey in the future. We will be able to track the history of each nest tree - i.e. the no. of nests per species and, when possible, the success of each nest per tree.
2. To inventory the colony and determine total occupancy for 1982. Unfortunately some delays were encountered and we were unable to conduct the census until late in the nesting season (the first week of July). By the time of our visit it appeared that many of the Black-crowned night herons had already fledged. Great blue herons and great egrets still had young birds on the nest, however.

Two full days were spent on the island, July 1 and July 8. A total of 475 trees were tagged and a total of 907 nests were counted. The breakdown by species is as follows:

Great blue heron	60
Great egret	135
Black-crowned night heron	90
Double-crested Cormorant	4
Unknown	618
Total	<u>907</u>

We were unable to identify the large majority of nests. Because of the late date a large proportion of the nests were empty. I don't believe, however, that all nests were occupied during the 1982 breeding season. Many were either in poor condition or showed little sign of recent activity (e.g. downy feathers and/or conspicuous droppings on the tree or ground underneath). One entire section of the colony, on the northern end of the peninsula, appeared as though it had not been utilized that season. Most of the nests appeared to be those of black-crowned night herons. It would be impossible, however, to estimate what percent were occupied.