

or draped over the top, with wings half raised or hanging as if drying in the sun. I suspect that the cormorant is deficient in oily matter with which to anoint its feathers for it does not seem to be as perfectly adapted to aquatic conditions as most other water birds. Like its near relative, the Anhinga, which has a similar habit, it seems to find it necessary to dry its plumage after prolonged submersion. At such times it is a most awkward and ungainly sight, sitting with relaxed wings and body, limp and flaccid as a garment hung on a bush to dry.

The cormorants lay from 3 to 4 eggs, but there is a great mortality in the early stages of the nestlings. The eggs hatch one by one at considerable intervals of time and the eldest is a large strapping youngster before the youngest is out of the shell and, in fact, would hardly be supposed to belong to the same brood. It is large and strong and both requires and is able to take much more than its proper proportion of the food delivered; hence the disparity of size tends to increase rather than diminish as the brood develops. This undue development of one at the expense of the others was perfectly obvious in all the nests observed. The larger nestlings bully and badger their weaker brothers and sisters unmercifully, picking and worrying them continually. This probably helps to explain the fact that, as the chicks increase in age, there are invariably fewer in the nest until, in the latest stages observed, we did not see a nest that contained more than one bird. As a certain percentage of birds lose their entire brood in one way or another, I do not think that, on an average, a pair raises to adolescence more than one nestling each season. The fact, that, in spite of their slow rate of reproduction, the species is apparently increasing, points to the cormorant being a remarkably hardy bird, well adapted to its conditions, probably of long life, and without dangerous enemies. Throughout the day cormorants can be seen passing in and out of the basin, but in the afternoon about three or four o'clock the decided movement is outward to the rookeries and in-down the inner waters are deserted.

On July        posted myself in the little pavilion opposite the Baker house, overlooking the narrow strait separating the basin from the outer bay, and counted the cormorants passing.