

PINTLALA GREAT BLUE HERON (*ARDEA HERODIAS*) COLONY DECLINE

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For several years Robert Mount and James Dobie told me about a Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) colony, located in a single tree on the eastern side of Interstate-65, south of the Pintlala Exit, Montgomery Co., Alabama. I finally located it on 25 March 1985, about 1 km south of Hooper Academy. The colony was in a single, dead osage orange tree (*Maclura pomifera*) situated in a small pond, about 25 m in diameter. There were 10 nests in the tree, when I first saw it. In subsequent years, it has varied from 10 to 18 nests (Table 1). On 12 June 1997, only four nests were present with only one occupied by a single, large, nestling.

From all appearances this may be the last year this colony site is used. The tree appears as sturdy as it was when we initially saw it, so that the colony site has not changed. The owner has not previously objected to the nesting birds and he still uses the field to pasture cattle. There are numerous fish ponds around Montgomery, where the herons can feed. With the increase of aquiculture in recent years, there has also been the desire among many land owners to prevent heron depredation by shooting them since federal depredation permits are now easier to acquire. It is, in my opinion, the most logical reason for the decrease in nesting Great Blue Herons at this colony site. **Julian L. Dusi**, Department of Zoology & Wildlife Science, Auburn University, Alabama 36849.

Table 1.

## NUMBERS OF NESTS AT THE PINTLALA COLONY SITE 1985-1997

DATES	NEST NUMBERS
03-25-85	10
04-27-86	18
03-20-87	15
07-05-88	15
04-21-89	15
04-27-90	14
08-14-94	17
03-18-95	15
06-04-96	14
06-12-97	4