Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

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Stora Enso and
Plum Creek.
For more information, contact
Eunice.Padley@dnr.state.wi.us
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WISCONSIN
DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Yellow-crowned Night-heron

(Nyctanassa violacea)

Federal Status: Not Listed
State Status: Threatened

Description: This medium-sized (22 to 28 inches long) heron weighs $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds. It has a glossy black head with a white crown and cheek patch. The neck and body are bluish-gray. The legs are yellowish-green, turning coral pink to scarlet during courtship.

Habitat: Yellow-crowned night-herons are a rare summer resident and typically may occupy a small portion of a southern floodplain forest during the breeding season. They may return to the same nesting site for 20 years or more. Their

nests are constructed 25 to 45 feet above the ground, or over the water. A variety of different-aged trees and shrubs are used for nesting, depending on the landscape configuration and proximity to water. Nests in mature trees are placed away from the trunk on the outermost fork of a limb and, if the canopy is closed, on the lowest horizontal limb. Nests consist of sticks and twigs, lined with grasses or leaves and reeds. This heron usually breeds during May through July in small colonies or as scattered pairs in forested habitats with an open understory, near water. They depend on aquatic animals for food. When foraging during the nesting season, these birds prefer long, narrow marshes with extensive edge.

Forestry Considerations: In general, no disturbance such as tree harvest should occur during the nesting season within 450 feet of an active nest. Where this heron has been found, single-tree selection should be favored within 300 feet of a stream or river. Employ *Wisconsin's Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality*, including the provision for buffers along riparian corridors.