

## Project Highlight – SD State Wildlife Grant

**Project Type** Species inventory

**Title** Nesting success of tree-nesting waterbirds in colonies on selected wetlands in northeast South Dakota

**In a nutshell** This study focused on a particular subset of colonial nesting waterbirds, tree-nesting species such as herons, night-herons, and egrets. Specific objectives were to determine nesting success and habitat requirements in certain nesting colonies in northeastern South Dakota.

**Relevant Habitats** forest habitats capable of supporting nesting colonial waterbirds

**Cooperators** South Dakota State University (Dr. Charles Dieter; graduate student Nathan Baker) and Dakota State University (Dr. Kristel Bakker)

### **Purpose**

- Determine the nestling success of tree-nesting waterbirds breeding in colonies on selected wetlands in northeast South Dakota as suggested in the South Dakota Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and the South Dakota All-Bird Conservation Plan.
- Identify important aspects of habitat required for colonial tree-nesting waterbirds on wetlands of northeast South Dakota to create management recommendations.

**Timeframe** 2008 - 2010

**Location** northeastern South Dakota

### **Summary or Important Findings**

- More than 1,000 nests monitored in 2008 and 2009, documenting nesting success for black-crowned night-heron, great blue heron, cattle egret, great egret, snowy egret, and double-crested cormorant. Nest failure was most commonly due to nest abandonment.
- Research found island colonies to be most common site for the black-crowned night-heron and cattle, great and snowy egrets.
- Relatively low reproductive success for black-crowned night-heron and great blue heron and relatively high reproductive success for double-crested cormorants in the study area.

**Best contact person** Nathan Baker, SDGFP

### **More Information**

Baker, N.J. 2010. Nesting success of colonial tree-nesting waterbirds on selected wetlands in northeast South Dakota. M.S. Thesis, South Dakota State University, Brookings.