

THE BREEDING BIOLOGY OF THE INTERMEDIATE EGRET PART 2: PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR AND NESTING INVESTMENT BY THE MALE AND FEMALE

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Data are from four nests observed prior to incubation and a different two from incubation through chick independence. The breeding male Intermediate Egret is estimated to spend 22 per cent more time at the nest than the female, due to him spending twice as long there during pre-incubation, on average. The sexes made the same number of feeding visits, but the two males regurgitated 15.2 and 8.0 per cent more food boluses than their females. The male's high level of pre-incubation nest attendance, while sometimes less than 100 per cent, is seen as a necessary defence against cuckoldry and nest stick theft. The single chick was brooded and guarded longer than the brood of two. At both nests feeding sessions became significantly shorter after the chicks converted fully to direct feeding.