SANTA CLARA VALLEY
This subregion includes the lower drainages of the Santa Clara Valley. Herons and egrets nesting in this area are far enough from San Francisco Bay that they probably forage for food within the Santa Clara Valley. The upper areas of the watershed and the surrounding hills were not surveyed for heronries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site #</th>
<th>Colony Site</th>
<th>Great Blue Heron</th>
<th>Great Egret</th>
<th>Snowy Egret</th>
<th>Black-crowned Night-Heron</th>
<th>Cattle Egret</th>
<th>County</th>
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<td>Santa Clara</td>
<td>Active</td>
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</table>
Heron and Egret Nesting Colonies in Santa Clara Valley*
1991-2005

- Colony site
- Study area boundary
- Town
- Major highway
- Stream
- County boundary

*Colony sites outside of this sub-region are not shown.
Almaden Lake

This site is on an island in Almaden Lake Park, in south San Jose. The park is surrounded by residential and commercial development and a golf course. Herons and egrets nest in giant reed that the City of San Jose plans to replace with native species. The city also plans to move the marina closer to the island.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: from boat or shore
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.2397 / W 121.8699

Nest survivorship (± SE)  x = no data.

Peak nestling count (colony total)  x = no data.

Peak number of active nests  x = no data.
**Almaden Lake (continued)**

**Colony site description**
Topography: island
Length x width: 50 m x 10 m
Nest substrate: giant reed (*Arundo donax*)
Average nest height: 2.5 m
Trees (dbh): none
Maximum tree canopy height: no canopy
Vegetation cover: not measured

**Evidence of disturbance**
Human activity (swimmers): potential source\(^a\)

\(^a\)Possible disturbance suggested by published accounts (see references in Methods).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Distance from colony site (m)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>0-</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>High density housing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected natural area</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports field</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Coyote Parkway Lakes

Coyote Creek Parkway and the adjacent Hellyer and Metcalf County Parks together form a 205-acre urban Santa Clara County park, 1 km south of the City of San Jose. Great Blue Herons nest in cottonwood and sycamore trees about 30 m from Highway 101 on Coyote Creek, downstream of the dam at Parkway Lakes and about 20 km south of San Francisco Bay.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: trail along Coyote Creek
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.2351 / W 121.7599

Colony site description
Topography: flood plain
Length x width: not measured
Nest substrate: Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)
Average nest height: not measured
Trees (dbh): not measured
Maximum tree canopy height: not measured
Vegetation cover: not measured

Evidence of disturbance
None recorded.

Land use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from colony site (m)</th>
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<th>100-</th>
<th>200-</th>
<th>500-</th>
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</thead>
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<td>1000</td>
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<td>High density housing</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected natural area</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Grant Lake

This Great Blue Heron colony site is about 8 km east of the City of San Jose in Joseph D. Grant County Park, along Mount Hamilton Road, 200 m north of the main entrance to the park. The nesting trees are 270 m west of Grant Lake, the closest wetland.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: trail
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.3425 / W 121.7226

Colony site description
Topography: hillside
Length x width: 33 m x 12 m
Nest substrate: Eucalyptus sp.
Average nest height: 33 m
Trees (dbh): 56 (3-10 cm), 23 (10-50 cm), 24 (50-100cm)
Maximum tree canopy height: 46 m
Vegetation cover: tree 70%, shrub 50%, ground 20%

Evidence of disturbance
None recorded.

Land use

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Grazing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected natural area</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nest survivorship (± SE)

Peak nestling count (colony total)

Peak number of active nests
Lake Cunningham

The nesting colony is on an island in the 50-acre lake at the 202-acre city park. The area, once a dairy farm, was converted into a water-oriented recreation facility in the 1980s. The park, which includes a water slide theme park, is within the City of San Jose, 18 km southeast of San Francisco Bay.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: trail in park
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.3346 / W 121.8062

Nest survivorship (± SE)

Peak nestling count (colony total)

Peak number of active nests

(continued)
Lake Cunningham (continued)

Colony site description
Topography: island
Length x width: not measured
Nest substrate: not measured
Average nest height: not measured
Trees (dbh): not measured
Maximum tree canopy height: not measured
Vegetation cover: not measured

Evidence of disturbance
Human activity (boaters in the lake): potential source*

*Possible disturbance suggested by published accounts
(see references in Methods).

Land use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Distance from colony site (m)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>High density housing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected natural area</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Llagas Creek, Morgan Hill

This colony site is in the city of Morgan Hill, about 3 km northwest of San Martin. The nesting tree is a large eucalyptus near the intersection of Watsonville Road and Santa Theresa Avenue, adjacent to a residential development. The only water in the immediate vicinity is the small Llagas Creek, but the heronry is within 6-10 km of four reservoirs.

Ownership: private
Public observation areas: none
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.0911 / W 121.6439

Colony site description
Topography: flood plain
Length x width: 26 m x 25 m
Nest substrate: *Eucalyptus* sp.
Average nest height: 45 m
Trees (dbh): 1 (>150 cm)
Maximum tree canopy height: >50 m
Vegetation cover: tree 80%, shrub 0%, ground 0%

Evidence of disturbance
Human activity (construction): potential source

Evidence of disturbance (construction): potential source

Land use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Distance from colony site (m)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orchard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vineyard</td>
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</table>

*Possible disturbance suggested by published accounts (see references in Methods).*
San Felipe Lake

This natural lake, 5 km southeast of Gilroy and 70 km southeast of San Francisco Bay, is also known as Soap Lake or Bolsa de San Felipe. The lake is surrounded by privately owned pasture and agricultural fields, and access is limited to public roads. The area has been designated as one of three Important Bird Areas in Santa Clara County.

Ownership: private
Public observation areas: none
Latitude / Longitude: N 36.9816 / W 121.4602

Nest survivorship (± SE)  x = no data.

Peak nestling count (colony total)  x = no data.

Peak number of active nests  x = no data.

Colony site description
Topography: wetland
Length x width: not measured
Nest substrate: willow (Salix sp.)
Average nest height: not measured
Trees (dbh): not measured
Maximum tree canopy height: not measured
Vegetation cover: not measured

Evidence of disturbance
Rising water levels: colony site abandonment

Land use Distance from colony site (m)
0- 100- 200- 500-
Land Use  100 200 500 1000
Farming  X X X X
Vasona County Park

This heronry is in a grove of eucalyptus in Vasona Park, a Santa Clara County park in Los Gatos, near Los Gatos Creek. Great Blue Herons nest directly above a heavily used parking lot and trail, adjacent to a children’s playground.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: Vasona Park
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.2390 / W 121.9716

Colony site description
Topography: flood plain
Length x width: 45 m x 30 m
Nest substrate: Eucalyptus sp.
Average nest height: 30 m
Trees (dbh): 2 (3-50 cm), 3 (50-100 cm), 7 (50-100 cm), 1 (>150 cm)
Maximum tree canopy height: 48 m
Vegetation cover: tree 69%, shrub 0%, ground 0%

Evidence of disturbance
Human activity (automobile and pedestrian traffic): potential sourcea

a Possible disturbance suggested by published accounts (see references in Methods).

Land use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Distance from colony site (m)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>High density housing</td>
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<td>Protected natural area</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports field</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nest survivorship (± SE)

Peak nestling count (colony total)

Peak number of active nests
Vasona Reservoir

This colony site consists of a patch of giant reed and low dense trees on an island in Vasona Park in Los Gatos. Great Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night-Herons and Snowy Egrets nest on the island. Great Egrets have been seen in the vicinity, but nesting by this species has not been confirmed.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: Vasona Park
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.2452 / W 121.9683
Vasona Reservoir (continued)

**Colony site description**
Topography: island
Length x width: not measured
Nest substrate: giant reed (*Arundo donax*)
Average nest height: not measured
Trees (dbh): not measured
Maximum tree canopy height: 20 m
Vegetation cover: not measured

**Evidence of disturbance**
Decreased water levels in lake: colony site abandonment
American Crow: potential source

*Possible disturbance suggested by published accounts (see references in Methods).*

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<td>Protected natural area</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports field</td>
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</table>
Colony Sites with Limited Activity

Anderson Reservoir

Located in the foothills northeast of Morgan Hill, the Anderson Reservoir was built in 1950 and is the largest human-made lake in Santa Clara County.

Ownership:  public
Public observation areas: Anderson Reservoir Park
Latitude / Longitude:  N 37.1530 / W 121.5812

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Years known to be active (number of active nests)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Great Blue Heron</td>
<td>1997 (1)</td>
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Calaveras Reservoir

Great Blue Herons nested in a eucalyptus tree near the Calaveras Reservoir, in the Sunol/Ohlone Regional Wilderness. The San Francisco Water Department owns the surrounding lands and leases the area for cattle ranching. The reservoir is closed to the public.

Ownership:  public
Public observation areas: none
Latitude / Longitude:  N 37.4467 / W 121.8095

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<td>1994 (2)</td>
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Calaveras Reservoir South

See above for description.

Ownership:  public
Public observation areas: none
Latitude / Longitude:  N 37.4548 / W 121.8111

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Great Blue Heron</td>
<td>1996 (3)</td>
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Colony Sites with Limited Activity (continued)

Los Gatos Creek Park

Los Gatos Creek is a relatively intact riparian area with willow and sycamore trees dominating the plant community. Great Blue Herons and Snowy Egrets nested on an island in the northernmost percolation pond adjacent to the creek. In 1999, the non-native vegetation was removed from the island and the herons and egrets no longer nest there.

Ownership: public
Public observation areas: Los Gatos Creek County Park
Latitude / Longitude: N 37.2679 / W 121.9511

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<td>Snowy Egret</td>
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