



# GET TO KNOW YOUR HERONS AND EGRETS

Audubon Canyon Ranch has been monitoring nesting herons and egrets in the North Bay area since 1991. Each spring, around March, adult herons and egrets find mates to nest and raise their young. Five different species have been observed nesting here: Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Cattle Egrets, and Black-crowned Night–Herons, and Great Blue Herons.

## Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

	Description	Be the Bird	Scan the QR codes to watch the videos of the birds.
	Great Egrets are large birds with white feathers, long black legs, and a yellow beak. The long, delicate feathers that extend beyond the tail, called aigrettes, are raised in a dramatic fan shape in a courtship display intended to attract the attention of a mate.	<p><b>Walk like a hunting a Great Egret.</b></p> <p>Great Egrets wait patiently, standing or slowly walking in shallow water. When prey come near, they quickly snatch them with their strong beak. Move as slowly as you can without moving your head or arms.</p>	

## Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

	Description	Be the Bird	Scan the QR codes to watch the videos of the birds.
	Snowy Egrets are all-white and much smaller than Great Egrets. They have black beaks, black legs, and bright yellow feet.	<p><b>Shuffle like a hunting Snowy Egret.</b></p> <p>Snowy egrets chase down their prey and shuffle their feet while they hunt. Watch how they shuffle in the video then imitate their moves.</p>	

## Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)



### Description

Cattle Egrets are about the same size as snowy Egrets. They are all white with thick, orangish-yellow bills. During nesting season they have golden feathers on their heads, chests, and backs and yellow legs.

### Be the Bird

#### **Strut like a Cattle Egret.**

Cattle Egrets stand up tall and have a funny strutting walk.

Scan the QR codes to watch the videos of the birds.



## Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)



### Description

Black-crowned Night-Heron adults are black and grey above and white below. Their eyes are red. Young birds look very different from the adults; they are brown and streaky.

### Be the Bird

#### **Crouch like a Black-crowned Night-Heron.**

Night-Herons often crouch, a posture that makes them look as if they have no neck.



## Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)



### Description

Great Blue Herons are the largest herons in North America, as tall as a kindergartener! They have mostly blue-grey feathers and a black stripe along the side of the head. The top of their head is white. Their beaks are yellow and their legs are greenish-brown.

### Be the Bird

#### **Gobble like a Great Blue Heron**

They eat prey of different types and sizes. Watch how the heron tosses and catches a large catfish to move it into a good position for swallowing. See if you can imitate this juggling act!



### **Be a good bird neighbor**

Nesting is a sensitive time for the birds. If the adults are scared off their nests, then the chicks or eggs could be in danger of being eaten by predators. When visiting the nesting birds, avoid scaring them by speaking softly, moving slowly, and giving them lots of space.