

ASAC



Egrets

Animal Shelter Advisory Committee Meeting

July 17, 2025

Photos from last year



Community Outreach



In the Summer of 2024, an egret rookery was established in the Shady Oaks neighborhood. Since egrets are federally protected once nesting begins, neither the city nor the residents could remove them. The large number of birds in the rookery caused significant disruption, including excessive noise, unpleasant odors, and damage to trees and grass.

Animal Control Officers have been patrolling for Egrets every morning and evening and also investigating any sightings beginning in March and ending in June. Total for both was 204 calls.



February 2025
Community Information

Prevention of Migratory Birds in 2025



The Cattle Egret

Is a stocky heron with a wingspan of 35" to 38" approx. 18" to 22" in height and weighs 9.5 to 18.7 oz.

Mainly white plumage, a yellow bill and long grayish yellow legs.

The EGRET feed mostly on insects, especially grasshoppers, crickets, flies, moths and spiders. They will eat frogs, lizards and earthworms.

City of Burleson
Animal Services

817-426-9283

animalshel@burlesontx.com

Migratory Birds (Egrets/Herons)

Texas is a major route for migratory birds shuttling between the United States and Canada. This annual event can impact residential, commercial and industrial properties. As you may know, your neighborhood and surrounding area has been affected by nesting egrets and herons. Initially only a few birds arrived during the early spring (March and April) of this year and abruptly hundreds of birds moved in and began establishing nests for nesting season.

Although this natural cycle can be beautiful, the challenges associated can be overwhelming. The nesting birds bring challenges such as noise, odor and significant amounts of excrement covering streets, sidewalks, cars and mailboxes on public and private property.

City staff is unable to address any of these issues while the birds are nesting. Cattle egrets are Protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which means that these birds or their young (including eggs), or their current **active nests** cannot be killed or destroyed. Violators are subject to hefty fines and/or penalties.



It is in everyone's best interest to try and stop the problem before it starts this spring. The city needs the help of residents to address this situation.

NOISE ↔ LIGHT ↔ WATER

Frequent Loud noise will keep the EGRET in flight and eventually move on. AIR HORNS are commercially available at Wal-Mart, Sam's and auto supply shops. Wood spoon, Pots / Pans Drums, trumpet, etc. will do as well. Make sure your neighbor(s) have been consulted.

Laser light, high power spot light, red lenses, strobe light, red flashing light will also keep them from wanting to nest on your property. These are also available commercially and are relatively inexpensive.

High pressure water works well in preventing new (non active) nests from being formed. EGRETS don't like the water spray and will keep from landing and roosting.

OVER →

Preventing Migratory Bird Nesting Homeowner Checklist

February-March

- Remove any old, abandoned nests.
- Trim your trees. Remove deadwood, thin tree canopy to allow sunlight between limbs/trees.
- Familiarize yourself with "sentry" birds. They are the first to arrive, looking for good nesting places.
- Find out how your neighborhood plans to distribute news of bird sightings.
- Watch for "sentry" birds and report sightings to your neighbors.
- Each species has a different breeding period. Be on the lookout for these birds beginning in:

February - Yellow-Crowned Night Heron

March - Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret

- Check daily for birds and nesting material in your trees.
- Begin scare tactics as soon as you see birds on or near your property.
 - Use noisemakers, water spray or shine lights at night.
 - Hang "scare eye" balloons or other moving objects in trees.
 - Use long poles, tennis balls or water hoses to disturb early nesting material.
- The City has two migratory bird deterrent sound systems that can be strategically placed in areas to discourage Egrets from settling in neighborhoods.
- The City's Animal Service Department will be on high patrol during the start of the nesting period and can deploy preventive noise making devices.



- **DO NOT HARM BIRDS OR EGGS.** Migratory birds are protected by international treaty. Once birds begin sitting on nests, eggs are probably present. You cannot kill, harass, move or disturb the birds during nesting season.

If you have dead birds on your property, you can call Animal Services at 817-426-9283 for pick-up.



Cattle Egret



Yellow-Crowned
Night Heron



Snowy Egret



Great Blue Heron

Deterrent kits



TIPS ON INSTALLING & USING BIRD DETERRENTS

SCARE EYE BALLOON



Placement:
Install the Scare Eye Balloon above trees, ensuring the Mylar tail hangs approximately 12 inches above the tree and remains highly visible to birds.

Coverage:
Use one Scare Eye Balloon per tree. Hang balloons near and around the problem area or in the flight path of the birds for maximum effectiveness.

Combination Deterrents:
Visual bird deterrents work best when paired with additional audio or visual deterrents.

Movement is key:
Ensure the Scare Eye Balloon can move freely in the wind, as its motion enhances its effectiveness.

JET NOZZLE FOR HOSE



Spray pesky birds with water from your garden hose. Even water birds don't enjoy being hit with a steady stream of water, so try blasting unwanted guests with your garden hose. Note,

however, that they should be sprayed right when they arrive on your property. If they have time to establish a roost, a slight shower won't deter them from visiting their nests. Remember, this method cannot be used once the birds have begun nesting.

BIRD SCARE RIBBON



Placement:
Hang the streamers around the perimeter of the area you want to protect, like gardens, balconies, fruit trees, or pool decks.

Height variation:
Hang streamers at different heights to maximize their movement and visual impact.

Spacing:
Space the streamers evenly apart to cover the entire area effectively.

Movement is key:
Ensure the streamers can flutter freely in the wind, as the movement is what deters birds.

Secure attachment:
Use sturdy clips or ties to secure the streamers to branches, railings, or other structures.

TIPS ON INSTALLING & USING BIRD DETERRENTS



AIR HORN

Use it at the right time
Use the air horn when birds are most active, such as when they are returning to their roosting spot.

Use it sparingly
Avoid using the air horn too often, as this can cause noise pollution and make animals desensitized to the sound.

Direct the sound
Point the air horn towards the ground or away from people to minimize disturbance.

Use it with visual devices
Combine the air horn with visual devices, such as scarecrows or fake owls, to make the strategy more effective.

Use it in conjunction with other sounds
Use high-quality recordings of alarm and distress calls at a volume that birds are used to hearing.

It can take several days to move birds using sonic devices. Leaving the noise devices on constantly can make birds realize that the noise is not a threat to them.

Note: City's Code of Ordinances; Chapter 34 Environment, Article V Noise Section 34-191 Noise

Method of noise measurement.
Noise measurement shall be a minimum of 30 seconds in duration. Decibel levels are measured from the complainant's property line. For residential districts adjacent to other districts (excluding industrial zoning districts), the residential decibel levels apply when measured from a residential complainant's property line. Violations will be determined based on the highest registered reading in the measurement. All measurement levels will be inclusive of any ambient noise that exists at the time of the measurement.

We suggest you speak to your neighbors and inform them that you are planning to utilize the air horn to deter the birds from your property, and encourage them to seek deterrent measures as well.



Question and Comments ?