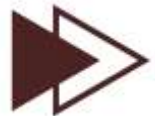




Egret Education & Outreach

Presented to Parks Board on March 20, 2025

Outline



Background: Egret Rookeries in Burleson and Issues associated with them



Protected Status & Challenges associated with mitigating egrets



Burleson Egret Deterrent Program



City Education & Outreach

Background

An egret rookery (colony of nests where dozens, sometimes hundreds, of egrets congregate) was established in May 2024 in the Shady Oaks area.

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2024: Shady Oaks

2017: Redhaw Court/Clinton Street

2018: SW Brushy Mound (Brown's Mountain)

The egrets posed a variety of **negative impacts and concerns** on the residential neighborhood during their nesting period.



Noise



Mess



Property Damage



Health Concerns



Protected Status

Egrets are **protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)**, making it illegal to harm or harass them once they are nesting. Therefore, early action and deterrence are crucial.



Challenges

No Interference Allowed: Once egrets lay eggs, they cannot be moved or disturbed due to the MBTA's strict regulations.

Colonial Behavior: Egrets are highly social during nesting and will often return to the same site year after year, bringing more birds with them each time. If a colony forms, the problem tends to get worse over time, making future deterrence more difficult.



Mitigating Best Practices

Mitigating Best Practices

Recommended deterrent measures from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

Note: Using a multiple harassment techniques is more effective at deterring birds than using a single method.



Landscaping

Herons and egrets need trees of substantial size to support their nests. Pruning and/or removing trees during the non-breeding season to eliminate perches and nest sites can reduce the amount of habitat available to waterbird colonies. If the birds return the following year, continue to prune perches and nest sites **before** the first egg is laid. All deterrent measures must stop once the first egg is laid.



Exclusion

Aside from completely removing all nesting substrate, installing exclusion netting over roost and nest trees is the most effective deterrent method for herons and egrets. Installing 1 – 2 inch mesh netting over some trees while also implementing other deterrent measures can minimize costs and still reduce the number of nests that are established. Be sure to use strong mesh to survive weather conditions. Do not use loosely hung, small mesh netting such as mist netting, as it can cause bird loss and draw public and regulatory attention.

Mitigating Best Practices

Recommended deterrent measures from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

Note: Using a multiple harassment techniques is more effective at deterring birds than using a single method.



Lasers

Wildlife Services' research has found that low power, long-wavelength lasers (red beam) can be an effective bird deterrent method and aid in dispersing flocks of birds under low-light conditions (i.e., between sunset and sunrise). Green lasers have also been found to effectively deter herons and egrets away from sensitive locations. Lasers can be aimed at objects near the birds, such as shrubs or sidewalks, in order to reflect the light and affect bird behavior. Lasers must be used with extreme caution and should not be aimed directly at birds or up at the sky. We recommend using an experienced professional for safe and successful bird dispersal with lasers. During the non-breeding season, harassment with lasers should continue until the birds fly.

Mitigating Best Practices

Recommended deterrent measures from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

Note: Using a multiple harassment techniques is more effective at deterring birds than using a single method.



Noise making devices

- **Clappers**
Multiple, rapid claps can be more effective at flushing perched birds than a single clap. Must be used aggressively and continuously.
- **Loud air horns**
Horns powered by an air compressor are very loud and are extremely effective.
- **Airsoft pellets**
Airsoft pellets shot through foliage in the trees where herons and egrets are roosting can be very effective. The sound of pellets zipping through foliage often flushes birds that are unresponsive to other hazing methods. Be very careful to avoid hitting any birds with airsoft pellets since they can cause minor injuries. Biodegradable pellets are recommended to avoid polluting the environment. Again, continuous use is the key to success.

Mitigating Best Practices

Recommended deterrent measures from U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services

Note: Using a multiple harassment techniques is more effective at deterring birds than using a single method.



Noise making devices

- **Electronic devices that play bird alarm calls**
Such as Bird Gard[®], can repel herons and egrets away, but they may be disruptive to nearby businesses and residents.
- **Propane cannons**
Propane cannons under roost trees can also be effective. However, herons and egrets can become accustomed to them and may not respond if they are used too often.



Physical methods

Another method that may be considered is hitting the birds with a stream of water from a garden hose. This may pose a nuisance to the birds without injuring them. **Whatever combination of deterrent methods are used, they must be used continuously and aggressively. Implementing deterrents for only an hour each day has a limited chance of success.**

Roosting Vs Nesting



Roosting

- Standing on or around nest



Nesting

- Sitting on nest
- Pink breeding spots

Burleson Egret Deterrent Program

Deterrent Program

- City Council approved \$30,000 to be utilized for an egret deterrent program. The program consists of:
 - **Go-Kits** (scary eye balloon, air horn, jet nozzle for hose, bird scare ribbon, information on how to correctly use the contents and information on the city's noise ordinance)
 - **Gas Cannon, projector lasers** for city use
 - **Outreach campaigns** – yard signs
 - **Overtime** for animal services staff



Education & Outreach

Multifaceted campaign

- **Social Media**
Facebook, Instagram, X, NextDoor
- **Enewsletters**
- **News Release**
- **Dedicated webpage** (www.burlesontx.com/egrets)
- **Yard Signs**
- **Everbridge Text Messages and Phone Calls**
- **Town Hall Meeting**
- **City Staff Education**
- **Flyers on homes affected by past rookeries**
- **BTX 311 Reporting Tool**

THE CITY OF
BURLESON
TEXAS

STAY CONNECTED FOR EGRET INFO



ALL THE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH THE CITY



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Sign up at www.burlesontx.com/alert

WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER
Sign up at www.burlesontx.com/enewsletter

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: [/BURLESONTX](https://www.facebook.com/BURLESONTX)
[/BURLESONANIMALSHELTER](https://www.facebook.com/BURLESONANIMALSHELTER)

Instagram: [@CITYOFBURLESON](https://www.instagram.com/CITYOFBURLESON)
[@BURLESONANIMALSHELTER](https://www.instagram.com/BURLESONANIMALSHELTER)

Nextdoor

BTX 311 CALL. CLICK. CONNECT.

REPORT EGRET SIGHTINGS

www.burlesontx.com/311
817-426-9600
Download the BTX 311 App

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO DETER EGRETS:
WWW.BURLESONTX.COM/EGRETS

Social Media

City of Burleson, Texas Government
 Published by DeAnna Phillips
 - October 2, 2024

This summer, the Shady Oaks neighborhood dealt with an egret rookery, and these federally protected birds can wreak havoc on communities with their noise and odor. With fall here and winter approaching, now is the time to prepare your property to prevent future rookeries next spring. Remove any old or abandoned nests, trim back tree branches, and clear away deadwood. Thinning tree canopies allows more sunlight in, making your property less attractive to nesting egrets. Don't ... [See more](#)



City of Burleson, Texas Government
 Published by DeAnna Phillips
 - November 20, 2024

?? Why should you prevent egrets from nesting in your neighborhood?

Egret rookeries can bring hundreds of birds, creating significant nuisances from their smell, noise, and waste. They often damage trees by killing branches and harming the surrounding grass. Once they nest, the birds remain in the area for several months, making the disruption long-lasting. Taking steps to deter nesting early can help protect your neighborhood's environment and quality of life.

Now is the p... [See more](#)



City of Burleson, Texas Government
 Published by DeAnna Phillips
 January 11

We're approaching the time when egret scouting birds begin searching for nesting spots. Don't let your neighborhood become their destination!

- 1. Set up deterrents now.
- 2. Collaborate with neighbors to share egret sightings.
- 3. Report sightings to STX 311 at www.burlesontx.com/311.
- 4. Learn to identify egrets and find more tips at www.burlesontx.com/egrets

EGRET ROOKERY PREVENTION

JANUARY

- ✓ FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH MIGRATORY BIRDS
- ✓ FIND OUT HOW YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRIBUTES NEWS OF BIRD SIGHTINGS

BURLESON TEXAS

Enewsletter & Yard Signs

First Egret Sighting of the Season

The city has recorded its first egret sighting of the season. A resident submitted a BTX 311 ticket reporting six egrets near Fire Station 3 on Lakewood Drive.

Animal Services inspected the area and observed only doves and hawks at this time. However, this serves as an important reminder that egret season is approaching, and we should all stay vigilant.

Egrets can become a significant nuisance if they choose to nest in your area, causing noise, odor, and property damage. Now is the time to put deterrent place to prevent them from settling. Since these birds are federally protected once they begin nesting, they cannot be removed until the nesting season ends—a process that can take up to five months. Take action now to help keep your neighborhood egret-free!

[Learn more about how to prevent egrets from nesting in your trees](#)
[Report egret sightings to BTX 311](#)



Be Prepared for the Upcoming Egret Season

We're approaching the time when egret scouting birds begin searching for nesting spots. Don't let your neighborhood become their destination!

1. Set up deterrents now.
2. Collaborate with neighbors to share egret sightings.
3. Report sightings to [BTX 311](#)
4. [Learn to identify egrets](#) and [find more tips](#)



IF YOU SEE ME.
REPORT ME.



MORE INFO:
[BURLESONTX.COM/311](https://burlesontx.com/311)



Page 2 - Add page title



DON'T LET ME
HANG OUT IN
YOUR YARD OR TREES.
FIND OUT WAYS TO
DETER ME.



SCAN ME

MORE INFO:
[BURLESONTX.COM/EGRETS](https://burlesontx.com/egrets)

Website & Internal Education



Urban Rookery Prevention

Identify Sentry Birds



Sentry birds are the first to arrive looking for good nesting places. Report sightings to [BTX 311](tel:714-501-5183).

Familiarize yourself with the variety of birds found in Texas. Each species has a different breeding period. Be on the lookout for these birds beginning at these times: **February: Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, March: Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret.** See pictures below of birds common to this area with basic descriptions. Nesting season is typically March - October. Pre and post nesting season is typically November - February. **Do not kill, harass, relocate, move or attempt to scare away the birds by any means during nesting season.**



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Egrets

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Microchipping Services

Paw Pals Animal Care Academy

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Home / Departments / Animal Services / Egrets

Egrets

Migratory Birds

Nesting birds, such as herons, egrets and other nesting waterbirds, bring challenges such as noise, odor and significant amounts of excrement that covers streets, sidewalks, cars and mailboxes on public and private property. People may find the birds' chosen nesting areas offensive and a nuisance when birds locate near their homes and businesses. Concerns of possible health hazards, as well as noise and odors are some of the most cited complaints.

However, these birds are protected under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918](#), a U.S. federal law that protects more than 800 species of birds during their migration between the United States and Canada. As a result, the City of The Burleson is unable to address any complaints while the birds are nesting.

Materials from October 9 Neighborhood Meeting

- [Bird Deterrents that can be purchased on Amazon](#)
- [Feb 2024 Egret educational flyer](#)
- [360 Connected For Egret Information](#)
- [Urban Biologist Adam Henry Presentation](#)

Report an Egret Concern

Use this request to report any egret-related nuisance including nesting, droppings, or other concerns. Egrets are federally protected birds, and taking the appropriate steps at the right time of year can help deter them from nesting on your property.

[Submit a Service Request](#)

What can you do before nesting season begins?

- Familiarize yourself with "noisy" birds. They are the first to arrive looking for good nesting places. Report sightings to your neighbors and Burleson Animal Services by calling [311-501-5183](tel:714-501-5183).
- Familiarize yourself with the variety of birds found in Texas. Each species has a different breeding period. Be on the lookout for these birds beginning at these times: **February: Yellow-Crowned Night Heron, March: Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret.** See pictures below of birds common to this area with basic descriptions.
- Nesting season is typically March - October. Pre and post nesting season is typically November - February. **Do not kill, harass, relocate, move or attempt to scare away the birds by any means during nesting season.**

What can you do once birds have arrived?

- Use a combination of scaring devices before migratory birds lay eggs.
- As soon as you see birds on or near your property, begin using scare tactics.
- Use noisemakers, water spray or strobe 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.
- **DO NOT** harm birds or eggs. These 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 when



Great Egret

- Length 37 - 41 inches
- Wingspan 48 - 54 inches
- Frequently noticed in area heronries
- Large white bird
- Bill is thin, long and yellow
- Long slender neck
- Black/gray legs and feet
- Breed March - August



Yellow-Crowned Night Heron

- Length 20 - 24 inches
- Wingspan 40 - 46 inches
- Frequently noticed in area heronries or as "sout" birds
- Light to dark gray body
- Gray bill
- Small section of white feathers on top of head and along eyes
- Long yellow legs
- Breed March - July



Cattle Egret

- Length 18 - 22 inches
- Wingspan 35 - 38 inches
- Yellow to orange bill
- Short, thick neck
- Hunched posture
- Yellowish legs
- Color may change during different times of the year
- Breed late February - October



Snowy Egret

- Length 20 - 27 inches
- Wingspan 41 - 44 inches
- Frequently noticed in area heronries
- Bill is thin, long and black
- Long slender neck
- Black legs
- Bright yellow feet
- Breed March - August



Little Blue Heron

- Length 22 - 29 inches
- Wingspan 39 - 41 inches
- Fairly small bird
- Very dark coloration
- Greenish legs
- Pale blue bill with dark tip
- Breed March - July



Great Blue Heron

- Length 45 - 54 inches
- Wingspan 66 - 79 inches
- Very large bird
- Not associated with area heronries
- Slate blue body
- Blue/green legs
- Breed March - July

Learn more at burlesontx.com/egrets



Staff Contact

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