

Jasey's Bird House

Black-crowned Night Heron



Hi Birders, these herons can be a bit harder to see than your standard Great Blue Herons, but are a very fun sighting. They are most active in the evening and can be seen fishing as dusk sets in. Unlike some species of herons, they don't spear their food, instead they grasp it with their thicker bills. Something about them has always felt almost mysterious to me. It's a stunning sight to see their two graceful white feathers trailing down their backs as they stand patiently fishing in the gathering dark. Keep an eye out. ~ Jasey

Black-crowned Night Heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

Size: A small, stocky heron

Weight: 25.6-35.8 oz

Adult: Light gray with a black back, bill and crown

Nest: A 12-18 inch wide, 8-12 inch deep nest made of sticks and other plant material in a tree or in cattails, usual in a colony of other Black-crowned Night Heron nests

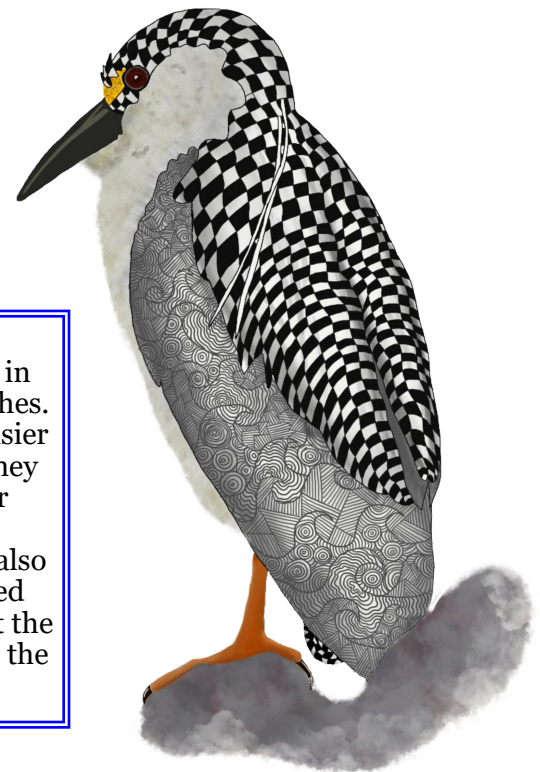
Eggs: 3-5, greenish-blue

Hatching Condition: Helpless

Food: Just about anything they can find including fish, amphibians, snakes, lizards, birds, eggs, garbage and insects

Viewing Tips

Look for this bird in wetlands and marshes. They are usually easier to see at dusk as they do much of their foraging in the evenings. You can also find them hunched among the leaves at the waters edge during the day.



Artwork by Jasey

Fun Black-crowned Night Heron Facts

1. Black-crowned Night Herons usually nest in colonies. These often include other species of herons as well as egrets and ibises. Colonies will often have up to a dozen nests in a single tree.
2. Scientists have a pretty good idea of what young Black-crowned Night Herons eat because, as gross as it is, nestlings often throw-up the contents of their stomachs when approached.
3. Black-crowned Night Herons don't seem to be able to distinguish their own offspring and will raise any chicks that end up in their nest.
4. Young Black-crowned Night Herons leave the nest about two weeks before they can fly. During this time they forage on foot often joining foraging flocks of other young herons.
5. The oldest known Black-crowned Night Heron was at least 21 years and 5 months old.



Photo from Audubon.org