



CTYBC TIPS

for birding the Gulf Coast

HERONS & EGRETS

Hérons and Egrets most commonly found in April on Mustang Island: Great Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron, Little Blue Heron, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret, Reddish Egret.

Other large shallow water birds include: White Ibis, White-faced Ibis.

Hérons and Egrets can be seen on the beach, in shallow retention ponds, at the water treatment plant, in the bays and estuaries, and at every listed birding location on the island.

Hérons are fairly easy to identify by size and color.

- Great Blue = yellow bill, white face, black plume at back of head, large size

- Tricolored = dark face, white plume, white belly and underwing coverts, small

- Little Blue = bluish gray all over, except for all-white or mottled juveniles, small

- Green = rufous neck, green back, striped neck, looks short when neck pulled in

- Black-crowned Night-Heron = white with black back and crown

 - juvenile = gray with wide brown streaks, usually near adult

- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron = gray with black and white face, yellow crown, long plume

 - juvenile = gray with narrow streaks, long neck, usually near adult

Egrets that can be confused are best identified by the bill and feet color, along with size:

- Great = Yellow bill, black feet, largest size

- Snowy = Black bill, yellow feet, medium size

- Cattle = yellow/orange bill, orange legs in breeding plumage, smallest size

- Reddish = normally dark morph with gray body and reddish neck and head, gray belly differs from white belly of juvenile tricolored heron

Tricolored herons are the least afraid of people, and the easiest to get close to, often landing on boardwalk railings, where their small size is more apparent.

Night-Hérons are often seen in daytime perched on logs or branches over shallow water or at the edge of marshes.

Juvenile herons and egrets can be confusing, but they usually hang out with their own kind.
