

WADING BIRDS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY

Presented by :



The Audubon Society of the Everglades

www.auduboneverglades.org

Photographs by Larry Hess

Introduction to Wading Birds

- Wading birds are different from most other birds. Wading birds have long legs and long thin bills. These make it possible for them to catch and eat fish and other small animals living in shallow water.
- In the springtime many wading birds grow special feathers, called plumes. These are very beautiful to look at.
- In the late 1800's and the early 1900's hunters killed millions of wading birds so that their plumes could be used to decorate lady's hats.
- So many birds were killed that several types of wading birds nearly became extinct.
- In 1905 The National Audubon Society was formed to help protect wading birds.
- Wading birds are now protected under laws passed by the United States Government.

Wood Stork



- Large bird
- White with black wing tips.
- Head is featherless with large downward curved bill.
- Eats: fish up to 10 inches long, crayfish, baby alligators, and snakes.
- Feeds by lowering open bill into water and swishing it back and forth.
When bird feels food inside bill, bill snaps closed and food is swallowed.

White Ibis



- Medium size.
- White bird with red bill. Legs are red-orange (red in mating season).
- Wings are white with black tips.
- Feeds both in the water and on the land using a probing motion.
- Eats crayfish and small crabs in water plus earthworms and lizards on land.

Glossy Ibis



- Medium size.
- Glossy brown bird with brown bill and legs.
- Feeds both in the water and on land using a probing motion.
- Eats crayfish and small crabs in water plus earthworms and lizards on land.

Roseate Spoonbill



- Large size.
- White bird with pink wings and red legs.
- Head is featherless with a large spoon shaped bill.
- Feeds by swinging its bill from side to side as it walks through the water.
- Eats small fish, crayfish, frogs, newts, and insects.

Great Egret



- Large size.
- White bird with black legs and yellow bill.
 - Bill is orange during mating season.
- Eats fish, lizards, frogs, and newts.
- Found world wide.

Snowy Egret



- Medium size.
- White bird with black bill, black legs, and yellow feet.
- Eats fish, crayfish, lizards, and insects.

Great Blue Heron



- Largest heron in North America.
- Gray body, reddish neck, heavy black and yellow bill.
- Eats fish up to 12 inches long.
- Catches fish by spearing them with bill.

Little Blue Heron



- Medium size.
- Bluish body with dark reddish brown head and neck.
- Bluish bill with black tip.
- Young birds are all white with bluish bill.
- Eats fish, frogs, crayfish, mice and insects.

Tricolored Heron



- Medium size.
- Blue and rusty red back, white neck and belly.
- Yellow legs with yellow and black bill.
 - In mating season legs are red and bill is blue.
- Eats fish, crayfish, lizards, and insects.

Green Heron



- Small size.
- Bluish green back and head. Reddish brown neck.
- Eats fish, frogs, crayfish, mice and leeches.
- Attracts fish by dropping small bits of food into water.

Limpkin



- Medium size.
- Grayish brown with white spots.
- Long downward curving orange and black bill.
- Eats apple snails.

Wading Birds In Breeding Plumage

Great
Egret



Roseate
Spoonbill



Snowy
Egret



Tricolored
Heron



- Many wading birds almost became extinct because they were killed in very large numbers to provide plumes for lady's hats.
- These birds are now protected by law.

Places for Viewing Wading Birds

Wading birds can be found in most locations that have shallow water.

These include:

- Marshes and swamps
- River and canal banks
- Lakes and ponds
- The Inter-coastal Waterway
- Ocean inlets

Some of the best places in Palm Beach County are:

- Wakodahatchee Wetlands, Jog Road, Boynton Beach
- Green Cay Wetlands, 12800 Hagen Ranch Road, Boynton Beach
- ARM Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, US 441, Boynton Beach
- Peaceful Waters, 11700 Pierson Road, Wellington
- Grassy Waters Preserve, Northlake Blvd., Palm Beach Gardens
- Mac Arthur Beach State Park, Jack Nicklaus Dr., North Palm Beach
- River Bend Park, Indiantown Road, Jupiter
- Jupiter Inlet, Beach Drive, Jupiter

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This resource includes photos of the common wading birds photographed in their habitat. A few facts are given for each. Included are the best places to observe these birds in Palm Beach County.

This resource may be used by teachers or students.

The idea originated as a supplement for the 4th grade assigned reading of **THE LAST EGRET** by **Harvey E. Oyer III**.

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How Living Things Interact with Their Environment

Standard 1:

The student understands the competitive, interdependent, cyclic nature of living things in the environment. **(SC.G.1.2)**

1. knows ways that plants, animals, and protists interact.
2. knows that living things compete in a climatic region with other living things and that structural adaptations make them fit for an environment.
5. knows that animals eat plants or other animals to acquire the energy they need for survival

Standard 2:

The student understands the consequences of using limited natural resources. **(SC.G.2.2)**

1. knows that all living things must compete for Earth's limited resources; organisms best adapted to compete for the available resources will be successful and pass their adaptations (traits) to their offspring.
2. knows that the size of a population is dependent upon the available resources within its community.
3. understands that changes in the habitat of an organism may be beneficial or harmful

FCAT TESTED VOCABULARY :

ADAPTATION, ECOSYSTEM, FOOD CHAIN, HABITAT, PREDATOR, PREY