

## BEHAVIORAL TRAITS OF A GREAT BLUE HERON

### Range and Habitat:

This heron breeds locally from coastal Alaska, south-central Canada, and Nova Scotia south to Mexico and West Indies. It winters as far north as southern Alaska, central United States, and southern New England. Can be found near lakes, ponds, rivers, and marshes.

### Breeding and Nesting:

This bird constructs its nest on a shallow platform of sticks lined with finer material, usually in a tree but sometimes on the ground or concealed in a reed bed. The Great Blue Heron is a monogamous breeder often nesting in colonies. Three to seven light greenish-blue eggs are laid and incubated for 25 to 30 days by both adults.

### Foraging and Feeding:

This bird spends 90% of its active day foraging for food. The Great Blue Heron's diet consists of fish, frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes, shrimps, crabs, crayfish, dragonflies, grasshoppers, and many aquatic insects. This heron fishes in both the night and day, with most of its activity around dawn and dusk. The heron uses its long legs to wade in shallow water and its sharp "spear-like" bill to catch its food.

### Vocalization:

The Great Blue Heron is relatively quiet compared to other members of its family. The heron releases a soft "kraak" when it is disturbed and in flight. Other calls of the heron include a "fraunk" when the bird is disturbed near its nest, and an "ar" when the heron is greeting other members of its species.

### Similar Species:

Often mistaken for a Sandhill Crane, but flies with its neck folded, not extended like that of a crane. In southern Florida an all-white form of this heron known as the, "Great White Heron," differs from Great Egret in being larger, with greenish-yellow rather than black legs.



### Breeding Locations:

Lakes, Marshes, freshwater, Rivers, Swamps

### Breeding Type:

Stable and common, Widespread

### Breeding Population:

Lakes, Marshes, freshwater, Rivers, Swamps

**Egg Color:** Blue Green, Light Blue

**Number of Eggs:** 2 - 7

**Incubation Days:** 25 - 30

**Egg Incubator:** Both sexes

### Nest Material:

Sticks, lined with twigs and leaves.

**Migration:** Migratory