

Getting to know the Ardea herodias (fannini)

They have been on earth for almost 2 million years, and are the largest of all herons in North America.

They stand about 5½ feet tall and their wings span up to 6 feet.

They have long, sharp bills which they use to spear their food.

Hérons will eat fish, crayfish, crab, frogs, snakes, rodents, small birds and insects.

Coastal hunting herons are often observed standing very still. A successful hunt is dependant on them being quiet and stealthy. Disrupting the hunt can cause them to miss their meals and abandon the nests.

If you find an injured heron...

**CAUTION: DANGER
CALL M.A.R.S.**



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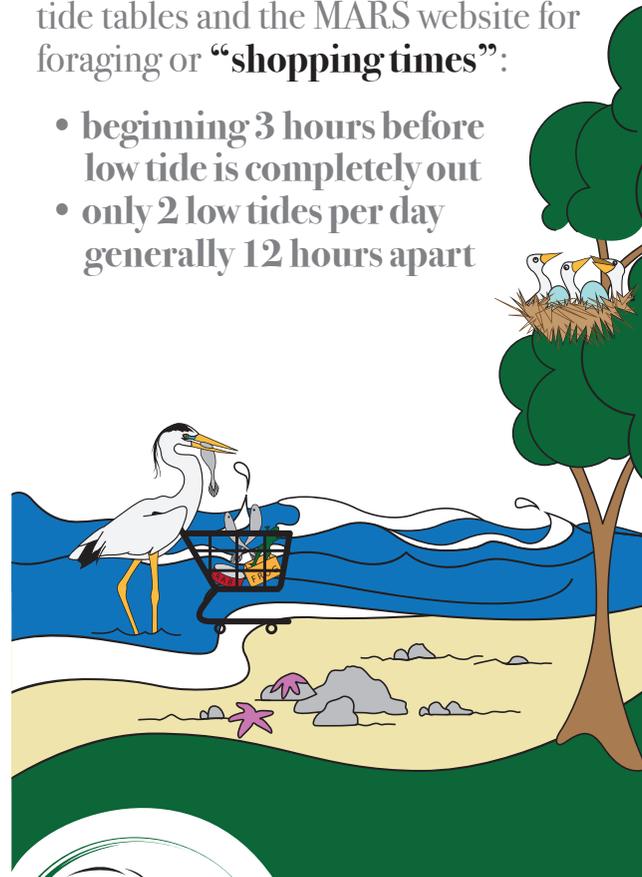
SPREAD THE WORD
watch for wildlife and ...



**PLEASE KEEP DOGS
ON LEASH AT LOW TIDE**

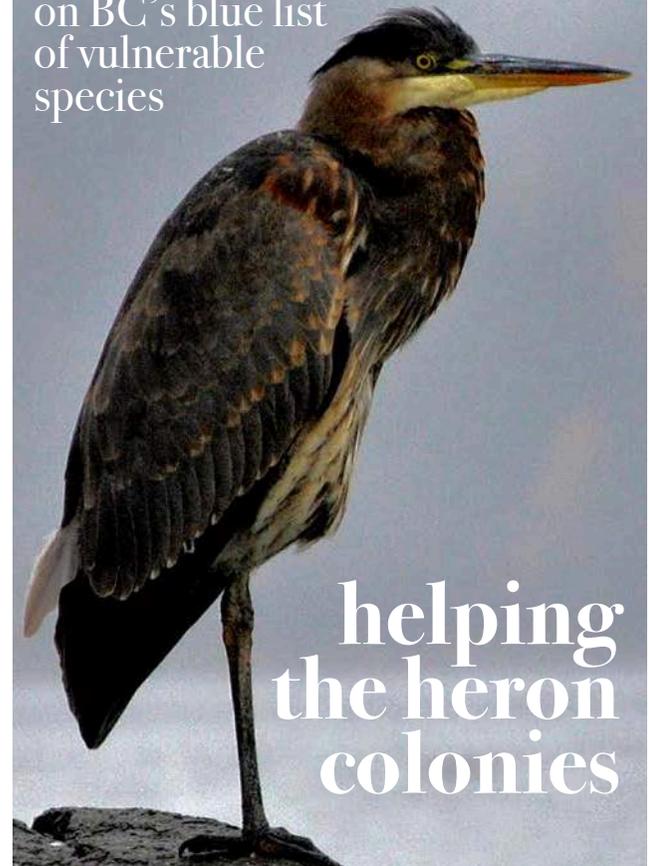
Beginning 3 hours before low tide, the herons set off to “get the groceries”. Daily feeding is crucial. Check your local tide tables and the MARS website for foraging or “shopping times”:

- beginning 3 hours before low tide is completely out
- only 2 low tides per day generally 12 hours apart



THE GREAT BLUE HERON

on BC's blue list of vulnerable species



helping the heron colonies

photo by Brian Jones



photo by Gloria Folk



photo by Lia Sommer



photo by Lora Martinez

Habitat & Nesting

Coastal colonies of herons can be found near beaches and mudflats. Rich in biodiversity, salt marshes and eel grass beds are the ultimate “grocery stores”.

Usually solitary, herons join with other herons in a colony of nests in tall, strong trees.

Nesting periods are from March to August. They lay from 2–5 greenish-blue eggs that take 28 days to hatch. They leave the nest (fledge) 60 days after hatching.

A healthy habitat is necessary for them to maintain their hunting and nesting territory.

The Problem

Hérons are easily frightened from their feeding grounds by dogs and people.

Daily feeding is crucial as they do not store body fat. Repeated disturbances can cause them to abandon the nests.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for herons to find a safe and peaceful place to live with enough food to survive.

Suitable habitats with tall trees near the shoreline are becoming scarce due to increased development.

What We Can Do

Keep our dogs on leash at key feeding times—3 hours before low tide.

If you see a heron while walking or kayaking, watch them from a distance.

Avoid herons where they are feeding in their territory, especially during nesting seasons (March–August).

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