

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

Nycticorax nycticorax



Photograph by Win. E. Workman

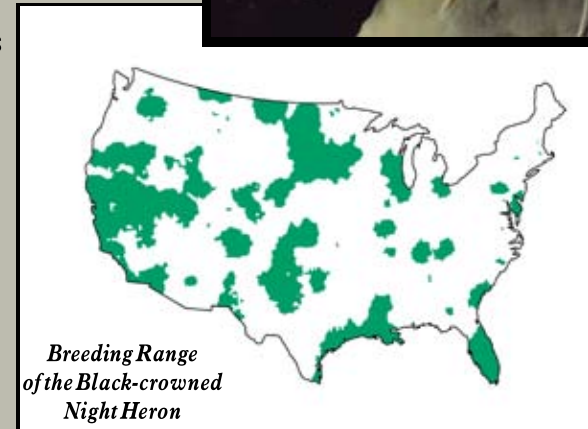
DESCRIPTION: Medium sized wading bird with a hunched over, stocky look; plumage is gray and white with a distinctive black cap and pair of white plumes that extend from the back of the head; during the breeding season, the black feathers from the head and back emit a bluish-green gloss and the legs become red.

DIET: Primarily feeds on crustaceans, particularly crabs; will also eat crayfish, fish, aquatic insects, mussels, snails, leeches, frogs and small snakes.

HABITAT: Found in varied habitats, but mostly along coasts and large cypress swamps.

STATUS AND CONSERVATION: LEAST CONCERN
The number of Black-crowned Night Herons declined drastically in the late 1960's due to the use of DDT, a pesticide that has since been banned in this country. Today, birds are often killed or trapped near fish culture establishments to keep them from feeding on the stock. It is estimated that 1,300 birds are killed per year at fish hatcheries in nine states.

DID YOU KNOW... Black-crowned Night Herons get their name from their nocturnal feeding habits. During the day, they are often seen roosting under the shade of large trees. Unlike most herons, the night herons don't begin to forage for food until the sun sets. As juveniles, they are mostly brown, with a lighter spotted pattern. Juvenile Black-crowned Night Herons closely resemble juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Herons.



Breeding Range of the Black-crowned Night Heron

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