

Boise's Big Blue Birds



Photo: Jane Rohling

Great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*)

Across the river you can see about two dozen large great blue heron nests in the black cottonwood trees. About late February or early March the herons begin their courtship rituals at the rookery. During spring and summer, this is a busy, noisy place. Colonial nesting in "rookeries" may help the herons find food and provide protection from predators.

Great blue herons select new mates each year. Once a mate is chosen, the male gathers sticks and carries them to the female who builds—or refurbishes—the nest. Both birds incubate the eggs and feed the young.

You can see great blue herons flying over the Boise Valley and wading in our ponds, and creeks and shallow sections of the Boise River year round. A heron patiently stalks fish, frogs, or aquatic invertebrates until they're within reach. Then the bird's long neck and deadly bill dart out and pluck the unsuspecting prey out of the water.

Photo: Jane Rohling



To minimize disturbance, please watch the herons from a distance and keep dogs leashed near the rookery! The area immediately surrounding the rookery on Wood Duck Island is closed to all access to protect the birds.

Photo: Mountain Visions

