

## Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias fannini*



Hérons in flight have an 'S' shaped neck



### Description

- The pacific subspecies is the largest of all herons in Canada, standing at 1 meter tall.
- Tall long-legged, long-necked wader that holds its head in an "S" curve at rest and in flight.
- Long, thick yellow bill, white crown and face.
- Black plume from above eye to beyond back of head.
- Black shoulder, shaggy blue-gray body & wings.
- Juvenile has brown-grey back and upper wing plumage and lacking black eyebrow.
- Sexes similar

### Similar Species

- Other Great Blue Heron subspecies.

### Biology

- nest in colonies of 2-10 nests (average).
- Nests are reused in successive years.
- Nests, 4-70 m high in trees, are large stick platforms, < 1 m diameter, lined with twigs, bark strips, coniferous boughs and rushes.
- Both nest and ground beneath are messy with droppings, old food, & sometimes dead chicks.
- Currently the four main colonies in southern BC contain 45% of the Canadian population.

### Habitat

- Populations nest in quiet woodlots within 8 kms of their foraging habitat.
- Nest in undisturbed mature deciduous; less often in mixed, or coniferous forest
- Foraging habitat is usually large eelgrass meadows along rivers and in estuarine and freshwater marshes.
- Elevations: 0-1100 m, but mainly near sea level.

### Occurrence: DSI, DCR, DSC

- Range extends from the coast of southeastern Alaska (Prince William Sound) south to Puget Sound, Washington. Along the entire coast of BC.
- Potential breeder throughout much of the SoG Business Area

### Status

BC: Blue-listed (Species of Special Concern) and Identified Wildlife Species in B.C.

Canada: Special Concern

### Action Required

If nest or nest trees are found:

- Notify BCTS and document occupancy and location.
- Retain the nest tree or trees within a WTP with a 200m buffer.
- From Jan 15 – Sept 15 maintain a quiet buffer within 200m of nest site, if occupied.