

WHITE-FACED HERON

HABITAT

The White-faced Heron lives anywhere where there is water, from tidal mudflats and coastal reefs to moist grasslands and gardens.^[1] They are found throughout mainland Australia and Tasmania.^[2]

DIET

Their diet includes fish, insects, and amphibians. They catch their prey by searching damp cracks, standing in water to watch for movement,^[3] wing flicking, strolling slowly in shallow water, chasing prey with open wings and striking with a peculiar rhythmic neck motion.^[4]

REPRODUCTION

They breed between October to December but may breed outside this season in response to heavy rainfall.^[5] They lay 2 to 4 eggs per clutch, and the eggs hatch after 24 or 25 days. The chicks stay with the parents until the next batch of eggs are laid. Both parents build the nest, incubate the eggs and take care of the young.^[6]

THREATS

They are threatened by water pollution and habitat destruction of wetlands.^[7] Pesticides used for rice farming also pose a threat.^[8]

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The Heron Specialist Group, HeronConservation, is an independent interactive global network of biologists, conservationists, specialists, resource managers, and others actively engaged in research and conservation of herons.^[9]



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DESCRIPTION

They are 60 to 70cm tall,^[10] with blue-grey bodies, white faces and white on the front of their necks. They have long, lance-shaped feathers on their lower necks, chests and backs.^[11]

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Egretta novaehollandiae^[12]

CONSERVATION STATUS

Least Concern^[13]

CLASS

Birds^[14]

LIFESPAN

15 to 20 years^[15]

POPULATION SIZE

Unknown^[16]

FUN FACT

Heron look similar to birds from other families, like storks and cranes, but unlike those species, they fly with their necks retracted instead of outstretched.^[17]

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- [2] BirdLife Australia, 'White-faced Heron', *BirdLife Australia* (21 Nov. 2022), Location, <https://australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/white-faced-heron/>, accessed 24 Aug. 2024.
- [3] Australian Museum, 'Azure Kingfisher', Feeding and diet.
- [4] Shamim1410, 'White-Faced Heron – Profile | Traits | Facts | Call | Diet | Breeding', *Bird Baron* (8 Apr. 2021), White-faced heron Feeding, <https://www.birdbaron.com/white-faced-heron/>, accessed 12 Sep. 2024.
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- [6] Animalia Bio, 'White-Faced Heron', *Animalia Bio* (2024), Mating Habits, <https://animalia.bio/white-faced-heron>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.
- [7] Wildlife Mountain Australia, 'White-faced Heron', *Wildlife Mountain Australia* (2023), para. 8, <https://wildlifemountain.au/white-faced-heron/>, accessed 12 Sep. 2024.
- [8] Animalia Bio, 'White-Faced Heron', Population threats.
- [9] HeronConservation, 'Welcome to the HeronConservation', *HeronConservation* (2024), para. 1, <https://www.heronconservation.org/>, accessed 8 Aug. 2024.
- [10] Australian Museum, 'Azure Kingfisher', Size Range.
- [11] Animalia Bio, 'White-Faced Heron', Appearance.
- [12] BirdLife Australia, 'White-faced Heron', Scientific name.
- [13] BirdLife Australia, 'White-faced Heron', Status.
- [14] Australian Museum, 'White-faced Heron', Class.
- [15] Animalia Bio, 'White-Faced Heron', Life Span.
- [16] Animalia Bio, 'White-Faced Heron', Population size.
- [17] Animalia Bio, 'White-Faced Heron', Fun Facts for Kids.