



# Nuisance Rookery Management

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# What is a Rookery?

- Nesting or roosting birds in trees
- Ranges from a few breeding pairs to thousands of birds
- Birds may return to same location every year
- Nesting season is February through October
- Multiple species







Loud, ground covered in bird droppings, feathers, dead birds, prey remnants and many live birds on the ground





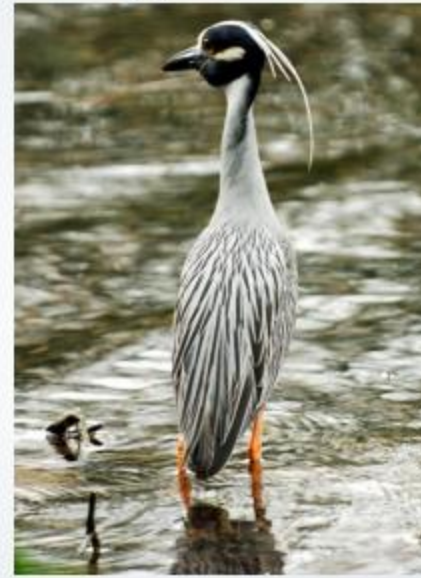
Cattle Egret



Snowy Egret



Yellow-crowned  
Night Heron



Great Egret



Little Blue Heron



Black-crowned  
Night Heron

# Migratory Bird Treaty Act

- International convention between USA, Canada, Mexico, Japan and Russia
- Established federal protection of nearly all species of birds
  - Illegal to “take” or possess migratory birds and their eggs, feathers, or nests
- Violations can result in fines and jail time
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Code provides similar state level protections



# What can and cannot legally be done?

- It is prohibited to kill or injure birds or harass them in a way that causes the abandonment or death of eggs or hatchlings
- It is legal to use scare tactics as long as there are no active nests



Once the **FIRST** bird lays an egg,  
ALL harassment and scare tactics  
MUST STOP!





## End of Nesting Season Nest Removal

- Nests can be destroyed at the end of the nesting season without a permit
  - All nesting activities by all birds in the rookery have ceased
- Infertile/abandoned/dead eggs or long-dead nestlings may also be destroyed

**Interim Empty Nest Policy of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2**



# Federal Depredation Permit

- Authorizes the lethal removal of a limited number of birds and eggs
- Can allow greater flexibility to prevent rookery establishment





# Prevention

- Early Detection
  - Deterrents should focus on **sentry** birds
  - Birds are nervous when they first arrive
  - Need to act **before eggs are laid**
- Public Awareness
  - Public education improves early detection





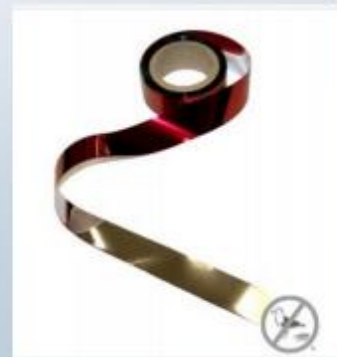
# Scare Tactics

- **Noise Deterrents**

- Predator calls
- Pyrotechnics (screamers, bangers)
- Cracker shells (shot from a 12-gauge shotgun)
- Rope-firecrackers
- Propane cannons

- **Visual Deterrents**

- Mylar tape
- Scare Eye balloons







Early nesting material can be knocked from trees as long as there are no eggs in the colony.





# Habitat Modification

Thin tree canopies  
Birds prefer >75% canopy closure





Modification of potential nesting areas produces more effective and longer lasting prevention.





Combination of techniques February through June is most effective



# Summary

- Prevention and early detection are critical
- Harassment must stop once the 1<sup>st</sup> egg is laid
- Not a one-time fix
- Hard work now may result in years of reduced conflict





# Questions?

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