

BLACK CROWNED NIGHT HERONS

SOME
OF
THE NEWS
FROM
HARBOR
ISLAND
NATURALLY

BY
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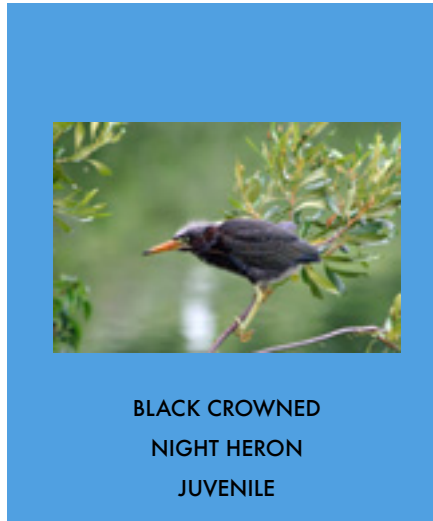


A MEMBER OF THE HERON FAMILY THAT IS
OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Night Stalkers

The Black Crowned Night Herons are nocturnal hunters that eat fish, insects, small crustaceans, frogs and small mammals. The preferred hunting technique is standing still and waiting to ambush their prey. Smaller and stouter than most of the other herons they inhabit both fresh and saltwater lagoons.

Black Crowns prey on other herons, which attack them on sight. Black Crowned Night Herons steal eggs and the young from other heron nests. They often patrol under nests waiting for chicks to fall. This hostility may be part of why they tend to hunt at night.



Once their prey is captured it is shaken until it is killed then swallowed head first. Strong digestive acids dissolve any bones.

They winter in the Caribbean and South America. They should arrive here toward the end of March.

Generally, Black Crowned Night Heron populations are stable. Their wide distribution and their varied diet makes them a good indicator of the health of local ecosystems,

The best time to see them is early in the morning around the fresh water rookeries.

Sources: National Geographic Field Guide to Birds of North America 4th ed. The Birder's Handbook. by Paul Ehrlich

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide>



All photographs are by John Albert

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