

Rare Animals of Louisiana

Reddish Egret

Egretta rufescens

Rarity Rank: S2B,S2N/G4

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Identification:

- Medium sized heron with two different color phases: one is dark, red-brown to rust colored on the head and neck with slate gray body and another is all white and very uncommon in Louisiana
- Stout bill with pink base and black tip
- Dark bluish to gray legs
- Adult length is between 69 and 82 cm with a wingspread of about 1.2 m
- Solitary during non-breeding season

Habitat:

- Nests in mixed species colonies amidst shrubby vegetation
- Generally restricted to sandy beaches or shallow ponds near the coast or on barrier islands when feeding

Food habits:

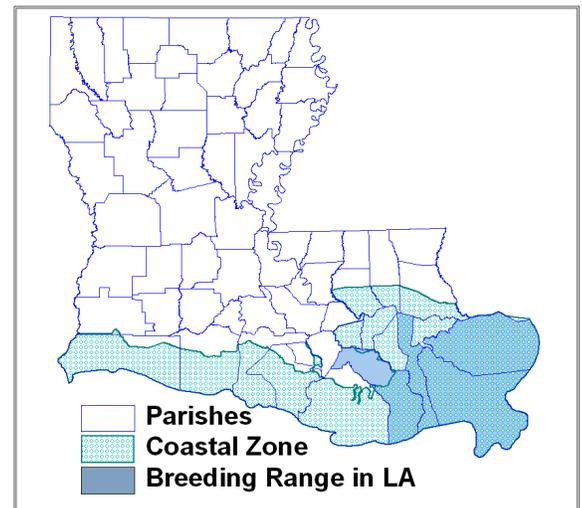
Mainly small fish

Range:

- Nests locally from the Northern Gulf Coast south through the Caribbean and both coasts of Mexico, including the Yucatan Peninsula
- Winters throughout the breeding range
- In Louisiana, the species is found throughout the coast during migration and less commonly in winter
- During nesting season it is restricted to islands in southeastern Louisiana

Reproduction:

- One brood per season, clutch size usually three or four
- Nests are built using grasses, sticks and forbs in a tree, vegetation or on the ground, and are rarely close together
- Eggs are ovate to elliptical in shape, bluish green in color and have a smooth texture
- Incubation accomplished by female
- Fledglings leave the nest after nearly five weeks and are able to fly as early as six and a half weeks



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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Threats:

- Entanglement in fishing nets and lines
- Beach development (especially in Florida) decreases the quantity of suitable habitat
- Human disturbance may lead to nest abandonment
- Coastal land loss

Beneficial Management Practices:

Roping or fencing off nesting sites during breeding seasons

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Mississippi, Barataria, Terrebonne



Nesting Reddish Egrets



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

References:

Lowther, P. E., and R. T. Paul. 2002. Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 633 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

<http://www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program> or 225-765-2811

www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869