




Grey Heron (Common resident)

Ardea cinerea

90-98cm. Large grey heron with grey upperparts, mostly white head and neck with prominent broad black head-stripes and blackish streaks down the center of the foreneck. They can be found in mangroves and inland and coastal wetlands.

<p>Adult – Non-breeding</p>	 <p>White crown, sides and throat with a broad black eye stripe extending from above the eye to the back of the crown, continuing as a crest with elongated black plumes. Long and heavy bill is dull yellowish. Foreneck is grey-white with two distinct broken black streaks running parallel down the center. Black "shoulder"</p>	<p>Juvenile</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Christoph Moring</i> More uniformly grey than non-breeding adults with duller and less contrasting head and neck pattern, and shorter head-plumes.</p>	<p>Adult – Breeding</p>	 <p><small>© Anne-Sophie HSB</small></p> <p>Breeding adults have bright orange-yellow bill, legs and feet.</p>	<p>Male – Female</p> <p>Males are larger than females.</p>
<p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i> patch at the forward bend of the wing. Legs are green-grey to yellow-brown.</p>						

Purple Heron (Uncommon resident)

Ardea purpurea

78-90cm. A very elongated, narrow-bodied heron with a long neck and a thin head and bill. It is a dark grey medium heron with orange head, neck and breast. They can be found in well-vegetated freshwater wetlands, marshes, lakes and occasionally, coastal wetlands and mangroves. They often stay hidden in dense vegetation.

<p>Adult (Male) – Non-Breeding</p> 	<p>Adult (Female) – Non-Breeding</p> 	<p>Adult – Breeding</p> 	<p>Juvenile</p> 
<p><i>Photo by Alan Ng</i> Adult has a black crown, black nape-plumes, chestnut-colored neck with distinct bold black lines down the sides of the head and neck. Dark chestnut-maroon belly and flanks, with yellowish-orange bill, legs and feet. Males are larger and darker, tending to slate grey with purple gloss.</p>	<p><i>Photo by Kwong Wai Chong</i> Females are olive grey with buff scapular and mantle plume.</p>	<p><i>Photo by Adrian Kettle</i> Long breast feathers develop. Legs and beaks reddened, becoming orange to red.</p>	<p><i>Photo by Pavel Štěpánek</i> Resembles adult but with a brownish-orange overall plumage without the bold black lines down the sides of the head and neck.</p>

Great-Billed Heron/Sumatran Heron (Uncommon resident)

Ardea sumatrana

114-115cm, they are the largest herons in Singapore. They are usually solitary and can be seen stalking prey at the edge of mudflats or estuaries.

Adult – Non-Breeding



Photo by Francis Yap

A large heron with **dark grey overall plumage** and a **long, stout dagger-shaped bill** that is black above and whitish yellow below. Wings are a dark brown grey and lighter underneath.

Adult – Breeding



Photo by Nigel Voaden

Distinct **white-tipped greyish plumes** on the scapulars and breast. The bill, while remaining black, develops a **yellow-green tip** and a yellow patch at its base.

Juvenile






Photo by Ilya Povalyaev

Plumage is **warmer-tinged (rusty brown)** than non-breeding adult.

Striated Heron/Little Heron (Common resident and migrant)

Butorides striata

40-48cm, a small stocky dark-backed heron with a thick neck. It has a relatively heavy dark bill, thick short legs and grey neck, and can be found in marshes, mangroves, coastal areas or waterbodies near parks and gardens. They are normally solitary and are usually spotted standing quietly.

Adult – Non-Breeding	Adult – Breeding	Juvenile	Male – Female
<p>Photo by Francis Yap</p> <p>Overall slaty grey plumage with glossy blackish crown with a short erectile crest. Lores are dull yellow green but blue at the bottom. A dark line extends from the bill to under the eye. The bill is blackish with a yellow base. The legs are yellowish.</p> 	<p>Photo by Francis Yap</p> <p>The head, back and erectile crest become glossy blue black. The bill turns glossy black and the lores turn blue. The legs turn glossy orange.</p> 	<p>Photo by Zahidi Hamid</p> <p>Juvenile is brown with white spots, with brown-black crown and a slight crest. Upper bill is brown-black above and yellow below. Compared to the juvenile Black-Crowned Night Heron, the juvenile Striated Heron is smaller and more slender, darker brown overall plumage, longer and slimmer bill and has long streaks on the chest and spotting only on the wings.</p> 	<p>Females are slightly smaller and duller than males.</p>

Black-Crowned Night Heron (Uncommon resident)




Nycticorax nycticorax

58-65cm, a stocky dark grey and white heron with a distinctive glossy black back and crown. They are highly gregarious and largely seen during dawn and dusk at marshes, mangroves and waterbodies near parks and gardens.

<p>Adult – Non-Breeding</p>	<p>Adult – Breeding</p>	<p>Juvenile</p>	<p>Male – Female</p>
<p><i>Photo by Alvin Seng</i> Greyish-white overall plumage with a contrasting black crown, mantle and scapulars, whitish nape-plumes, yellow legs and feet and mostly blackish bill. Irides are crimson red.</p> 	<p><i>Photo by Alvin Seng</i> Glossy bluish-green mantle and scapulars with reddish legs. White head plumes develop that can reach 25cm long.</p> 	<p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i> Duller brown overall with white-spotted upperparts including the mantle (not just on the wings as compared with the juvenile Striated Heron). Streaked crown, sides of the head and underparts.</p> 	<p>Females are smaller and have shorter head plumes during breeding season.</p>




Malayan Night Heron (Uncommon migrant)
Gorsachius melanolophus

48-51cm, a small chestnut brown nocturnal heron that live in forests. They can also be found near forest edges, gardens, parks and wooded areas.

Adult – Non-Breeding	Adult – Breeding	Juvenile	Male – Female
 <p><i>Photo by Alan Ng</i></p> <p>Sides of the head and neck are deep rufous, with a black crown and long crest. The bill is stocky and down-curved, dark brown above</p> <p><i>Photo by See Toh</i> and green below. Upperparts are chestnut-tinged brown and the underparts are dark brown speckled with black, which can be seen in flight.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Ayuwat Jearwattanakanok</i></p> <p>The lores turn blue during the mating season.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Chris Li</i></p> <p>Duller than adults with dense irregular whitish and greyish bars on the crown and throughout.</p>	<p>Males may have a longer crest and bluer lores during the mating season.</p>

Javan Pond Heron (Uncommon migrant)
Ardeola speciosa

45cm, a small brown streaked heron with a black back and a golden-brown head during the breeding season. They can be found in various wetlands like streams, marshes, ponds and open fields.

Adult – Non-Breeding	Adult – Breeding		Juvenile
<p></p> <p><i>Photo by See Toh</i></p> <p>In non-breeding and juvenile plumage, it is indistinguishable from other pond-heron species. The head is streaked olive brown and yellowish beige. Irides are yellow.</p>	<p></p> <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Pale golden head, crest and neck with two long white crest plumes. The irises become orange and the bill turns bright yellow with a black ring near the tip and blue at the base. Wings are white and covered by a black skirt. Plumages of the lower neck and breast are rufous.</p>	<p></p> <p><i>Photo by Neoh Hor Kee</i></p>	<p>Juveniles are streaky brown like the non-breeding adult.</p>

Chinese Pond Heron (Uncommon migrant)




Ardeola bacchus

45-42cm, a small dark bird with wine chestnut head and neck and purple black back with white wings during the breeding season. They can be found in various wetlands like streams, marshes, ponds and open fields.

Adult – Non-Breeding	Adult – Breeding		Juvenile
<p></p> <p><i>Photo by See Toh</i></p> <p>In non-breeding and juvenile plumage, it is indistinguishable from other pond-heron species. The head is streaked olive brown and yellowish beige. Irises are yellow.</p>	<p></p> <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Distinctive chestnut-maroon head, head plumes, neck and upper breast, with white underparts and blackish-slate mantle and scapulars.</p>	<p></p> <p><i>Photo by Lars Petersson</i></p>	<p>Juveniles are streaky brown like the non-breeding adult.</p>

Indian Pond Heron (Rare migrant)
Ardeola grayii

45cm, a small pink buff bird with brownish-buff head and dark maroon mantle during the breeding season. They can be found in various wetlands like streams, marshes, ponds and open fields.

Adult – Non-Breeding	Adult – Breeding		Juvenile
<p><i>Photo by Abhishek Das</i></p> <p>In non-breeding and juvenile plumage, it is indistinguishable from other pond-heron species. The head is streaked olive brown and yellowish beige. Irides are yellow.</p> 	<p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Head and neck are un-streaked brown buff. Cream white plumes extend from the back of the head. The upper back turn a deep maroon while the underparts remain white.</p> 	<p><i>Photo by Jens Eriksen</i></p> 	<p>Juveniles are streaky brown like the non-breeding adult.</p>

Yellow Bittern (Common resident and migrant)
Ixobrychus sinensis

36-38cm, a small, slender, light beige to light brown heron with a black cap and tail, and a long thin bill. They are mostly found at the water's edge perched motionless while waiting for prey. They can be found at well-vegetated ponds, mangroves and grasslands near wetlands.

Adult (Male) – Non-Breeding	Adult (Female) – Non-Breeding	Adult – Breeding	Juvenile
 <p>Photo by Jens Eriksen</p> <p>Blackish crown that distinguishes the male Yellow Bittern from the female Yellow Bittern. The throat is sandy brown with white stripes, while the back is rufous. The wings and the tail are distinctively black.</p>	 <p>Photo by Marcus Craig</p> <p>The female resembles the male but the female's crown is reddish brown and streaked instead of dark.</p>	 <p>Photo by Amar-Singh</p> <p>During the mating season, the base of the bill turns red, which is more noticeable in males.</p>	 <p>Photo by Zhong Ying Kody</p> <p>Juveniles resemble the females but has bolder streaks on the crown, upperparts and underparts.</p>




Cinnamon Bittern (Uncommon resident and migrant)
Ixobrychus cinnamomeus

38-41 cm, a small, mainly rufous heron with pale underparts. They can be found in grasslands, marshes near freshwater wetlands and mangroves. They are often seen in flight or perched motionless.

Adult (Male) – Non-Breeding	Adult (Female) – Non-Breeding	Adult (Male) – Breeding	Juvenile
 <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Uniform bright cinnamon-rufous wings and upperparts. The bill is yellow to green orange, tail is chestnut brown and a broad brown streak runs down the center and front of the neck.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Mohamad Zahidi</i></p> <p>Smaller, with slightly darker upperparts than the males, with faint buffish speckling on scapulars and upperwings.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Daisy O'Neill</i></p> <p>The bill becomes more orange and the lores turn a dark red in the males. Colors of the soft-parts brighten, more so in males.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Alan Ng</i></p> <p>The juvenile resembles the females but has buffish streaks on head-sides and dense buffish speckling on the upperparts and upperwings.</p>

Von Schrenck's Bittern/Chestnut Bittern (Rare migrant)
Ixobrychus eurhythmus

39-42cm, a small dark heron with

<p>Adult (Male) – Non-Breeding</p>	<p>Adult (Female) – Non-Breeding</p>	<p>Juvenile</p>
 <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Male has dark chestnut upperparts, which contrast strongly with buffish underparts and wings. Bills turn black during mating season for both males and females.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Females resemble the female Cinnamon Bittern but has a distinctive black brown and much bolder white speckling on the upperparts and wings.</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Silas Toy</i></p> <p>Juveniles resemble the female Cinnamon Bittern but has a distinctive black brown and much bolder white speckling on the upperparts and wings.</p>

Black Bittern (Uncommon migrant)
Ixobrychus flavicollis

54-61cm, a medium black or dark brown heron with a white and brown striped throat that is bordered with yellow. They can be found in marshes, reedbeds, and mangroves but are shy, often hiding in reeds for long periods of time.

Adult (Male)

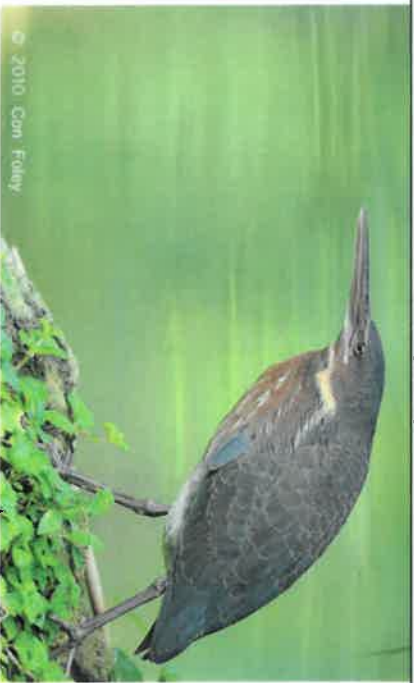


Photo by Con Foley

Males have **black upperparts**, while the chin, throat, neck and upper breast are **buff streaked with black and white**, bordered on both sides by a **yellow band** which extends from the chin to the neck.

Adult (Female)



Photo by Jacob Tan

The females resemble the males but are **lighter in color**, with **dark brown upperparts and more rufous breast-streaks**.

Juvenile







Photo by Dave Czaplak

Juveniles resemble the females but have a **scaly appearance, with narrow rufous fringes** in the crown and upperparts.

Pacific Reef Heron/Eastern Reef Heron/Eastern Reef Egret (Uncommon Resident)
Egretta sacra

58cm. Relatively thick bill, short legs relative to body size and a hunched posture. In flight, it has more rapid wing beats than most herons, with neck coiled back and legs extended to show yellow footpads. Preferentially feeds on rocky shores and reefs. Highly territorial and typically feeds alone or in pairs.

<p>Black Morph - Adult</p>	<p>Black Morph - Juvenile</p>	<p>White Morph – Adult/Juvenile (more common than black morph in the tropics)</p>	<p>Adult – Breeding</p>	<p>Male – Female</p>
 <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Overall dark greyish plumage, greenish legs, hunched posture</p> <p>Uniform grey wings in flight</p> <p>Yellow footpads contrasting with less bright feet</p>	 <p><i>Photo by James Kennerley</i></p> <p>Pale smokey grey</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Francis Yap</i></p> <p>Resembles Chinese Egret but with shorter legs</p> <p>Smaller than Eastern Great Egret and Intermediate Egret, with yellow (not black) legs and feet, shorter lanceolate plumes and hunched posture</p> <p>Thicker build than Little Egret, thick and less pointed bill</p>	 <p><i>Photo by Amar-Singh</i></p> <p>Small crest made up of a tuft of short lanceolate plumes that also occur on the foreneck and back</p> <p>Bill and legs turn yellow</p> <p>Distinguished from Chinese Egret by its thicker bill, shorter legs, shorter and thicker crest plumes, shorter back plumes and yellow legs</p>	<p>Males are larger than females.</p>

Little Egret (Common migrant)
Egretta garzetta

55-65cm, a thin, medium white egret with a long thin neck and black bill, dark legs and yellow feet. They can be found in various freshwater and coastal wetlands and feed less actively than the similar-looking Chinese Egret.

Adult – Non-Breeding / Juveniles



Photos by Francis Yap

A medium-sized, all-white egret with black bill, black legs and distinctive yellow feet.

Adult – Breeding



Photo by Francis Yap

During the breeding season, both males and females grow long crest plumes.

Intermediate Egret (Uncommon migrant)
Ardea intermedia

65-72cm, a medium white egret that has a relatively short yellow or bicolored bill. It can be found in various inland freshwater habitats, mangroves and mudflats and are often found with other egret or heron species.

Adult – Non-Breeding / Juveniles



Photos by Francis Yap



Medium-sized white egret with **black legs** and a **yellow bill** with a **black tip**. It can be distinguished from other white Egret species with its **considerably shorter bill** as well as its **shorter and less kinked neck**. It is larger than the Eastern Cattle Egret and has a thinner neck with longer and darker legs.

Adult – Breeding



Photo by anon. from Ebird

Exceptionally long back and breast plumes form. Yellow bill may come turn black on the ridge of the upper mandible.

Great Egret (Uncommon migrant)

Ardea alba

85-102cm, a large, slender white egret with a long neck, black legs and yellow beak. It can be found in various inland freshwater habitats, mangroves and mudflats.

Adult – Non-Breeding / Juveniles



Photo by Francis Yap



Photo by Joel Sartore

White, large egret with black legs and yellow bill. Has a longer and strongly kinked neck than other white Egret species, as well as a pointed extension of facial skin that extends below and beyond the eye.

Adult – Breeding



Photo by Christoph Morling

Black legs turn red and yellow bill turns black.

Chinese Egret (Rare migrant)
Egretta eulophotes

68cm, a white, medium-sized egret with yellow bill and yellow legs and feet, with darker legs. It can be found at mudflats or other coastal habitats feeding actively, often running, flying or darting in search of food.

Adult -- Non-Breeding / Juveniles



Photos by Francis Yap

All-white egret with yellow bill and yellow legs. Lores are yellow, green or grey. Can be distinguished from other egret species by their greenish legs and yellow bill with yellowish-orange mandible.



Adult -- Breeding



Photo by Wong Lee Hong

The entire bill turns yellowish-orange, and breast-plumes and crest grow long and dense. Lores turn bright blue and legs are black with yellowish-orange feet.

Eastern Cattle Egret (introduced resident and common migrant)

Bubulcus ibis

48-53cm, a short-legged white egret with a relatively short yellow bill that resembles other white egret species during non-breeding seasons. They can be found in grasslands, wetlands or mudflats, are gregarious and often feed near cattle, where they capture insects or prey that are disturbed and flushed out.

Adult – Non-Breeding / Juveniles



Photo by Francis Yap

Resembles other white Egret species but smaller and stockier with black legs, black feet, short yellowish bill and relatively thicker neck.

Adult – Breeding



Photo by Francis Yap

Breeding adult has extensive rufous-buff feathers on the head, neck, breast and back. Bill turns reddish with a yellow tip, lores turn purple and legs turn reddish.

Resources used:

1. <https://www.heronconservation.org/herons-of-the-world/list-of-herons/>
2. <https://singaporebirds.com/>
3. <https://ebird.org/home>
4. <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/home>
5. <https://besrroup.org/>

