



*inspiring people to protect
Bay Area birds since 1917*

For Immediate Release

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Artists “chalk it up” in a flash mob to protect Oakland herons on Wednesday morning April 6

Hérons and egrets will fill the sidewalks as well as the trees of downtown Oakland on Wednesday April 6, when artists from a number of local organizations will converge in an “Eco-Art Flash Mob” to help protect the city’s nesting colonies of Black-crowned Night-Hérons and Snowy Egrets.

More than 50 pairs of night herons are currently nesting in street trees, and Snowy Egrets will begin their nesting cycle in the same trees this month.

“The talent of local artists highlights the beauty and poignancy of these remarkable birds and will inspire the whole community to ensure that herons thrive here,” said Cindy Margulis, Executive Director of Golden Gate Audubon Society. “Black-crowned Night-Hérons are great ambassadors for the City of Oakland: They’re cool, they’re distinctive, they’ve got unforgettable voices, and they are an emblem of Oakland’s shorelines where they forage.”

Starting at 6:30 a.m. and finishing by 9 a.m., the artists will create chalk images of herons and egrets on a square block of sidewalks centered at Alice and 13th Streets across from the Civic Center U.S. Post Office.

(That’s the site of the notorious tree-trimming incident in 2014 that destroyed nests and displaced heron chicks.).

The Eco-Art Flash Mob is part of a larger initiative by Golden Gate Audubon to protect and educate the public about Oakland’s herons and egret. Twenty-five volunteer docents from GGAS are monitoring the heronry this season and sharing insights on the

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birds' fascinating natural history with passersby. GGAS is also leading a series of educational tours of the nesting colony for adults and schoolchildren, and has provided local businesses with educational heron posters.

In addition, GGAS is coordinating with local wildlife rescue agencies – International Bird Rescue, the Lindsey Wildlife Museum, and the Oakland Zoo – to rescue and rehabilitate herons that may fall from the trees onto the unforgiving concrete.

“We encourage downtown residents and workers to take a minute to watch and marvel at these unique birds,” Margulis said. “Some people drive for hours just to glimpse herons and egrets but we’ve got them right here in the midst of the city! What a great opportunity for the community to observe wildlife and to help these birds thrive in Oakland.”

Black-crowned Night-Herons and Snowy Egrets are colonial nesters, meaning they nest in large groups with multiple nests of both species sharing the same trees. The size of their clutches (groups of young) varies, but most Night-Heron and Snowy Egret parents will be attending to at least 2-3 chicks at their nest. Male and female adults take turns minding the nest.

In the Bay Area, both species traditionally nest on islands or at the edges of wetlands that provide them with food such as fish, clams, frogs, and insects. But since there aren't enough clusters of suitable nesting trees on Oakland's shoreline anymore, these herons are relying on the dense canopies of large street trees instead.

*PHOTO/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES: The best time to document the artists at work on Wednesday will be around **8 a.m., centered at 13th and Alice Streets**. GGAS Executive Director Cindy Margulis will also be present and available for interviews.*

To view a short video of our first heron art mob last year:

http://goldengateaudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/OaklandHérons_ArtMob.mp4

For more information, contact GGAS Communications Director Ilana DeBare at (510) 301-5573 or idebare@goldengateaudubon.org.

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