

# Action Plan Update: April 15, 2014

## Preventing Egret and Heron Nesting Problems in Residential Neighborhoods

Although our team is very busy working to assist you in preventing herons and egrets from nesting in your neighborhood we wanted to take the time to provide a brief update on our progress. As mentioned in our update on March 17<sup>th</sup>, we noticed the first arrival of yellow-crowned night herons in our community. Since this sighting we have confirmed activity in four separate neighborhoods. With tremendous support from our community we have been successful in keeping these birds on the move. It is our intention to keep them active and nervous long enough that their desire and biological need to nest will force them to move to a more suitable nesting habitat.

Initially we were tracking approximately 10-15 herons. Recently we have noticed a reduction in these numbers and it has become less common to see more than four together. To date we have not confirmed any active nests in residential areas of our community. Even though we have not pinpointed exactly where they have moved, we feel certain with the level of community support that if their new location was less than desirable the new activity would be reported to our team in Animal Services. We consider this decrease in activity to be encouraging, but by no means a sign that our mission is complete. In fact it is now more important than ever to remain vigilant and continue reporting all heron and egret activity to Animal Services at (972) 466-3420. If you call after hours, please leave a message so our team can log your sighting and schedule a survey of your area.

We want to express our appreciation to each of you that have worked so hard to support this partnership. We appreciate that your efforts come at a price and that many of you have taken time from work, postponed vacations and made other personal sacrifices to support this effort. We also want to recognize those that may not have had problems with birds, but are being very patient with city staff and your neighbors while noise-making devices are being deployed to assist with moving these birds. We all serve with great pride knowing that we have such a strong sense of community in these affected areas. Thank you.

### To Recap Animal Services' Deterrent Measures

Reported sightings will trigger the following responses:

1. A report of migratory bird activity is shared with our Animal Services team.
2. Animal Services staff will conduct an inspection of the reported areas to deploy deterrent measures and/or educate affected residents regarding the need for their immediate participation in deterring activity on their property.
  - a. Measures will include any combination of pyrotechnics ("screamers" and "bangers"), propane cannons, laser lights and air horns, in combination with visual deterrents, noisemakers and water jets that residents deploy.
  - b. Education for those residents experiencing regular activity will include the issuance of a "starter kit" of deterrent materials and instruction from Animal Services on best use of these materials.
3. Animal Services will work with our residents and trained city staff to track migratory bird activity and make adjustments as necessary to increase our opportunity for success.
  - a. Deterrent equipment will be shifted as necessary to keep migratory birds on the move.
  - b. City staff will be in frequent communication with state and federal agencies to track progress.
4. As a final resort the approved method of lethal removal will be deployed to further discourage nesting activity of hard-to-move birds.
  - a. Lethal measures are our absolute last resort and require documentation that all other non-lethal alternatives have been exhausted.

- b. Our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Depredation Permit sets a maximum of 25 cattle egrets that may be taken throughout our community over the course of 2014. This is roughly one percent of the birds that were present in 2011.

**5. Although success in moving these birds to a more desirable nesting habitat is our end goal, it is important to note that each of these efforts are intended to support your activity to protect your personal property from nesting migratory birds. This means our success depends on your participation!**

Here is how you can help:

- Start looking now for migratory birds
- To review birds of interest, please visit our website by clicking [here](#)
- Ensure that your trees are trimmed to allow sunlight to shine through; it may also be helpful to create a separation between tree canopies – It's not too late!
- Remove ALL old nesting material – It's not too late for this either!
- Team up with your neighbors when hiring a tree trimming service and ask for discount rates for group service
- Be a good neighbor and help those who may have special needs
- Report migratory bird activity to our team in Animal Services by calling 972-466-3420 (press 3 to speak to an attendant) or email your report to [animalservices@cityofcarrollton.com](mailto:animalservices@cityofcarrollton.com)

The summer of 2011 was very difficult for residents where there was concentrated nesting. We hope to serve as your partner in preventing the problems faced last year.

Please feel free to forward this email to your neighbors or have them contact us to be added to this group.