

# School-to-Nature



## Little Green Heron (Species: *Butorides Virescens*)

There are 8 species of Heron in Wisconsin; the Little Green Heron has been spotted near water sources on Conservancy lands. This Heron is very shy and so is not often observed; but if you approach quietly you may see one or you may hear its “skeow” call. Green Herons are “loners,” territorial and intolerant of other water birds, attacking intruders on sight. When alarmed, they raise their crests, hold their necks stiff, and flutter their tails. With humans they usually just fly away.

The Little Green Heron is a stocky bird hunched on bent yellow legs, usually watching a water source for food. It has an iridescent green back and head cap, which can also appear dark blue. Its neck and body are chestnut brown. Females have the same coloring as males, but are slightly smaller. Green Herons can live for about 8 years.

These Herons forage mostly at dawn and dusk; at other times they hide in dense vegetation near river banks, quiet streams, and ponds. Their favorite foods are small fish, crayfish, frogs, tadpoles, and large insects. Herons do their part in controlling those populations. They are among the tool-using species and highly intelligent, sometimes dropping a small object on the water to attract prey.



Green Herons in Wisconsin mate between March to July, depending on location. Even though adults are considered loners, parents fully partner to incubate and raise chicks. 2-4 eggs are laid in a nest of sticks and stems, near or even above water. Incubation takes 21-25 days. Once born, the chicks are fed regurgitated food. After 16-17 days the chicks start jumping around their nest, snapping at insects, and will fledge. They become independent about 30-35 days after fledging, and they mature in one year. Wisconsin Herons are migratory; adults arrive in this area in March/April, and by the end of August, adults and young Herons begin their migration back to the far southern U.S.

August 2022 BH / DL

**Caledonia Conservancy | P.O. Box 044714 | Racine, WI | 53404**  
**262-498-4993 | [www.CaledoniaConservancy.org](http://www.CaledoniaConservancy.org)**