

# SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

Look for it now in Southwest Ohio!

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"Blue Heron Rookery" by Dave Woehr is licensed under CC BY 2.0

## Great Blue Heron (*Ardea Herodias*)

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One of Ohio's largest birds, the great blue heron stands nearly four feet tall. It has a whitish head with black plumes that originate just above its eyes and project out behind its head. The plumage of the body is brown, black, and white, yet it gives an overall appearance of being a bluish-gray color.

The great blue heron is often observed motionless, as it pursues its prey while standing in a stream, river, or wetland. Unlike numerous other predators that actively stalk on foot or wing, the great blue heron takes the complete opposite approach -- it stands still, watching the water for a fish. Then in the blink of an eye, in a sharp and seamless movement it will snare its prey.

Great blues are considered "partial migrants." While you may see them during mild Southwest Ohio winters, some Ohio herons will migrate to warmer areas with unfrozen waters in the winter. They return as soon as the ice melts -- mid-February in warm years and mid-March during a particularly long or cold winter.

To learn more about this species, visit [Great Blue Heron | Audubon Field Guide](#)

### FUN FACTS

- Great blue herons usually nest in trees and may form large colonies called rookeries.
- In Ohio, breeding season runs from March to mid-April.
- Both parents feed young, by regurgitation. Young are capable of flight at about 60 days, depart the nest at about 65-90 days.
- Eats mostly fish, but also frogs, salamanders, turtles, snakes, insects, rodents, birds. May hunt by day or night.
- No longer considered endangered in Ohio, there was a time when heron numbers dwindled as their feathers were a favorite of the millinery trade during the 1800s.