



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

Come visit us!

Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at
<http://tourism.oregonstate.edu/>

Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program
<https://www.GORPguide.org>

For more information about the GORP training program see:
<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/snowy-egret-egretta-thula/

By colliiek2

August 28, 2020

What graceful bird has bright yellow feet that are rarely seen because they are in the mud?

The bright yellow feet of the adult Snowy Egret are typically hidden by the mud and shallow water. The younger birds have dull yellowish legs and feet. The distinctive foot (yellow) and bill (black) colors make this bird easy to identify compared to other herons.



Photo from ODFW.

Habitat

Snowy Egrets forage the marshes and wetlands along the Oregon coast. The bright white feathers make the bird easy to see particularly as it stands still, closely watching its prey and poising for an ambush.

Prey can insects and worms, crustaceans, fish and crayfish, reptiles, snails, and worms. They will also startle prey through movements such as head sways and wing flicks, or through sounds, stab prey with their beaks, and take prey stirred up by other animals (such as cows).

Too beautiful

At one time, the distinctive bright white feathers growing along the bird's nape and neck captured too much attention. Egrets were overhunted in North America for these stylish hat decorations until 1910. Populations have increased.



Check out the bright yellow feet. Photo from Unsplash.

On the rebound

The Snowy egret is an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species in the Northern Basin and Range ecoregion and protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The birds breed eastern Oregon and in several southern U.S. states from California to Mississippi and throughout Central America. Snowy Egrets can be found year around in South America.

Where to look

The Snowy Egret is native and very common on the southern Oregon coast and likes to hang out near estuaries (such as Haynes Inlet near North Bend and along the Coos Bay), salt marshes (Isthmus Slough), flooded agricultural fields (like along the Coquille River drainage near Coquille) and mudfields, pond edges, and other shallow waters. A full-grown Snowy Egret is about two feet tall and has a wing span of nearly 40-inches.

Where to learn more:

–All about birds, Cornell Lab of Ornithology

(https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snowy_Egret/id)

- ebird, Merlin, Cornell Lab of Ornithology (<https://ebird.org/species/snoegr>)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (<https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/bitterns-herons-and-egrets>)