

## Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*



**Folk Name:** Lady of the Lake, Louisiana Heron

**Status:** Migrant

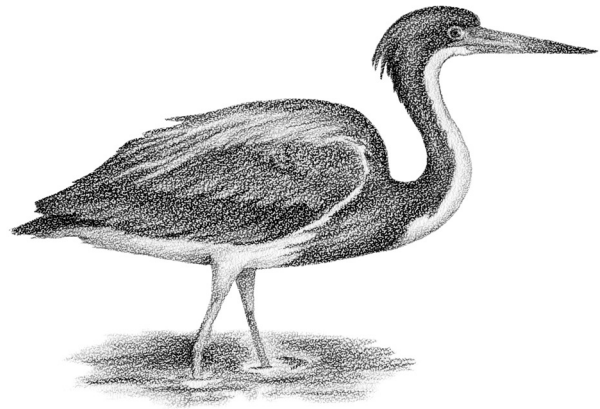
**Abundance:** Very Rare to Rare

**Habitat:** Lakes, rivers, ponds, wetlands, marshes

The Tricolored Heron is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful and graceful of our herons. It is also the least likely to stray far inland from its breeding grounds along the coast of both Carolinas. This mid-sized heron can best be separated from other herons by noting its all-white belly and white underwing coverts that contrast with dark bluish-gray on most of the neck, breast, and back. The third color giving it its common name is a chestnut-rufous color that can be seen on immature birds and on the throat and nape of adults.

To date, we have compiled almost 15 reports of individual Tricolored Herons spotted in the Central Carolinas. In the twentieth century, David Wright located one in York County near Fort Mill, SC, on August 10, 1983, and then he found another on September 1–9, 1983, at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge. Robin Carter found one at Great Falls in Chester County on September 13, 1987. Taylor Piephoff found one on the viewing pond at Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge on August 17, 1990. Bill Hilton Jr. reported one at the Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History in York County.

Steve Tracy found a Tricolored Heron at the Allen Steam Plant in Gaston County in the early 2000s. He then discovered another one in the county near Heatherloch Lake on August 31, 2004. Alan Kneidel photographed one at Lake Don T. Howell in Cabarrus County on August 14, 2008. He noted this bird was "hanging out with a few



juvie Little Blues." It remained there several days.

On July 19, 2011, Bob Haussler sighted an adult Tricolored Heron flying over a marsh on the upper side of Cane Creek Reservoir in Union County. Two years later, George Andrews photographed one on the same lake on August 6, 2013. This bird lingered there for almost a month. Andrews noted "this bird is anything but active, on the same water log perch ea. sighting. Did see fly today, quite ably!" Don Crutchfield reported one at Martins Lake in Chesterfield County on August 12, 2013. One year later, Mike McCloy photographed one at Pee Dee NWR on 13 August. Steve Tracy found a Tricolored Heron along Lake Wylie near the Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden on August 2, 2015, that lingered until at least 16 August. He found another at the same spot the following year on July 17, 2016, providing our most recent sighting.