



FACTSHEET

# Eastern Reef Egret



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**Common Name:** Eastern Reef Egret

**Scientific Name:** *Egretta sacra*

**Conservation Status:** Listed as Least Concern under ICUN (2014). All Rottnest Island's fauna is protected under the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*.

**Habitat:** Coastal habitat

**Body length:** 49-65 cm

**Weight:** 300-470 g

**Gestation period:** 28 days

**Number of young:** 1-3 (2-3 eggs)

## Description:

The Eastern Reef Egret has either dark or white colouring. It is the dark Reef Egret that is found on Rottnest Island. This bird is dark grey all over apart from a small white streak on its throat. It has yellow eyes, greenish legs and a dark greyish-brown bill.

## Diet:

Small fish, crustaceans, molluscs, insects.

## In the Wild:

The Eastern Reef Egret lives on the Island all year round. They are usually seen hunting on the reefs around the Island. The Reef Egret tends to hunt alone and is very stealthy. It crouches low as it moves through shallow water or over coral and rocks. When it sees its prey, it strikes quickly with its long bill.

There are only one or two breeding pairs on the Island. Their nests are made of sticks and are lined with seaweed. These birds hide their nests under shrubs or rock ledges for protection.

## Threats:

- Habitat destruction caused by climate change and severe weather events
- Human activity (particularly tourism and boat traffic)
- Pollution
- Invasive species



## DID YOU KNOW?

Sometimes the Reef Egret stretches its wings out to make a shadow over the water. The Egret does this to trick its prey. The fish thinks that it has reached the sanctuary of a cave. When it lets its guard down, the bird catches it.

