

HERONS



FAMILY ARDEIDAE

GREAT BLUE, LITTLE BLUE, GREEN

AVERAGE WEIGHT: 2-3.3 KG

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 45-54"

WINGSPAN: 66-79"



NORTH AMERICAN HERONS

Herons (particularly the Great Blue) are opportunistic & adaptable animals that can clean out a koi pond within a few days. They are successful, solitary (aside from at breeding time) predators that eat small fish, mammals, & amphibians by spearing them with their bill, feeding around dawn & dusk. They migrate to Canada to breed & spend the summer months, before heading south in the fall. Their habitat is usually marshes, swamps, shorelines - any body of water will do.

The key method of prevention is protecting your fish! Ensure that you have adequate pond coverage

(use floating plants & waterlilies) & that your fish have places to hide (e.g., sunken tubing, caves). You can use a net to deter the heron (once he's bored and gone, you can remove it). You can even sink lattice work - the fish will be protected and the plants can grow through. Having a deeper section will also make your fish trickier to locate.

Herons can certainly be a nuisance to ponds, but please keep in mind that it is illegal to kill them (up to \$100,000 fine)! Using some of the tips on the right, you can prevent herons from harming your fish and frogs!

PROTECTING YOUR POND

BLOCK ACCESS



Herons prefer to land on shore. Use planting baskets and large rocks to block their access to the pond's shallow areas, as well as fishing line. You can also landscape the outside of your pond with gravel, as herons prefer muddy wading grounds.

NOISE & REPELLENTS

Herons will scout out your place to gauge the best time to feed. Mix up your schedule or use a radio to simulate human voices when you're out to keep the heron off-guard.

DECOYS



- There are a number of ways to repel herons, but they are crafty so make sure to move decoys around frequently. You can use the Scarecrow (a motion-sensor activated sprinkler) or animal decoys such as alligators, coyotes or large birds of prey. You can also use a heron decoy, but wait until after mating season (start in June), as the heron may try to mate with the decoy!

- Using a floating material (children's flutter-board) you can cut out the shape of a koi. Thinking it to be a slow, weak fish, it will be unable to spear it and will eventually give up.

BORROW A DOG



Borrow a dog overnight or have one visit and tinkle in your garden. If this isn't an option, you can visit a hunting store and purchase animal urine (from predators like bears, large birds, raccoons) and spray it near the pond.