

# EGRETS & NUISANCE HERONRIES/ROOKERIES

**Community Meeting**  
**June 15, 2023**

**Memorial Library**



# Facts

- Texas Parks & Wildlife reports over 40 nuisance heronries in towns & cities.
- Cattle Egrets are attracted to inland heronries already established by other herons like the blue heron and snowy egret.
- Other egrets are limited by the distribution and abundance of crayfish.
- Cattle Egrets tend to like Live Oak trees with tree canopies with >75% and 20 to 30 feet in height.
- Age of heronries, if left undisturbed is 1-12 years, usually 5 years.
- Number of nests is 130-18,450 – usually 5,000.

# A Rookery





Cattle Egret



Snowy Egret



Yellow-crowned  
Night Heron



Great Egret



Little Blue Heron



Black-crowned  
Night Heron



# Cattle Egrets

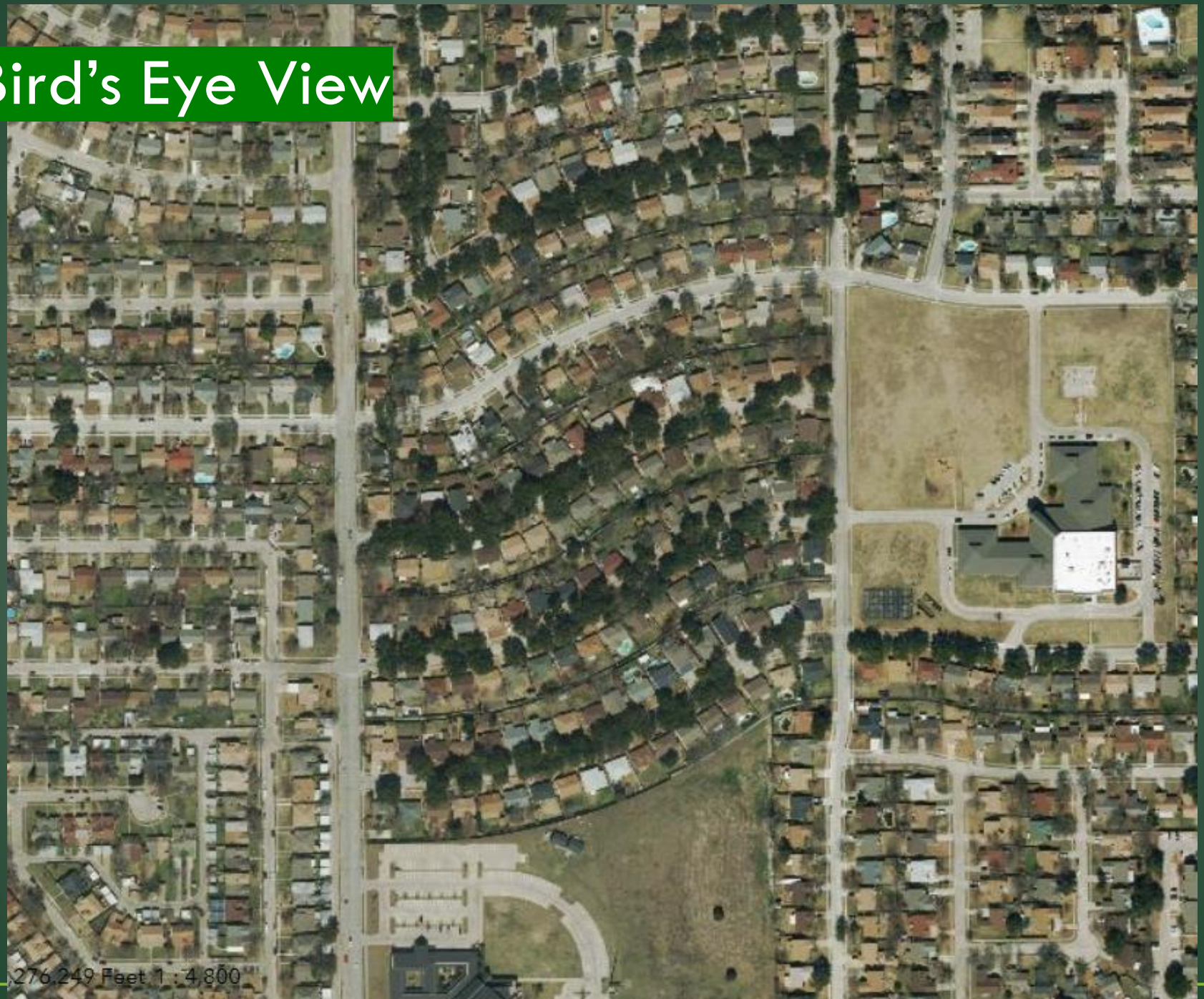


# The Situation

- Neighborhoods in SE Grand Prairie has been experiencing large number of egrets for the past five years.
- Problem is tree canopy that exists in the neighborhoods and cost of trimming Live Oaks. Cost around \$850 or more per tree to trim.
- City Restrictions: Spending public money on private property.



# Bird's Eye View



276,249 Feet 1 : 4,800



## Arlington Helps Neighborhood Plagued by Egrets

City has handed out countermeasures like noisemakers, streamers, balloons to deter the birds from nesting

By Ben Russell

Published Apr 3, 2018 at 4:52 AM | Updated at 7:13 AM CDT on Apr 3, 2018

## Egrets Invade Carrollton

By Randy McIlwain

Published May 30, 2011 at 6:49 PM

IRVING JAN 2014



# Federally protected egrets are a concern for Coppell residents

## Hundreds of Egrets Nest in North Texas Yard

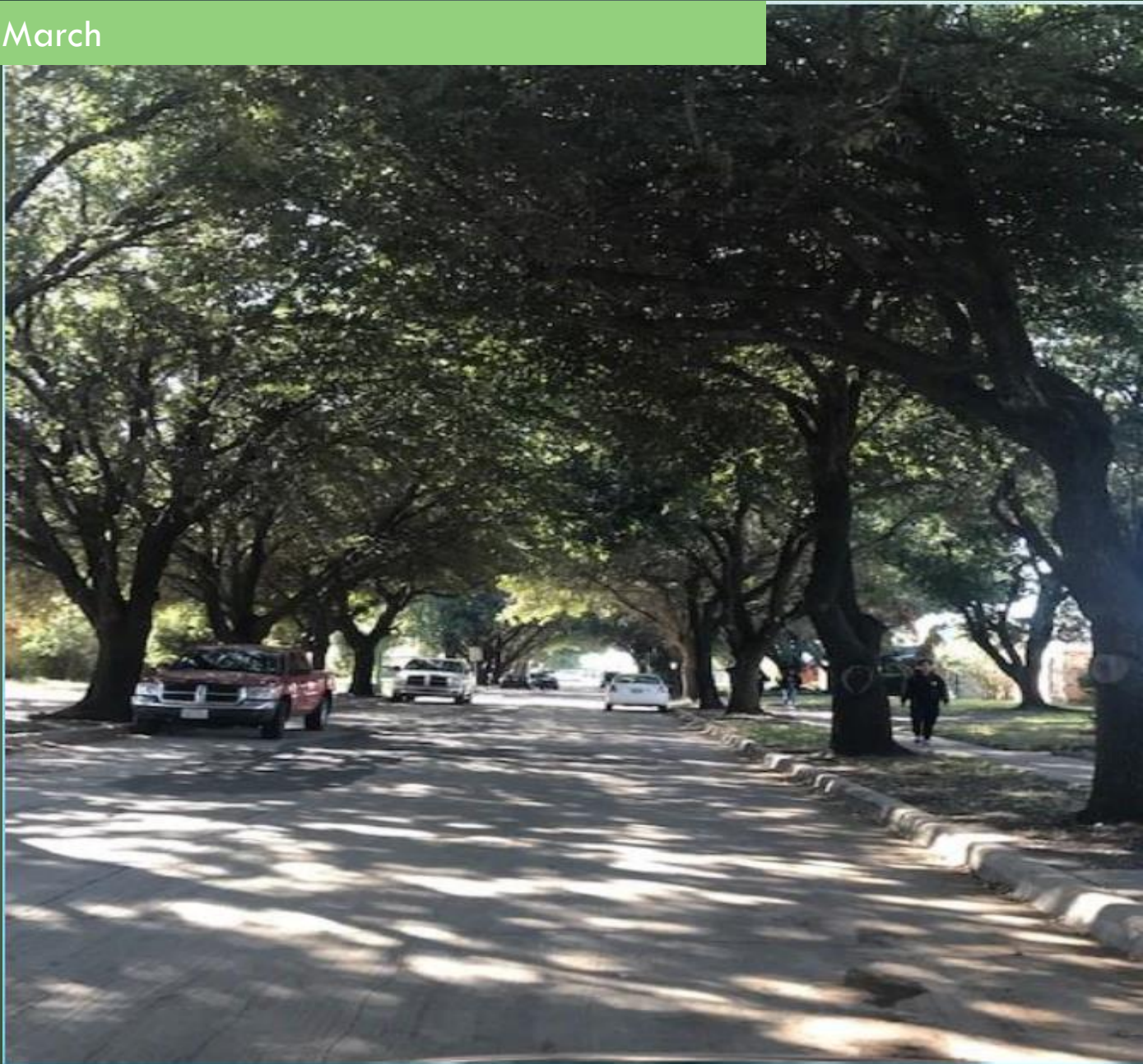
By Jack Highberger

Published Jul 11, 2019 at 9:01 PM | Updated at 10:42 PM CDT on Jul 11, 2019





Street in March



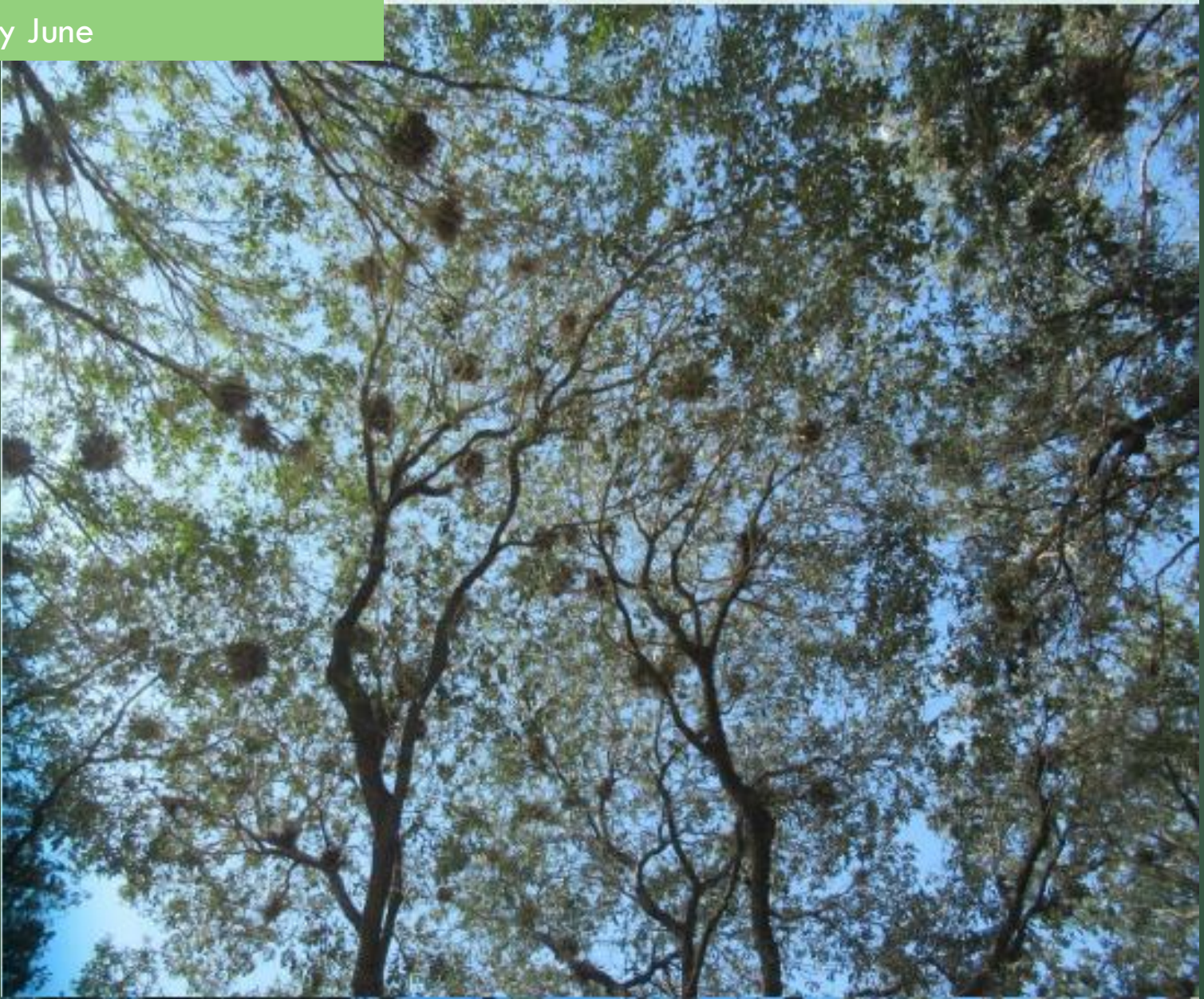


Black Crowned Night  
Heron - SCOUT in MAY





## Trees by June



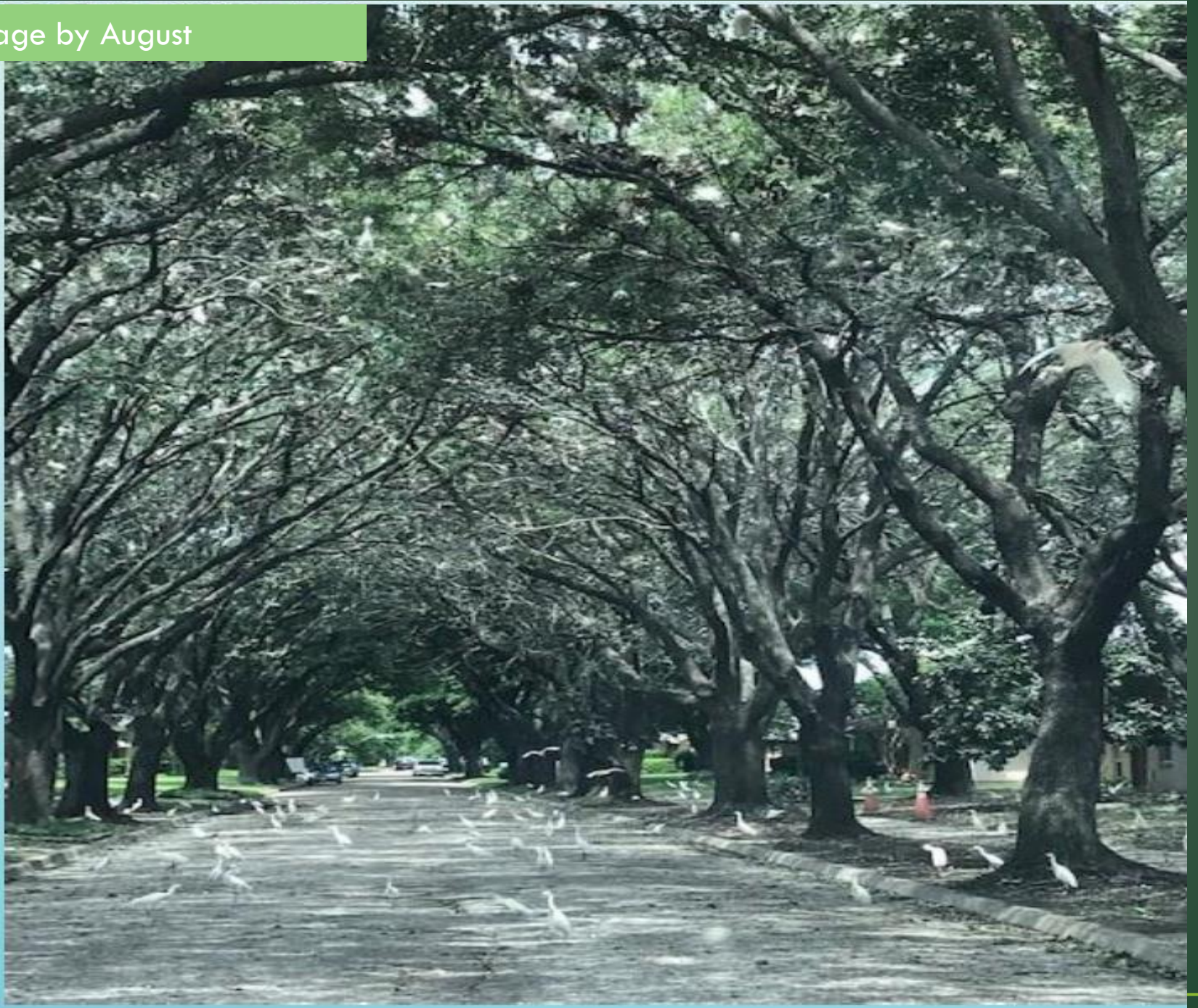


## Neighborhood by July





## Damage by August





# Noise – Odor - Solids





# February



The background of the slide features a pattern of vertical green lines of varying thicknesses, resembling blades of grass, set against a light gray gradient. A solid green horizontal bar spans the width of the slide, serving as a background for the title.

# The Birds



# SCOUTS



**Yellow-crowned Night Heron**  
**February - July**



**Black-crowned Night Heron**  
**February - July**



# JOINERS



**Blue Heron**  
**March - August**



# JOINERS



**Snowy Egret**  
**March - July**



**Black-crowned Night Heron**  
**February - July**



# PARTY CRASHERS



**Cattle Egret**  
**April - October**

# City Actions – 2018



Grand Prairie  
— T E X A S —

## CATTLE EGRETS

INFORMATION ABOUT MIGRATORY  
BIRDS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

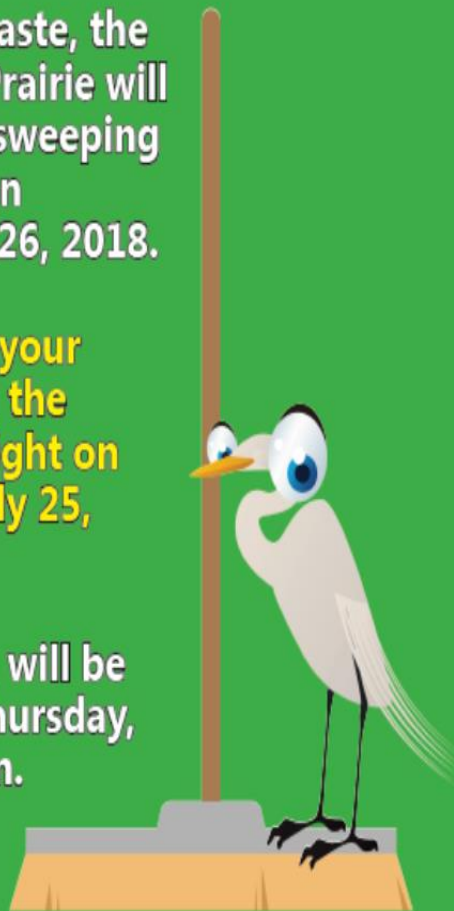


# SPECIAL NOTICE!

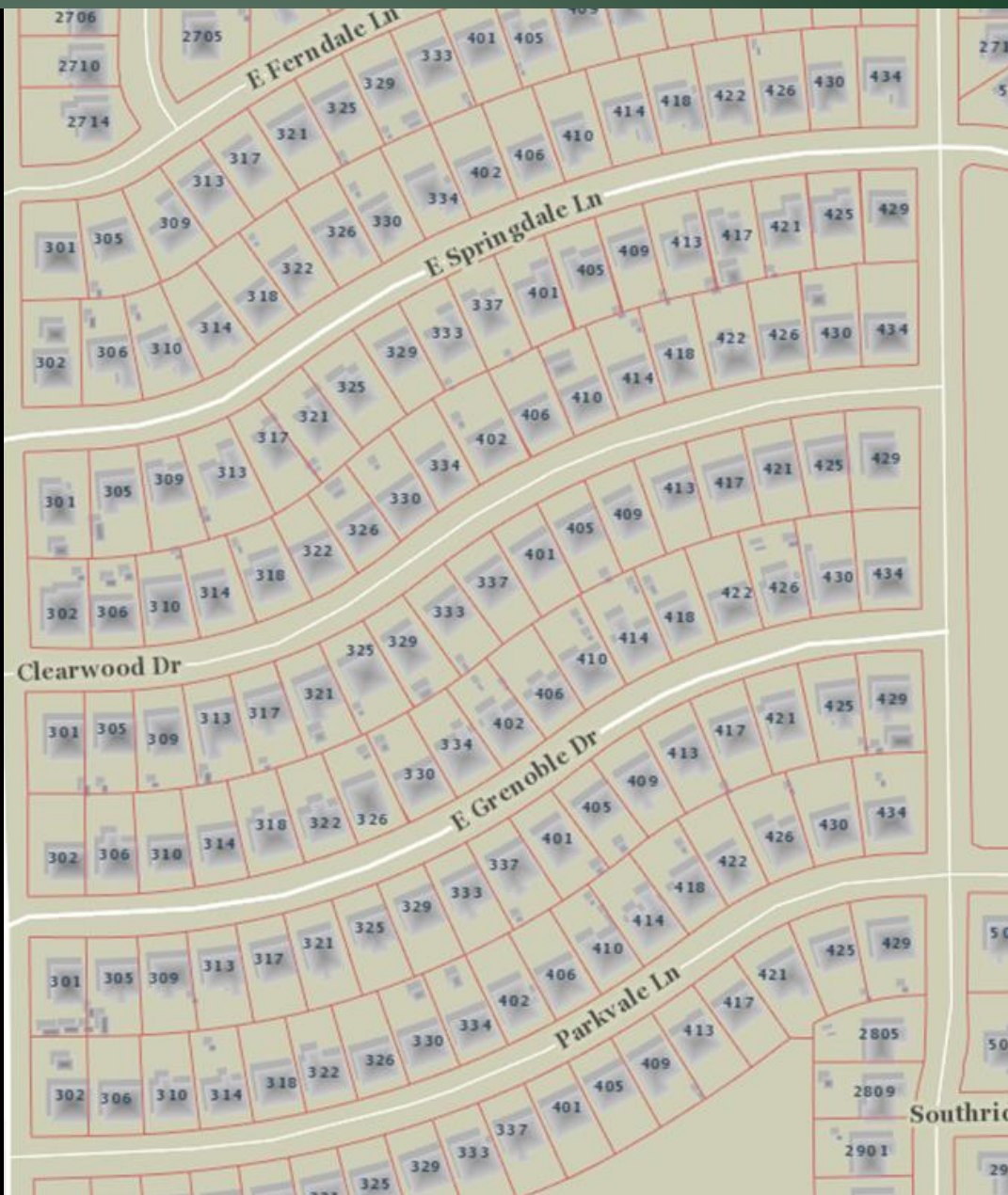
Due to egret waste, the City of Grand Prairie will provide street sweeping on this street on Thursday, July 26, 2018.

Please remove your vehicle(s) from the street by midnight on Wednesday, July 25, 2018.

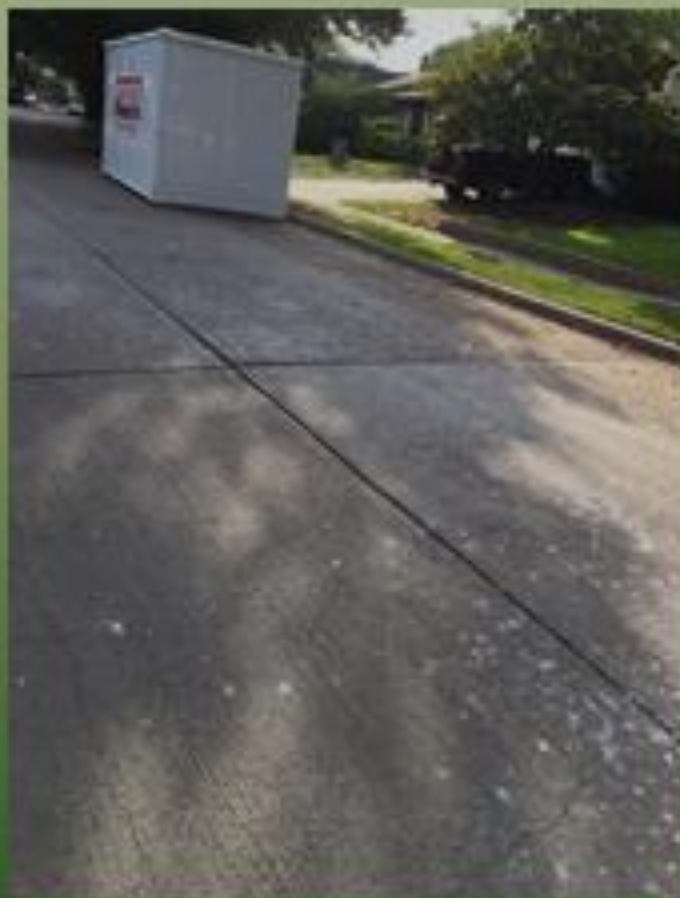
Street cleaning will be complete by Thursday, July 26 at 5 p.m.



Grand Prairie  
TEXAS



# Before and After







# What to do about **MIGRATORY BIRDS** in your neighborhood



## HOW TO PROACTIVELY TAKE ACTION

Find out at our meeting on

**Thursday, December 6 at Development Center 6p.m.**

206 W. Church St., Grand Prairie, TX 75050

### 1 **WINTER: FEBRUARY - MARCH**

Check daily for birds and nesting material in trees

Use scare tactics to drive birds away from property

### 2 **SPRING & SUMMER: MARCH - OCTOBER**

Nesting Season: Do not kill, harass, relocate, move or attempt to scare away the birds during nesting season

### 3 **FALL & WINTER: OCTOBER - FEBRUARY**

- Remove old or abandoned nests
- Trim trees
- Allow sunlight between limbs and other trees
- Destroy old and new nests before egg laying
- Before migratory birds lay eggs, use a combination of scaring devices



Hang "scare eye"  
or moving objects



Use water hoses  
before egg laying



Noisemakers or  
shine lights at night



## MEETING NOTICE MIGRATORY BIRDS *in your neighborhood*

LEARN HOW TO PREVENT BIRDS FROM NESTING  
AND SIGN UP FOR FREE SCARE KITS

**Thursday,** | **Main Library - Inspire Room**  
**January 17** | 901 Conover Dr.,  
**at 6p.m.** | Grand Prairie, TX 75051



Search...



**CITY GOVERNMENT**

**RESIDENTS**

**BUSINESSES**

**VISITORS**

**I WANT TO**

[City Government](#) » [City Departments](#) » [Animal Services](#) » Wildlife and Trap Policies

## Migratory Birds

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### Migratory Birds in Grand Prairie

Texas is a major route for migratory birds shuttling between the United States and Canada. Grand Prairie has been faced with the challenge of managing the effects of egrets in our community's residential areas. Currently, only a few areas of Grand Prairie see migratory birds.



**CATTLE EGRET**

#### WHY ARE THEY IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Cattle Egrets begin migrating from South Texas each year in February in search of favorable nesting areas. History shows they appear to choose the same location each year they return. When establishing a home, Egrets are drawn to neighborhoods with:

- Large, well-established trees with dense and lush covers.
- Abundance of insects where birds are

**Prairie Paws**  
— GRAND PRAIRIE —  
**ANIMAL SERVICES**

### Contact Grand Prairie Animal Services

Prairie Paws Adoption Center  
2222 W. Warrior Trail  
Grand Prairie, TX 75052

Phone: 972-237-8575  
Fax: 972-237-8579  
[Email Animal Services](#)

[Hours & Contact Information](#)

[Volunteer](#)





## Egret Kit Information



### TAPE

This non-sticky "tape" is actually a metallic ribbon made from Mylar film. It is often referred to as bird tape, scare tape, flash tape, or holographic tape. When sunlight hits the tape, it reflects bright flashes of light. It also makes a crackling noise with any slight breeze. Birds associate this combination of light, movement, and sound with fire so they become scared and flee the area. Tie to tree branches.

### EYE BALLOONS

The Eye Spot Balloon is a visual scare device. When birds see the bright colors, predator eyes, and reflective surface, they will be confused and frightened and want to avoid the area. Fill with helium gas from your block captain and hang on tree branches.



### BULLSEYE NOZZLE

Use this hose attachment to scare off adult birds and to knock down old nests or empty nests.



### AIRHORNS

Use these when you see birds in the trees prior to nesting. The noise will startle them and they should fly off.

Remember, once egrets and herons start nesting, federal law prohibits harassing the birds.





# City Response to Increased Habitat

2019





Grand Prairie  
— T E X A S —  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY DIVISION

## SPECIAL NOTICE

### STREET SWEEPING JULY 9-10

Due to egret bird waste, the city of Grand Prairie will provide street sweeping on this street Tuesday or Wednesday, July 9-10, 2019.

Please remove your vehicle(s) from the street by midnight Monday, July 8, 2019.

Street cleaning will be complete by 5 p.m. Wednesday, July 10.

### NATIONAL PROTECTION

Cattle Egrets, among other migratory birds, are a federally protected species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. It is illegal to trap, kill, shoot, poison or otherwise harm them.



Sweep Every 3 Weeks





Street Sweeping July 30, 2019



July 30, 2019 Grenoble



## NOTICE

### IT IS EGRET NESTING SEASON AND FEDERAL LAW PROHIBITS:

- Tree Trimming
- Removing of Limbs
- Disturbance of Egrets

Violators are subject to enforcement by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife and Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

### LEARN HOW TO PREVENT BIRDS FROM NESTING

Thursday,  
August 29  
&  
November 21  
at 6 p.m.

Main Library - Inspire Room  
901 Conover Dr.,  
Grand Prairie, TX 75051



## AVISO

### ES LA TEMPORADA DE ANIDACIÓN DE LA GARCETA Y LA LEY FEDERAL PROHIBE:

- Poder los árboles
- Recortar las ramas
- Pertubar a las garcetas

Los transgresores están sujetos a la aplicación del las leyes del Departamento de Pesca y Vida Silvestre de los Estados Unidos y del Departamento de Parques y Vida Silvestre de Texas.

### APRENDA CÓMO PREVENIR QUE LAS AVES DE LA ANIDEN

Jueves,  
Agosto 29  
y  
Noviembre 21  
a las 6 p.m.

Main Library - Inspire Room  
901 Conover Dr.,  
Grand Prairie, TX 75051







**2020 Actions – Postcards, Street Sweeping  
2x/month, letters to homeowners**



Lake Parks Village 2 & 3, Two Worlds, & Inglewood Village - 2020 Survey



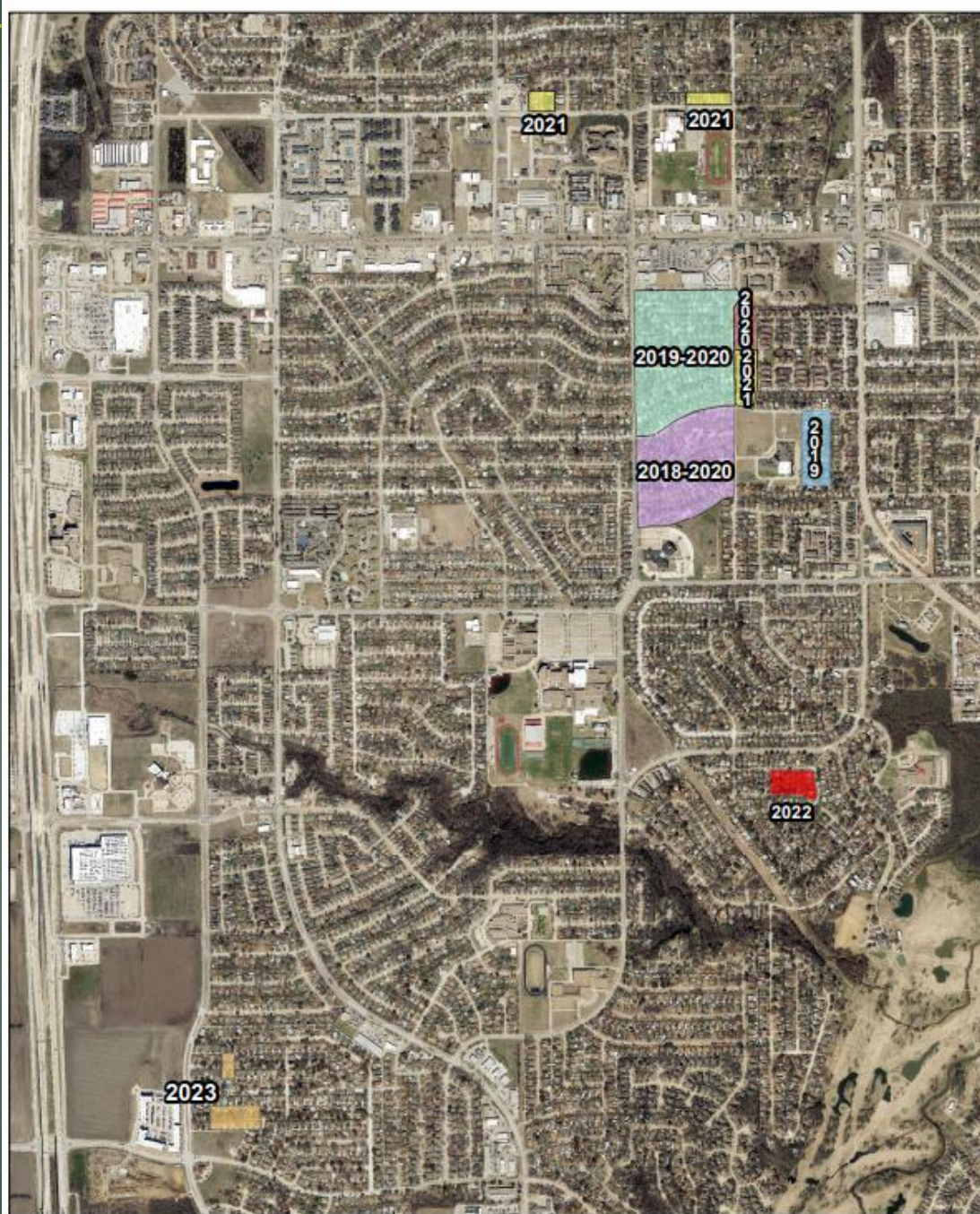


# Egret Survey



	Number of houses with Nest
2019	155
2020	33





**Egret Problem Areas**



# Abatement Measures Considered:

- Propane Cannons: Other cities had Citizens very mad about this.



- Speaker System — Failed. Egrets nested right next to the speakers.



**Health Hazard?**



# Bird Droppings

- Large populations of roosting birds may present a risk of disease to people nearby. The most serious health risks arise from organisms that can grow in the nutrient rich accumulations of bird droppings under a roost, particularly if the roost have been active for a long time.
- According to the Department of State Health Services, no illnesses attributable to egrets has been reported in the state.

# What to do if you think the bird droppings are affecting your health?

- Avoid being outside if you don't need to be.
- Rinse yard and driveway to avoid heavy accumulation.
- Use mild bleach solution on the driveway.
- Consider wearing a dust mask when outside.
- See your physician.
- Contact the Texas Department of State Health Services at



## Public Health Region 2/3 - Arlington

**Aurelia Schmalstieg, MD**, Regional Medical Director

Becky Earlie-Royer, Ph.D., MPH, CHES, Deputy Regional Director

Regional Headquarters: 1301 South Bowen Road, Suite 200, Arlington, TX 76013,  
Mail Code 1905

Phone: 817-264-4500

FAX: 817-264-4506

TDD: 817-264-4505



# Legal Protection

- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Code Chapter 64



Once the FIRST bird lays an egg,  
ALL harassment and scare tactics  
MUST STOP.



2 Houses on Grenoble cut down  
their Live Oak Trees during  
Nesting Season.

Numerous birds were killed or  
injured.

46 Babies/Adults transported by  
Animal Services to a  
Rehabilitation Facility.



## Illegal Tree Trimming





# End of Nesting Season Nest Removal

- All nesting activities by all birds in the rookery have ceased
  - Nests can be removed
  - Infertile/abandoned/dead eggs or long-dead nestlings may also be destroyed

**Interim Empty Nest Policy of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2**



# What you can do

- 1) Trim Trees in Nov- Feb to open the stand 50-75%
- 2) Remove all old nests
- 3) Scout for native species in February
- 4) Use scare tactics on the scouts who are vulnerable to harassment.

REMEMBER: Once birds are nesting, they can not be disturbed.  
Cutting down limbs does disturb nesting.

# SCARE KITS

- WHAT IS IN THEM
  - Reflective holographic tape
  - Scare-eyes balloons
  - Airhorns
  - Bullseye hose nozzles
- HOW TO USE
  - Reflective holographic tape and scare-eye balloons are visual deterrents that need to be attached to tree branches as high as possible. Bright colors and reflective surfaces confuses and frightens birds when use properly.
  - Airhorns emit sounds that scare birds away.
  - Bullseye hose nozzles are attached to garden hoses to scare off adults and to knock down old nests or empty nests.
- WHEN TO USE
  - Scare tactics and devices are most effective when used at the first sight of the bird's arrival.
  - Once the birds establish residency on a tree they are not easily scared off.
  - Any scare tactic and devices may be used up until the birds start laying their first eggs.



Questions?

