

About the Birds in Doris Holman's Books

For more information see specific Bird Fact Sheets.

Egret

The Great Egret is the symbol of the National Audubon Society, one of the oldest environmental organizations in North America. Audubon was founded to protect birds from being killed for their feathers.

Not all young that hatch survive the nestling period. Aggression among nestlings is common and large chicks frequently kill their smaller siblings.

Great egrets do not feed at night like some other heron species. They either forage alone or in mixed flocks, often by slowly walking in shallow water. The male great egret chooses the nesting site and builds a nest platform of sticks and twigs in a tree or bush before he selects a mate.

The great egret has also been called the American egret, common egret, great white egret, and angel bird. The longevity record for a wild Great Egret is nearly 23 years.

Duck

Adult ducks are fast fliers, but can be caught on the water by large aquatic predators. This can occasionally include fish such as the musky in North America or the pike in Europe. In flight however, ducks are safe from all predators except humans and falcons.

Ducks have huge preen glands that are important because this oil helps control germs and lice on their skin and feathers. Without the preen glands, their feathers would become waterlogged, and the ducks would sink.

Seagull

There are approximately 28 regularly found species of gulls in North America, with the Herring Gull being the most common.

The Herring Gull regularly drinks fresh water when it is available and if it isn't, the gull will drink seawater. A seagull have special glands located over its eyes that allow the salt to excrete from its body. Also, a seagull's coloring can change with the season from white to gray or black.

In the classic children's fable, *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, the main character is a young seagull. This story teaches that this world is not the end and that material pursuits are not the reason we are here. The lesson teaches that we can give ourselves freedom to soar like Jonathan, if we can allow ourselves to listen to our hearts and even when it goes against the accepted ways.