

NATURE'S WAY

The Great Blue Heron

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The Great Blue Heron
(Ardea herodias)



By BUD SIMPSON

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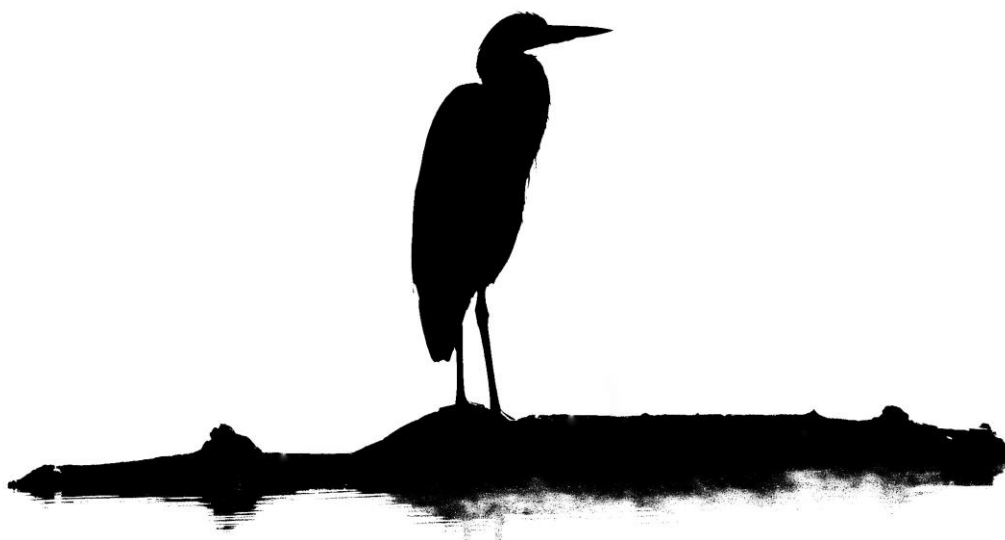
This small book is dedicated to all who love Mother Nature and all her creatures, but in particular, all its feathered creatures.

*He walks the shallow with an antic grace.
The great feet breaks the ridges of the sand,
The long eyes notes the minnow's hiding place.
His beak is quicker than the human hand.*

From, *The Heron*, by Theodore Roethke
(1908-1963)

Foreword by Paul Knoop

INTRODUCTION:



This book is intended as a photographic essay concerning one bird species, the Great Blue Heron. It is not a technical piece by any means. My intent is to let these photographs speak for themselves as much as possible. I might interject my observations into its photographic narration at some points, but only as clarification or to point out an observation of my own pertaining to what these great birds have taught me about themselves. They were the teachers, I was the eager student. They still have much to teach me. I'll never live long enough to know it all. I was amazed to find that I had over 9,000 images of Great Blue Herons in my computer folders. I know I will run across some photographs later on and say to myself: I should have included this one, or that one. I still take more photos each time I go to my lake. I can't help myself. Who knows if the next photo will teach me something else about these aptly named birds. I'm almost afraid to check my picture files for all the other species I have photographed. If all goes well with this offering, I may do other books on other species in at some point in the future.



It all starts here; in the Heron rookery. Many Great Blue Herons gather communally, sometimes filling many trees with what appears to be, loosely built nests of sticks and twigs. The males bring the material to the nest and the female inserts the twigs into just the right spot for a strong structure.



This photograph shows but part of a rookery. Other nearby sycamore trees are not shown here, but still have about the same density of nests as these. These nests are near completion of their yearly refurbishing.