

# Cherokee Ethnobiology

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## GREAT BLUE HERON

### Cherokee Importance

Egrets, Herons, and Cranes of all types were important to the Cherokees for a number of cultural reasons. Feathers from all of these birds were utilized as components of both ceremonial and everyday attire. Chief John Ross's Cherokee name was "Great White Crane" – Guisgui (ᎠᎺᎠ ᎠᎺᎠ).

### Description

Great blue herons are a very tall bird with a slender body and a long neck and legs. Great blue herons have a wingspan of nearly 6 feet and can stand nearly 4 feet tall. Most of the feathers are gray in color, but the feathers on its back are a more blue color, hence their common name. They also have black plumes that start just above each eye and extend off the back of their head. The great blue heron can also occur in a white phase, not albino. However, they can be distinguished by the plumage on their head and yellow legs. They are usually seen wading near the shoreline of any water body looking for fish, crayfish, frogs, salamanders, and any other food they can swallow.

<b>Where found:</b>	Great blue herons can be found anywhere there is a shoreline, from ponds, streams, wetlands, rivers or lakes.
<b>Other names:</b>	Crane, Heron, Herring
<b>Taxonomy:</b>	Kingdom - Animalia Phylum - Chordata Class - Aves Order – Ciconiiformes Family – Ardeidae Genus – Arde Species – <i>herodias</i>

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