



COMMONWEALTH of the
NORTHERN MARIANAS ISLANDS

- Farallon de Pajaros (Uracas)
- Maug
- Asuncion
- Agrihan
- Pagan
- Alamagan
- Guguan
- Sarigan
- Anatahan
- Farallon de Medinilla
- Saipan
- Tinian
- Aguiguan
- Rota

* Distribution in the CNMI



PHOTOS BY TIM SUTTERFIELD



NATIVE WATERBIRD
CATTLE EGRET

Chuchuko a'paka *Chamorro* Ghe're'bwesch *Carolinian*

IDENTIFICATION

The Cattle egret is small white heron with a yellow bill and long, black legs. It grows to about twenty inches. During the breeding season, the bill and legs turn brighter and the feathers on their heads, backs, and breasts are washed with orange.

HABITAT and FEEDING

The Cattle egret often forages with livestock in open fields and pastures and can also be seen in wetland habitats.

Cattle egrets are opportunistic feeders. They conserve energy by catching insects that are disturbed by the movements of livestock. Their favorite insects are grasshoppers, flies and moths. They also feed on spiders.

REPRODUCTION

Cattle egrets usually nests in colonies. Males establish territories and compete for females. They will bond and mate with one female per season. Males collect nesting materials such as twigs, sticks, and vines. Females build their nest above the ground in a shrub or tree. She lays three to five light blue eggs and gives an

additional amount of male hormone to the first eggs laid.

Parents take turns incubating the eggs for a period of three to four weeks. The first-born chicks are more aggressive than the younger chicks when competing for food.

Parents take turns feeding the young chicks. After two to three weeks the chicks leave the nest but remain nearby and continue begging for food from their parents. After about two months, the chicks are completely independent and can fly to other areas to forage for food on their own.

THREATS and CONSERVATION

This species is quite common and is very adaptable. However, potential threats are loss of habitat and introduced predators.

The Cattle egret is a protected wading bird in the CNMI. It is illegal to hunt, kill or possess this protected species or any part thereof without a permit issued by the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife. The taking of eggs from any species of land or sea bird is also prohibited without a permit.



ARTIST DOUGLAS PRATT

Bubulcus ibis

FIESTA BIRDS

Increased migration to the CNMI corresponds with the Rota fiesta, held every year in October.

FACTOID!



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