STOW LAKE GREAT BLUE HERON COLONY CHRONOLOGY: 1993-PRESENT

Prepared by Nancy H. DeStefanis
Executive Director, San Francisco Nature Education **All nests at Heron Island unless otherwise indicated.**

1993 Nest # 1: 2 hatched, 2 fledged

1994 Nest # 1: 3 hatched, 3 fledged

1995 Nest # 1: 0 hatched

(Parents sat on eggs for six months before giving up.)

Nest # 2: 3 hatched, 3 fledged

1996: Nest # 1 2 hatched , 2 fledged

Nest # 2 2 hatched, 2 fledged

Nest # 3 2 hatched, 1fledged

Nest # 4 3 hatched, 0 fledged

1997: Nest # 1: 4 hatched, 4 fledged

Nest # 2: 4 hatched, 4 fledged

1998: Nest # 1 3 hatched, 3 fledged

1999: Nest # 1: 4 hatched, 4 fledged

LATE NEST # 2: 4 hatched, 4 fledged (July-August 1999)

LATE NEST # 3: 3 hatched, 0 fledged (July-August 1999)

(Parents abandoned chicks in August)

2000 -Nest # 1

(Heron island) 3 hatched 3 fledged (April-June, 1999)

Nest # 2

(Strawberry Isl.) 3 hatched, 3 fledged (April-June,1999)

Nest # 3

(Heron Island) 3 hatched, 3 fledged (July-Aug. 1999)

Nest no. 4

(Heron Island) 3 hatched, 3 fledged (July-August 1999)

Nest no. 5

(Heron Island) 2 hatched, 0 fledged (July -Aug. 2000)

(Parents abandoned chicks in August)

2001 -Nest #1 0 hatched

2002 -Nest # 1

(Heron island) 3 hatched, 3 fledged (hatch date: March-fledged May, 2002)

Nest # 2

(Heron Island) 4 hatched, 4 fledged (hatch date: April)

Nest # 3
(Strawberry Isl.) 2 hatched, 2 fledged (hatch date: May)

2003 - all nests on Heron Island

Nest #1 2 hatched, two fledged
Nest # 2 2 hatched, two fledged
Nest # 3 4 hatched, four fledged

2004 Season-10 chicks fledged from all four nests

Nest #1
Nest #2
Nest #3
Nest #4

Total chicks fledged as of 2004: 71 chicks in 11 seasons

2005- 10 chicks from 4 nests

Nest no. 1	3hatched	2fledged
Nest no. 2	3 hatched	3fledged
Nest no. 3	3 hatched	3 fledged
Late Nest 4	2 hatched-June 20th , 2 fledged August 2005	

Arrived at Stow May 10, 2005-constructed new nest
Sitting on eggs May 20, 2005

Total chicks fledged: 10

2006- total 16 chicks from 6 nests
Nest no. 1 -2 chicks- 2 fledged
Nest no. 2- 2 cks-2 fledged
Nest no. 3 – 2cks-2 fledged
Nest no. 4-4 cks hatched-4 fledged

Late nests: left side of tree: July 8, 2006
Nest no. 5 -3 cks hatched –3 fledged (left side of tree)
Nest no. 6- 3 cks hatched- 3 fledged (right side of tree)

Best season ever.

2007 – 14 chicks from 6 nests

2008 – 3 nests 8 chicks

2009 – 3 nests 10 chicks

2010 – 6 nests 10 chicks

2011 – 3 nests 10 chicks

2012 – 2 nests 4 chicks

2013 – 6 chicks fledged from 3 nests
Nest # 1 - 2 chicks
Nest # 2 - 2 chicks
Nest # 4 - 2 chicks

Nest # 3 - abandoned

2014 – 3 nests – all failed in April 2014

2014 – 1 nest – 3 chicks fledged by Sept. 8, 2014

The same pair from the nest that failed, built a new nest on top of old center nest and produced three chicks on or around June 30, 2014. We know it is the same pair because the male in both nests has a tongue injury causing the tongue to protrude like a pencil below its beak.

2015-1 nest- 3 chicks fledged on May 20, 2015- Heron Island

The same male that built the successful nest last year returned with a partner and occupied last year's nest. The pair hatched 3 chicks which all departed by May 20, 2015 from Heron Island.

2015-Nest #1 nest- 3 chicks fledged on May 20, 2015- Heron Island-nests 2, 3 & 4 were unsuccessful.

2015- 1 nest near Waterfall at Stow Lake- 2 chicks fledged on August 4, 2015

Two pair of herons from Heron Island moved over to the Island near the Waterfall at the end of April 2015. Both pair constructed new nests in a Monterey Pine tree. One nest was abandoned in early June, but the other nest was successful. This is the first time that the Great Blue Herons have nested on this tiny island; there are only two trees on the island. Note: there were originally three chicks in the nest, but one disappeared after a few days.

2016- 5 nests on island near Waterfall.

nest #1- 3 fledged nest #2- 3 fledged nest #3- 3 fledged nest
#4- 2 fledged nest #5 - late nest - 2 chicks hatched approx.
July 9, 2016. **2017 - 5 nests near the waterfall**
14 chicks fledged from 5 nests, 2 additional nests were occupied and later abandoned.

Nest #1- 4 chicks
Nest #2- 2 chicks (originally 3 chicks, one died after hatching)

Nest #3- 3 chicks
Nest #4- 2 chicks
Nest #5- 3 chicks

2018- 7 nests near the waterfall

Nest #1- chicks-nest and chicks fell on 4/9/18.Chicks did not survive.
Nest #2- 2 chicks fledged.
Nest #3- 4 chicks fledged.
Nest #4- 2 chicks fledged.
Nest #5- 3 chicks fledged.
Nest #6- 3 chicks fledged.
Nest #7- 3 chicks fledged.

*6 successful nests: -17 chicks fledged.

**Most chicks fledged in one season in history of colony.

2019 8 nests, 21 chicks

Nest #1- 3 chicks hatched, 3 fledged
Nest #2- 4 chicks hatched, 4 fledged
Nest #3- 2 chicks hatched, 2 fledged
Nest #4- 3 chicks hatched, 3 fledged
Nest #5- 2 chicks hatched, 2 fledged
Nest #6- 2 chicks hatched, 2 fledged
Nest #7- 2 chicks hatched, 2 fledged
Nest #8- 3 chicks hatched, 3 fledged

*21 chicks fledged in 2019.
**Best Year Ever In 26 Years!

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2020 7 nests, all 17 chicks fledged

Nest #1- 3 chicks hatched,
Nest #2- 2 chicks hatched,
Nest #3- 3 chicks hatched,
Nest #4- 1 chick hatched,
Nest #5- 3 chicks hatched,
Nest #6- 3 chicks hatched,
Nest #7- 2 chicks hatched,
Nest #8- inactive

2021 8 nests on Heron Island - the tiny island near the waterfall.

Ten chicks fledged from four nests. Two additional nests were occupied and later abandoned. 2 other nests fell into the water.

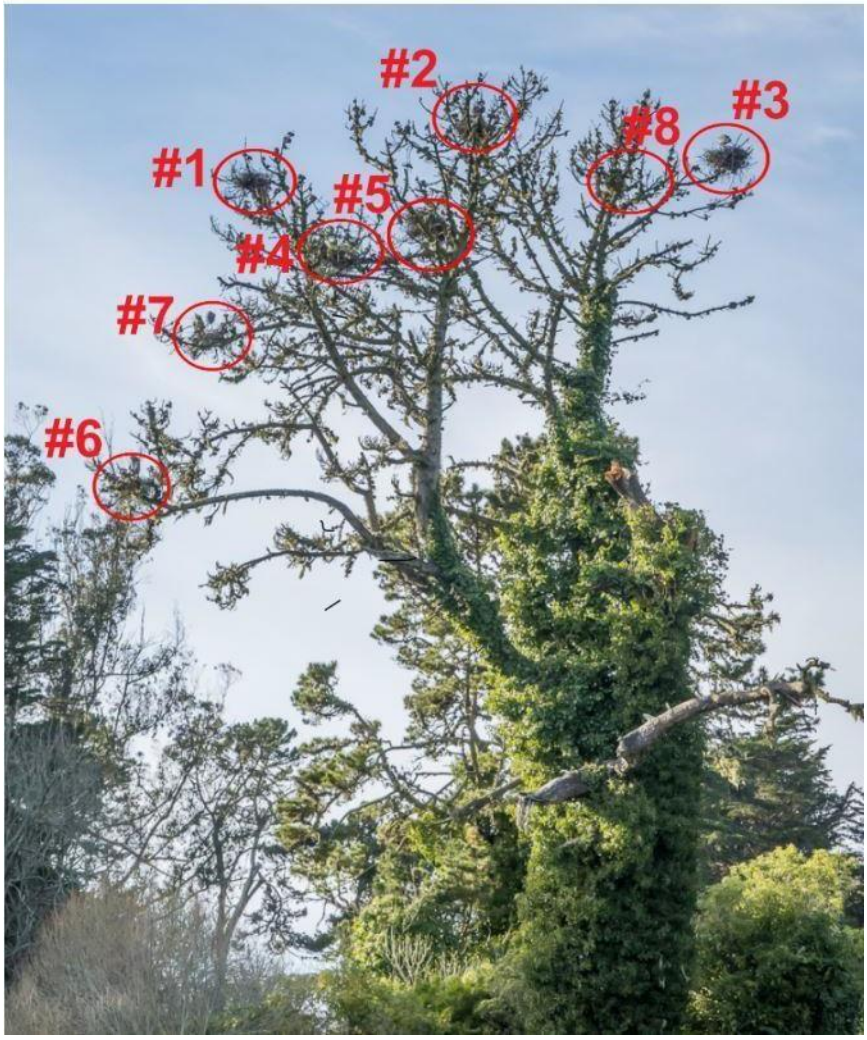
By June 30, all parents and chicks had departed Stow Lake. The season started with eight active nests. However as the season progressed, nests were abandoned, adult herons stole sticks from the nearby tree with a Red Tail Hawk nest and two nests fell into the lake with chicks aboard as their underlying branches snapped off in heavy winds.

There are two trees on the tiny island. What was once a healthy Monterey Pine Tree for the breeding Great Blue Herons is now dead and many branches with nests have broken off in heavy winds since Nov. 2020. The tree is quite bare.

The adjacent Monterey Pine tree with the Red Tail Hawk nest is healthy and thriving. Perhaps the herons will someday displace the Red Tail Hawks and inhabit their tree for future breeding.

Nest #1- occupied then abandoned
Nest #2- 3 chicks hatched, 3 fledged
Nest #3- 3 chicks hatched, 1 expired in nest, other 2 perished when nest fell into the water.
Nest #4- occupied then abandoned
Nest #5- 2 chicks hatched, 2 fledged
Nest #6- 3 chicks hatched, 3 fledged
Nest #7- 3 chicks hatched, 2 fledged before nest fell into water, remaining chick in nest perished.
Nest #8- 2 chicks hatched, 2 expired in nest.

View of Heron Tree from South Side



GRAND TOTAL: 259 CHICKS FLEDGED AT STOW LAKE.

Notes:

a. Original nest from 1993 - fell into Stow Lake and sunk on Jan. 24, 2000 (This nest appears in 'Heron Island' video on YouTube.)

b. Nest from 1996 fell into a pedal boat on December 31, 1997.

c. Heron Island 1 (1993-2015) at Stow Lake is located opposite Stow Lake Boathouse.

d. Heron Island 2 (2015-present) at Stow Lake is located on a small island opposite the Strawberry Island waterfall.

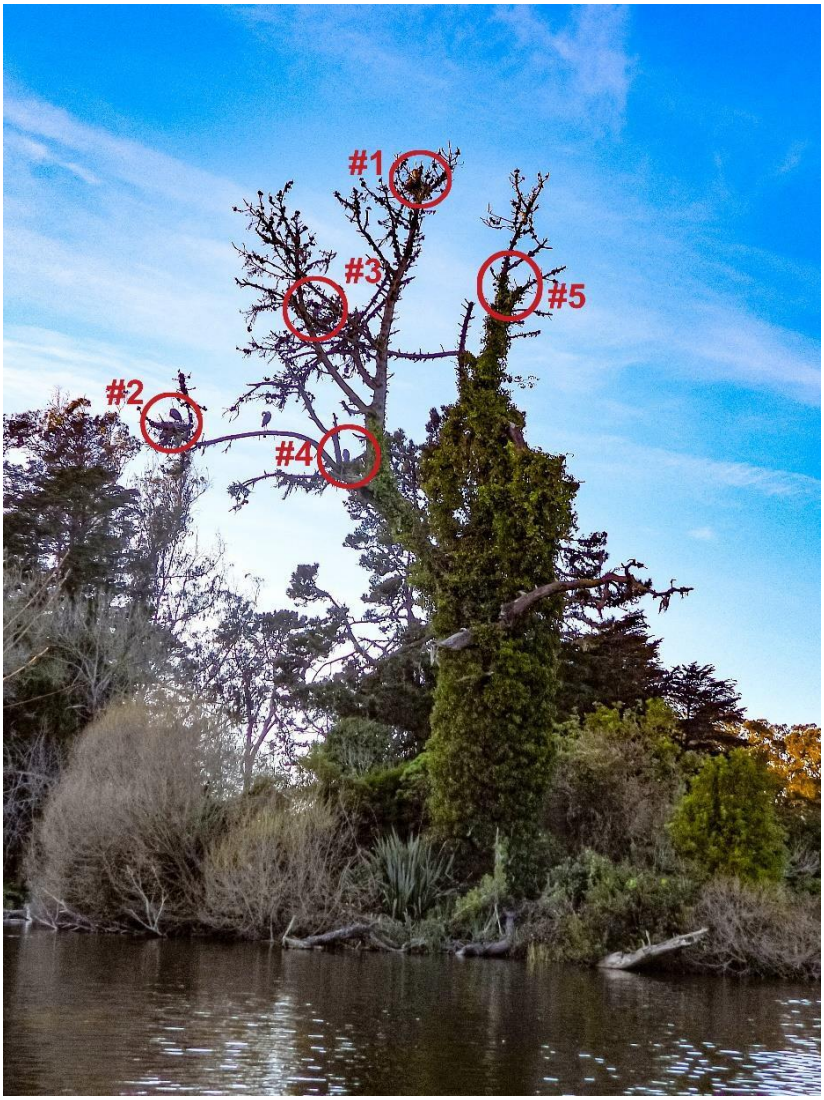
e. Great Blue Herons began nesting in 1993 at Stow Lake. The colony was discovered by field ornithologist Nancy DeStefanis.

f. To date, Great Blue Herons have nested successfully on three islands at Stow Lake: Strawberry Island, Heron Island and Waterfall Island.

For more information: Please contact Nancy DeStefanis, Executive Director, San Francisco Nature Education: info@sfnature.org

Revised 8/19/21

2022 - 3 Nests on Heron Island II-tiny island by the waterfall.



Nest #1 – 2 chicks fledged

Nest #3 – 3 chicks fledged

Nest #5 – 3 chicks fledged

Note: Nest #2 had 2 chicks which expired at about 2 weeks old.

Note: Nest #4 – Pair were incubating eggs when nest blown out by strong winds.

2022 - New Nest on the island by the Stow Lake Boathouse

1 nest- 3 chicks approx.10 weeks old. Still being fed by parents as of 7/18/22.

END OF 2022 ENTRIES.

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