

San Antonio's Assault on Egrets



Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation is proud that San Antonio was named Bird City Texas, unfortunately, we have found that the proclamation may not be serving egrets and other bird species as well as the name would imply. In order to earn this designation, an extensive application process was completed followed by a list of conservation actions that must be taken by the city to meet Bird City Texas requirements.

WRR has seen egrets targeted by city residents and officials for decades, especially at Elmendorf Lake Park and Brackenridge Park. WRR avidly opposes the mistreatment and blatant disregard for these wild animals by city, state, and federal entities. We will continue advocating for what is best for these birds, which is respect for them as sentient beings and wildlife that occupied this earth—and these particular spots—long before humans.

WRR is committed to working alongside city, county, and state as well as public and private entities to make this region a safer and more respectful place for birds and wildlife of all kind. WRR aims to build a coalition to represent and protect these birds, and we encourage the participation of individuals and local and state entities.





How *You* Can Help



1 Follow WRR on social media ([@wrrtx](#)) and/or sign up to receive our e-alerts to learn about what is happening and how to get involved

Read about Bird City Texas requirements and activities:

- 2**
- Texas Parks & Recreation Bird City Website:
 - tpwd.texas.gov/wildlife/birding/bird-city-texas
 - Bexar Audubon Society Bird City Website
 - bexaraudubon.org/bird-city-texas

Contact local officials and organizations to tell them you want more transparency and public engagement

- 3**
- Texas Parks & Recreation
 - Bexar Audubon Society
 - San Antonio Mayor
 - City Council

The History of San Antonio's Assault on Egrets

2000

WRR intervenes on the bulldozing of an egret rookery on private property that had been nesting ground for thousands of birds for 20+ years. Despite WRR rescuing 24 chicks, only 10 survived and were released back to the wild where they were forced to find a new home, a fate that has been plaguing egrets ever since.

2010

The assault on birds continues as Joint Base San Antonio – Kelly Field (JBSA) claims egrets have become a safety hazard in air space.

2017

Methylantranilate chemical spray, named "Bird Buffer," is deployed at Elmendorf Lake Park. This chemical works by irritating the pain receptors associated with birds' senses of taste and smell. The wall of poisonous fog keeps the birds on Bird Island, their haven within Elmendorf Lake Park. No public notice is made, despite National Institute of Health's Toxicology Data Network showing it as a hazardous irritant to humans as well as the birds.



2003

The city of San Antonio uses pyrotechnic "bird screamers," "bird banger" firecrackers, decoy owls, and balloons to try to scare birds from downtown.

2016

JBSA make unsubstantiated claims that the Elmendorf Lake rookery causes safety risks of distracting pilots and colliding with planes.

Feb. 2018

JBSA expands their claims, now asserting that Clovel Gardens Landfill and surrounding area rookeries cause safety risks of distracting pilots and colliding with planes.



Apr 2018

"Bird Buffer" is deployed in Brackenridge Park with no public notice of its hazards to humans.

Egret rescues increase exponentially at Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation. WRR formally contacts the City and launches a public awareness campaign around the disruption of the lives of these egrets and other federally protected birds.

Feb 2019

The assault on birds continues.

Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales and JBSA personnel claims that thousands of bird aircraft strikes, where a bird collides with a moving airplane, take place at Kelly Air Force base annually. In reality, city reports show only one bird strike per year is linked to cattle egrets.

Dec 2019

Bird Island is essentially leveled to evict birds from Elmendorf Lake Park. Trees are cut down or topped, ground vegetation cleared, and 70% of the island's canopy is removed. City of San Antonio claims they would like the birds to relocate to Brackenridge or Mitchell Lake



Aug 2018

WRR installs temporary signage at Brackenridge Park educating the public on the migratory nesting, federal protections, and WRR as a resource for any injured or orphaned birds. The Texas Department of Agriculture bans "Bird Buffer" at Brackenridge due to human health risks and unlawfulness of use around endangered species. The San Antonio Zoo continues use.

Jun 2019

City employs "Bird Buffer" in Elmendorf Park to deter birds from Bird Island from travelling to the public park despite the 2018 ban from Brackenridge Park by Texas Department of Agriculture.

2020 - Now

Signage and cones once allowed by the City of San Antonio and Parks and Recreation are now being removed daily, causing rising deaths and injuries to birds by motorists.

Harassment efforts to evict birds continue TODAY at Brackenridge Park and Elmendorf Lake Park and begin extending into the King Williams District – all using the same egregious tactics. When paired with the regular topping and removal of trees in Brackenridge Park, the plight of egrets can only be expected to worsen.

