

## AMERICAN BITTERN



#1. **American Bittern**, *Botaurus lentiginosus*  
© Whatbird.com

The **American Bittern**, *Botaurus lentiginosus*.

A marsh bird, or more specifically a male bittern, landed here at South Pond at EastView, calling for a mate during the years 2013 to 2016. It wasn't heard for three years and then came back in 2020 and 2021.

As a matter of fact, both South and North Ponds have perfect cover, while South Pond has the perfect overall depth for the American Bittern to be successful. On the other hand, I'm not sure if there is enough food to support a family of Bitterns. There is obviously something enticing about the habitat to bring a male to the pond and have him call for a mate for several days to longer than a week in two cases. What I don't know is what is preventing a female from showing up to join him at South Pond.

So, listen for a weird booming call, sounding like a low short melodious honk, a low guttural sound that repeats five times, then waits several minutes and calls again doing this for five to ten minutes. The bird then rests and stays quiet. If that happens you are listening to the bittern!

Looking at picture #1 you can see that this bird looks like a medium sized heron and in fact is in the heron family. It is a very secretive solitary wading bird, camouflaged by its color and tends to stay within the reeds and cattails as much as possible. On occasion, before the cattails and reeds become tall or in a new marsh, one might catch a glimpse of this species.

As solitary as this species is its range is well known. The species breeds in all of Canada and central and northern United States. It winters in the southern U.S. as well as the Caribbean and parts of Central America.

Because the American Bittern's diet is mostly fish, and includes crustaceans and insects I may have answered my own question: Why can't the male entice a female to nest here

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in South Pond? The fish supplies in South Pond are almost non-existent although I heard that some small minnow like fish had been released into the pond several years ago.



#2. **American Bittern**, *Botaurus lentiginosus*  
© Madison Audubon

### GREEN HERON



#3. **Green Heron**, *Butorides virescens*,  
© Wikipedia

The **Green Heron**, *Butorides virescens*, is a very common small heron found in many small wetland habitats. This bird is primarily a dusk to dawn type bird, although one could see it during the day. However, it prefers to hunt at night and generally will stay mostly hidden during daylight hours. Yet, during nesting season both parents will hunt during the day for the benefit of their nestlings.

The primary diet of this species is also fish, as well as amphibians and insects. They have been known to eat small mammals.

An interesting sidelight for this species is that it is one of the few individual bird species that is known to use "tools" while hunting for food. It will either use captured beetles, insects, even bread and drop the item on the water to attract fish. Once a fish is attracted to the bait the heron's bill swiftly darts in to catch the unsuspecting fish.

A close relative of the **Green Heron** of North America is the non-migratory **Striated Heron**, *Butorides striata*, of Eastern Panama in Central America to Northern Argentina in South America.

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## **OBSERVATIONS**

### **MAMMALS**

White-tailed Deer  
Red Fox  
Coydogs howling/barking  
Gray Squirrel

### **REPTILES**

Garter Snake

### **AMPHIBIANS**

Bullfrog  
Green Frog

### **BUTTERFLIES**

Cabbage White, P.  
Mourning Cloak  
Canadian Tiger Swallowtail  
Black Swallowtail  
Common Ringlet  
\*Monarch, P.

\*P represent a picture taken of subject.

*[All Measurements taken at solar noon \(1230 EST\).](#)*

### **PRECIPITATION**

**Average June 1-14 Precipitation for EastView Vermont = 27.0 mm or 1.1 inches.**

**Overcast Days 1-14: We had 10- days, of overcast skies. Of those overcast skies 6 days produced rain.**