

19 MAY -2 PM 4:09



CITY HALL
ONE FRANK OGAWA PLAZA • 2ND FLOOR
OAKLAND, CA 94612
(510) 238-7001 • dkalb@oaklandca.gov

DAN KALB

COUNCILMEMBER – DISTRICT 1

Date: May 2, 2019
To: Members of City Council and Members of the Public
From: Council President Pro Tempore Kalb
Re: A RESOLUTION NAMING THE BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON THE OFFICIAL BIRD OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND

SUMMARY

Many cities, states, and countries designate specific bird species to serve as a symbolic representation of their culture and identity. While several of Oakland’s neighboring cities have designated official city birds such as the Alameda Snowy Egret, the Berkeley Barn Owl, and the Richmond Osprey, Oakland has not yet officially designated a city bird. The resolution proposes to name the Black-crowned Night Heron as the official Bird of the City of Oakland.

ANALYSIS & OUTCOME

The Heron’s bold personality and industrious lifestyle represent our strong-willed, tenacious, and dynamic community. No matter how many times they are displaced or face hardships, Black-Crowned Night Herons keep coming back and even thrive. The Black-Crowned Night Herons are nesting right now in Oakland, so it is a great time to honor them.

While official city bird designation for the Night Heron will not result in any additional regulatory protection, it will raise public awareness of the unique behavior and habitat requirements of this species, foster public stewardship for its continued existence, and be a potent symbol for awareness of the increasingly difficult challenges posed by climate change in the years ahead, magnifying the message that we must safeguard the environment and the animal species whose fates depend upon it.

BACKGROUND & PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

International Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on May 11, making this month a fitting time of year to raise awareness about the plight of all migratory birds, including the Black-crowned Night Heron. The San Francisco Bay Area is known as a crucially important breeding area for the migratory Black-crowned Night Heron and Oakland is home to the Bay Area’s largest night heron rookery (clustered nesting colony). The Black-crowned Night Heron has been deemed a climate-endangered bird by the Audubon Society.

In 2016, realizing there were too many night herons in jeopardy in the concrete "jungle" of downtown, Golden Gate Audubon Society worked with Oakland Zoo and International Bird Rescue to save over one hundred black-crowned night herons and snowy egrets chicks who fell from street trees. The

organizations later worked with the Oakland Planning Department to create conditions of approval for ~~developers of two planned downtown housing projects to sponsor science-based relocation efforts to~~ move the Night Herons who nested in the street trees near the planned developments to Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park – conditions that have been upheld when the original developers sold to new owners.

In 2017, when students of Oakland’s Park Day School learned of the plight of the Black-crowned Night Heron, they created a petition in 2017 to ask City of Oakland to name the Black-crowned Night Heron our official City Bird. Their petition secured nearly 2,000 signatures and inspired more people, especially young people, to join in the students’ campaign for the night heron to become Oakland's official bird. To quote one of the students, “the Black-crowned Night Heron is a cool and funky bird, just like Oakland, so it should be our city's official bird.”

In addition to the students, the signers of the petition and the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the Oakland Zoo, International Bird Rescue, the developers of the Holland Partner Group Project and the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation project in the downtown corridor and Chinatown areas are all in favor of the Black-crowned Night Heron becoming the city's official bird.

FISCAL IMPACT

The only fiscal impact of this resolution would be to create and install no less than two signs in visible locations around or near Lake Merritt informing residents and visitors alike that the Black-crowned Night Heron is Oakland’s official City Bird. The District One City Council office has reached out to Oakland Department of Transportation for an estimate of the costs to design, manufacture and install no fewer than two signs around or near Lake Merritt; these cost estimates will be provided at the May 14th Public Works committee meeting.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: No direct economic opportunities or impact have been identified.

Environmental: The public awareness opportunities associated with this resolution will increase support for protections of migratory birds such as the Black-crowned Night Heron.

Social Equity: No direct social equity opportunities or impacts have been identified.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Lisa Jacobs, Office of Council President Pro Tempore Dan Kalb at (510) 238-7014.

Respectfully submitted,

Council President Pro Tempore Dan Kalb,
District 1



Prepared by: Lisa Jacobs, Office of Council
President Pro Tempore Dan Kalb, District 1

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DRAFT

City Attorney's Office

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE DAN KALB & MAYOR
LIBBY SCHAAF

RESOLUTION NAMING THE BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON THE OFFICIAL BIRD OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland wishes to ensure the survival and continued thriving of all who live and will live in our community, including non-human species for countless generations to come, by pursuing innovative policies that advance sustainable development, environmental justice, and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, in 1870, the City of Oakland became home to the nation's first official wildlife refuge, Lake Merritt, which is on the Pacific Flyway and was designated an official protected state game refuge with a stated purpose "to educate and inspire through understanding the values of conserving the natural resources of this state" and still today supports breeding colonies of water birds, including the Black-crowned Night Heron, on its several bird islands; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Oakland was named a "Bird Friendly City", only the second city in the nation to be so named, by adopting standards for bird-safe buildings, demonstrating the city's continuing tradition of looking out for its birdlife; and

WHEREAS, many cities, states, and countries designate specific bird species to serve as a symbolic representation of their culture, identity and commitment to wildlife protection, and while several of Oakland's neighboring cities have designated official city birds such as the Alameda Snowy Egret, the Berkeley Barn Owl, and the Richmond Osprey, Oakland has not yet officially designated a city bird; and

WHEREAS, the Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) has lived in Oakland since before the area was settled by humans, and Oakland is now home to the Bay Area's largest night heron rookery (clustered nesting colony); and

WHEREAS, the Black-crowned Night Heron is a resilient bird with remarkable adaptability for living in urban areas while remaining wild and retaining their natural behaviors, and can be seen roosting on the beams of overpasses, hanging out in alleys downtown, and nesting in trees along streets in Chinatown and near Lake Merritt; and

~~**WHEREAS**, the stocky, gritty and resilient night heron has charmed Oaklanders of all ages because it is easy to see, identify and enjoy; and the Oakland Public Library card featuring a Black-crowned Night Heron by Oakland artist Lea Zalinskis was voted most popular card design in 2017; and~~

WHEREAS, in 2016, realizing there were too many night herons in jeopardy in the concrete "jungle" of downtown, Golden Gate Audubon Society worked with Oakland Zoo and International Bird Rescue to save over one hundred black-crowned night herons and snowy egrets chicks who fell from street trees. The organizations later worked with the Oakland Planning Department to create conditions of approval for developers of two planned downtown housing projects to sponsor science-based relocation efforts to move the Night Herons who nested in the street trees near the planned developments to Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park – conditions that have been upheld when the original developers sold to new owners; and

WHEREAS, the Black-crowned Night Heron serves as an excellent symbol for the City of Oakland given its bold personality and industrious lifestyle, and as a representation of our strong-willed, tenacious, and dynamic community no matter how many times they are displaced or face hardships, they keep coming back and even thrive; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, students of Oakland's Park Day School learned of the plight of the Black-crowned Night Heron and created a petition in 2017 to ask City of Oakland to name the Black-crowned Night Heron our official City Bird, securing nearly 2,000 signatures and inspiring more people, especially young people, to join in the students' campaign for the night heron to become Oakland's official bird because, to quote one of the students, "the Black-crowned Night Heron is a cool and funky bird, just like Oakland, so it should be our city's official bird"; and

WHEREAS, while the official bird designation offers the Black-crowned Night Heron habitat no additional regulatory protection, it will raise public awareness of the unique behavior and habitat requirements of this species, foster public stewardship for its continued existence, and be a potent symbol for awareness of the increasingly difficult challenges posed by climate change in the years ahead, magnifying the message that we must safeguard the environment and the animal species whose fates depend upon it; and

WHEREAS, public awareness is a crucial component of migratory bird conservation, and residents who are enthusiastic about birds, informed about the threats they face, and empowered to help address those threats can directly contribute to maintaining healthy bird populations; and

WHEREAS, the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) – the nation's oldest and most effective bird conservation law that protects nearly a thousand species of birds from poaching, hunting and accidental killing – is under threat from the Trump Administration, which is seeking to apply a new interpretation of the law to end industry accountability for bird deaths; and

WHEREAS, International Migratory Bird Day is celebrated on May 11, making May a fitting time of year to raise awareness about the plight of all migratory birds, including the Black-crowned Night Heron; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the Park Day students and the many signers of their petition, local organizations such as the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the Oakland Zoo, International Bird Rescue and the Center for Biological Diversity all support naming the Black-crowned Night Heron the official city bird; and now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the City Council and the Mayor, recognizing that the Black-crowned Night Heron is a common permanent resident in many Oakland parks, city street trees and waterways, hereby designates the Black-crowned Night Heron as the Official Bird of the City of Oakland; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED: That the City of Oakland reaffirms its commitments to advancing the health, safety and prosperity of our human and non-human residents and the natural environment that we inhabit, to the benefit of all people, wildlife and their habitat, and shall place no fewer than two signs in visible locations around or near Lake Merritt informing residents and visitors alike that the Black-crowned Night Heron is Oakland's official City Bird.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES – FORTUNATO BAS, GALLO, GIBSON McELHANEY, KALB, REID, TAYLOR, THAO AND
PRESIDENT KAPLAN

NOES –

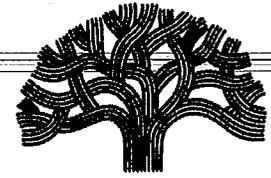
ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____

LATONDA SIMMONS
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

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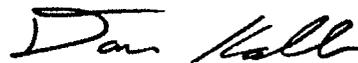
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