

# Great White Egret

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Ardea alba*

Compared to the now familiar little egret, the great white egret is enormous, almost as large as a grey heron. A few decades ago, records of great white egret were less than annual, but many now winter in the UK and a few pairs even nest here. Visiting birds can be found in all kinds of wetland habitats, even farmland ditches! They stand in shallow water, waiting for fish, insects and amphibians to approach, then spear them with their dagger-like bill.



## Key ID features

Large size—similar to grey heron, but with longer neck and legs

Yellow dagger-like bill. Turns black in breeding individuals

Don't confuse with...  
Little egret. See separate ID sheet.



Lower legs and feet black (not yellow like little egret)

Upper legs yellow/orange.