

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Little Egret - *Egretta garzetta*

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Pelecaniformes
Family: Ardeidae
Genus: *Egretta*
Species: *Egretta garzetta*

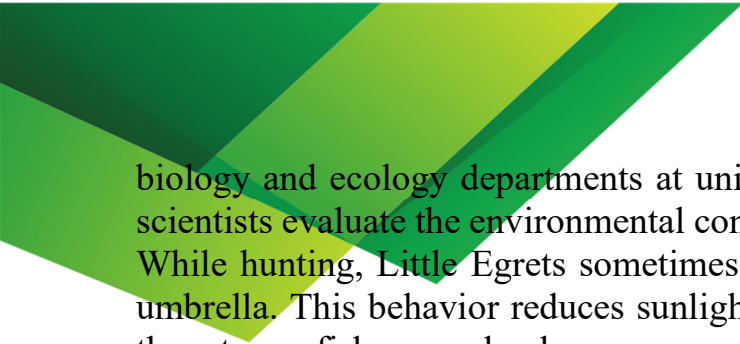
The Little Egret is a graceful water bird with a body length of approximately 55–65 cm and a wingspan of 88–106 cm. Its plumage is completely snow-white. The main features that distinguish it from similar species, such as the Great Egret, are its smaller size and its characteristic black legs with bright yellow feet, often described as “yellow slippers.” During the breeding season in spring and summer, delicate ornamental plumes grow on its back and chest. Little Egrets can live comfortably in both freshwater and saltwater habitats. They are commonly found in shallow coastal



areas, irrigation canals, marshes, and rice fields. In Azerbaijan, they are widely distributed around the water bodies of the Kura-Aras Lowland and along the coast of the Caspian Sea. Their activity becomes especially noticeable during May.

These birds play an important role in the ecosystem as bioindicators, meaning that their presence reflects clean water and rich biodiversity in an area. By feeding on harmful aquatic insects and small pests, they indirectly support agriculture. They are also admired for their beauty and contribute greatly to ecotourism and birdwatching activities.

Currently, Little Egrets are not used for industrial or agricultural purposes because they are protected under international wildlife conservation agreements. However, they are valuable in scientific research and education, especially in



biology and ecology departments at universities. Studying their populations helps scientists evaluate the environmental condition of wetlands and aquatic ecosystems. While hunting, Little Egrets sometimes spread their wings over the water like an umbrella. This behavior reduces sunlight reflection on the water surface, allowing them to see fish more clearly.

Although they often search for food alone, they usually build their nests in large colonies together with other heron species. These colonies are commonly located in trees or dense reed beds. During flight, Little Egrets pull their necks into an “S” shape, a feature that helps distinguish them from many other large water birds in the sky.

