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Front Cover: **GIANT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*)

The great egret, is a large, widely distributed egret, distributed across most of the tropical and warmer temperate regions of the world. It is a member of the heron family, Ardeidae and one of the largest water birds. However, with all that great body size, the bird is very slim and light and weighs only around one kilogram. That is one of the reasons why it looks so graceful and gentle in flight. The great egret comes to Israel in the autumn during the migration season, and stays all winter, leaving us in the early spring. Its diet consists mainly of fish, but will also consume frogs, small mammals, reptiles or even small unsuspecting birds. The great egret is a successful species that can be seen almost all over the world. In Israel the sub-species, *Egretta alba*, spends the summer in Eastern Europe, where it breeds in colonies. Giant Egrets can make up to 23 visits to Israel during its relatively long avian life.