

October's At a Glance photo plainly represents a long-legged wader, a heron or an egret species. Despite the fact that the picture shows only the head and neck, it readily provides enough of a view to identify the bird.

Several features are immediately obvious. First, the bird possesses a very long and slender bicolored bill. Second, the long, almost reptilian, neck is heavily striped on the front. And third, close scrutiny reveals a short white plume on the back of the head. Collectively, these features are shared by only one species of North American ardeid.

Only the Reddish Egret, Little Blue Heron, and Tricolored Heron exhibit such a prominently bicolored bill. The first two of these species can be eliminated on the basis of the striped neck. Thus, the evidence quickly points to Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*) as the identity of the pictured species. Further support for the bird's being a Tricolored Heron lies in the extremely long slender neck, a feature not similarly exaggerated in any of our other dark heron species. The single short white plume on the back of the head indicates that the pictured bird is an adult.

The Tricolored Heron in the picture was photographed in April in southern Florida.



Tricolored Heron

Photo by Wayne R. Petersen

AT A GLANCE

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Can you identify this bird?

Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.

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