

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Anseriformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Coscoroba coscoroba*

**Family:** Anatidae  
**Common Name:** Coscoroba Swan

**AZA Management:**     Green                      X Yellow                       Red                       None



**NATURAL HISTORY:**

**Geographic Range:**    Europe                          Asia                          North America                          Neotropical    X  
                                  Africa                          Australia                          Other    [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Habitat:**                      Forest                          Desert                          Grassland                          Coastal      
                                  Riverine    X                      Montane                          Other    Ponds, lagoons, canals

**Circadian Cycle:**    Diurnal    X                      Crepuscular                          Nocturnal                          Other    [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Cold Tolerance:**                      To 70° F                          To 60° F                          To 50° F                          To 40° F      
                                  To 30° F                          To 20° F                          Other    Capable of tolerating wide range of temperatures provided shelter and moving water are available

**Heat Tolerance:**                      To 30° F                          To 50° F                          To 70° F                          To 90° F      
                                  To 110° F                          Other    Capable of tolerating wide range of temperatures provided water and shade are available

**Diet:**                      Frugivore                          Carnivore                          Piscivore                          Insectivore      
                                  Nectivore                          Omnivore    X                      Folivore                          Other (Add Below)    X

**Captive Dietary Needs:**  
 Commercial waterfowl pellets, chopped greens

# Species Fact Sheets

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: 7 Years (Average) Females: 7 Years (Average)

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: 35 Years Females: 35 Years

## BREEDING INFORMATION:

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 3-5 Years Females: 3 Years

**Courtship Displays:** Male calls to the female and bites the back of her neck; mating takes place in the water

**Nest Site Description:** Bulky, conical mound of plant material built on small island or on floating raft of vegetation. Eggs are laid in a shallow depression at the top, lined with grasses and feathers.

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** Eggs are white or cream colored, 8.2-9.4 centimeters long, 5.3-6.7 centimeters wide, and weighing 129-203 grams.

**Incubation Period:** 33-40 Days

**Fledgling Period:** 2-4 Months

**Parental Care:** Females incubate the eggs while males guard the nest site. When the female leaves the nest to feed, the male does not take over incubation. After the eggs hatch, both parents care for the cygnets, leading them to food (even stirring up the water with their feet to uncover food) and guarding them from predators. The Coscoroba swan is the only swan which does not carry its cygnets on its back.

**Chick Development:** Chicks begin calling from inside the egg a few days prior to hatching. Cygnets are 99-119 grams at hatching and are gray or brown with dark stripes on their back and head. They are precocial and able to swim and feed themselves within hours of birth.

## CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Paired during the breeding season, congregate into large flocks during the molting season

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Paired

**Minimum Group Size:** Pair

**Maximum Group Size:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes **Comments:** Can be housed alongside other waterfowl species, as well as other birds, such as shorebirds, macaws, and flamingos

**Optimal Habitat Size:** 500 Square Feet per Pair

**Management Challenges:** Because of their size, coscorobas are often maintained in open-air, outdoor enclosures instead of enclosed aviaries. Their pools and food sources tend to attract native wild birds, such as Canada geese and mallards, which become potential disease vectors and competitors for food.

# Species Fact Sheets

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The sole member of its genus, the Coscoroba swan is the smallest of the world's swan species. Males measure 88-115 centimeters and weigh 3.8-4.5 kilograms. Females are smaller, weighing 3.2-4.5 kilograms. Size is the only external physical trait which can be used to differentiate between the sexes. Both adult males and females have entirely white plumage except for their black primary feathers. The flattened bill is red or orange, while the eyes may be red, orange, yellow, or brown. Juveniles are duller, often a gray or brownish plumage with gray legs and bill.

The name "Coscoroba" is an onomatopoeic representation of the bird's call. The call of the female is of higher pitch than that of the male.

The Coscoroba is the only swan species not in the genus *Cygnus*. Taxonomically, some authorities ally them more closely with the geese or whistling ducks, or consider them to be a genetic link between the different groups of waterfowl. Unusual attributes of the Coscoroba include the appearance of the cygnets, the absence of bare skin on the face, the small size, and the vocalization.

Barring nesting failure or the death of a partner, Coscoroba swans often mate for life. Initial courtship displays may be intense and highly ritualized, becoming less so in subsequent years. Pairs often stay in the same territory every year. Though pairs will defend their nesting sites fiercely, against both predators and other Coscoroba swans, they became much more sociable after the cygnets hatch. At this time, the flight feathers are molted, and the temporarily flightless swans congregate in larger flocks for protection.

The Coscoroba swan is currently listed as a species of Least Concern by the IUCN. The major potential threat to the species is habitat loss and degradation through the loss or diversion of wetlands.

## REFERENCES:

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