

# Species Fact Sheets

**Order:** Anseriformes  
**Scientific Name:** *Anser cygnoides*

**Family:** Anatidae  
**Common Name:** Swan goose

**AZA Management:**  Green  Yellow  Red  None

**Photo (Male):**



**Photo (Female):**



## NATURAL HISTORY:

**Geographic Range:** Europe  Asia  North America  Neotropical   
 Africa  Australia  Other  Migratory. Key breeding grounds in the border area between Russia, Mongolia and mainland China. It winters in North and South Korea, central China and occasionally in Japan.

**Habitat:** Forest  Desert  Grassland  Coastal   
 Riverine  Montane  Other  Varied, generally in close proximity to fresh or brackish lakes and rivers

**Circadian Cycle:** Diurnal  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  Can be maintained outdoors as long as they have access to open water

**Heat Tolerance:** To 30° F  To 50° F  To 70° F  To 90° F   
 To 110° F  Other  Can be maintained outdoors as long as they have access to water and shade

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

**Captive Dietary Needs:**

Herbivore, feeds primarily by grazing on dry land and grubbing for roots and tubers. Can be maintained on captive waterfowl chow and supplemental greens.

**Life Expectancy in the Wild:** Males: unknown Females: unknown

**Life Expectancy in Captivity:** Males: Oldest recorded male= 22 years. Median life expectancy= 11.4 years  
 Females: Oldest recorded female= 32 years. Median life expectancy= 11.4 years

**BREEDING INFORMATION:**

**Age at Sexual Maturity:** Males: 1.5 years old until approximately 19 years old  
 Females: 1.5 years old until approximately 16 years old

**Courtship Displays:** Mutual vocalizations, head dipping, neck-streching and triumph ceremonies

**Nest Site Description:** A shallow nest of plant material on the ground, usually situated in dense vegetation near water

**Clutch Size, Egg Description:** 5-8 eggs in clutch, all white. Size 73-92mm x 45-57mm. Mass 117-160g

**Incubation Period:** 28 days

**Fledgling Period:** 2 months

**Parental Care:** Female broods while male defends. Both parents assist with rearing

**Chick Development:** Goslings are precocial. Shortly after hatching, parents will lead them to water. Have yellowish-buff head and underparts, broad blackish eye-patch, dusky brown upperparts with pale buff patches and blackish-grey bill with pale tip.

**CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:**

**Social Structure in the Wild:** Flock size varies seasonally: up to c. 40 birds in spring, non-breeding summer flocks up to 200 and molting flocks slightly larger (exceptionally up to 1000), and largest in winter. Nests in single pairs or loose colonies.

**Social Structure in Captivity:** Pairs or small flocks. Single sex flocks possible.

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**Minimum Group Size:** 2

**Maximum Group Size:** As many as an exhibit can comfortably house.

**Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits:** Yes

**Comments:** Known to hybridize with other Anser species, particular when kept unpaired

**Optimal Habitat Size:** 500 square feet per pair

**Management Challenges:** Because of their size, Swan geese are often maintained in open-air, outdoor enclosures instead of enclosed aviaries. Their pools and food sources tend to attract wild birds, such as Canada geese and mallards, which become potential disease vectors and competitors for food. Hatchings are often reared off exhibit due to predation risk. Full-winged birds tend to wander. Pinioning or wing-clipping advised.  
Like other geese, swan geese can be hard on vegetation and will overgraze areas when kept in smaller exhibits.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The swan goose is the largest goose species, reaching up to 3 feet in length. Males and females are similar in coloration, with males being slightly larger in size and weight. It displays a white throat and a dark brown crown extending along the back of the neck to the wings. The swan goose has a black bill and chestnut-colored chest. It is the ancestor of the domestic "Chinese" and "African" goose breeds and some swan goose representatives show evidence of hybridization with their domestic cousins.

### REFERENCES:

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BirdLife International 2016. *Anser cygnoid*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016.

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