



Common Name Plumed Whistling-Duck

Scientific Name: *Dendrocygna eytoni*

FAMILY: Anatidae

ORDER: Anseriformes

AZA MANAGEMENT: None

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

- EUROPE
- ASIA
- NORTH AMERICA
- NEOTROPICAL
- AFRICA
- AUSTRALIA
- OTHER

HABITAT

- FOREST
- DESERT
- GRASSLAND
- COASTAL
- RIVERINE
- MONTANE
- OTHER

TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE



From 30F to 90° F

Can be maintained outdoors as long as they have access to moving water to keep their feet from freezing Can be kept outdoors as long as water and

DIET

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FRUGIVORE | <input type="checkbox"/> NECTIVORE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CARNIVORE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OMNIVORE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PISCIVORE | <input type="checkbox"/> FOLIVORE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INSECTIVORE | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER |

Captives can be fed commercial waterfowl diet, supplemented with greens, insects/worms, and vitamins and minerals.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Median Life Expectancy

Maximum
Longevity

Within AZA 15 Years

In the Wild 7-10 Years



CIRCADIAN CYCLE

- DIURNAL
- CREPUSCULAR
- NOCTURNAL
- OTHER

Within AZA 15 Years

In the Wild 7-10 Years



BREEDING INFORMATION



AGE AT SEXUAL MATURITY



Males 2 Years



Females 2 Years

Incubation period: 28-30 Days

Fledgling Period: 8-9 Weeks



CLUTCH SIZE, & EGG DESCRIPTION



8-14 white eggs, ovoid in shape, measuring 4.5 x 3.5 centimeters, weigh 40 grams.



COURTSHIP DISPLAYS

Male and female will preen each other around the head and neck; at the beginning of the breeding season, males will sometimes chase females for lengthy periods of time, both in the air and in the water.



NEST SITE DESCRIPTION

Small scrape in the ground, lined with leaves, usually under a bush. They will sometimes utilize the nests of other species, including burrows.



CHICK DEVELOPMENT

Ducklings are born with sharp nails and stiff tails, which allow them to quickly exit the nest cavity. They grow quickly and are fully feathered at seven weeks, with adult coloration achieved by the end of their first year.



PARENTAL CARE

Both parents incubate the eggs and will protect the nest from potential predators.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION



SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In the Wild: Small Flocks (50-200), sometimes gathering into larger flocks mixed with other species of duck

In Captivity: Pairs, Small Flocks (Single or Mixed Species)



MIXED SPECIES EXHIBITS

Compatible in mixed species exhibits?

YES

NO

Comments: Often kept in mixed-species aviaries with other waterfowl, as well as parrots, doves, and other birds. They may hybridize with other whistlingducks in captivity.



OPTIMAL HABITAT SIZE

100 Square Feet per Pair

Minimum Group Size: Pair

Maximum Group Size: Large Flocks



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Potential for hybridization with closely related species, some (mild) aggression during breeding season to exhibit-mates. Though primarily terrestrial, their enclosures should still include a pond or other water feature to allow bathing. The species is not especially cold hardy, and should be sheltered in winter. There is low clutch fertility in captivity.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Also known as Eyton's whistling-duck or the grass whistle duck, the plumed whistling-duck is found throughout much of eastern and northern Australia. It is also found in New Guinea, with vagrants sometimes observed in New Zealand. The common name is in reference to the large, characteristic black-edged plumes that fan out from the flanks. Adults measure 42-60 centimeters with a wingspan of 75-90 centimeters and weigh approximately one kilogram (males are slightly larger than females). The chestnut chest is streaked with thin black bars. The underside is pale with a white rump, while the back is dark brown. The legs and bill are pink (the later mottled with black), while the irises are yellow. Plumed whistling-ducks are predominately terrestrial and are relatively poor swimmers and divers. They feed on land, cropping grasses with their beaks, though they will sometimes dabble in shallow water. Foraging often takes place in the evening. They seldom perch in trees, and are somewhat awkward when doing so. Breeding takes place in the wet season (January through March), and breeding success is tied closely to rainfall. A single clutch of 10-14 eggs is generally laid per year in a nest of matted grasses. Unlike many other waterfowl species, male plumed whistling-ducks will assist the females with incubation and brooding. Dispersing young may travel as far as 1200 miles. The species is shy and secretive, with the breeding season bringing out the only aggression displaced. They are often found in mixed-species flocks in the wild, associating with wandering whistling-ducks and Australian wood ducks. In captivity, hybrids have been produced with other whistling-duck species. Like other whistling-ducks, they communicate with high-pitched whistles. Compared to some other whistling-duck species, the plumed whistling-duck is only modestly represented in North American zoo collections. It is much more common in European and Australian facilities. Plumed whistling-ducks are not considered endangered due to their large range and high population; their numbers are stable, possibly increasing in some areas due to the provision of food from agriculture. The species is categorized as being of Least Concern by the IUCN, and is not managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. No subspecies are currently recognized.

REFERENCES

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