



Andean Goose

Chloephaga melanoptera

FAMILY: Anatidae

ORDER: Anseriformes

AZA MANEGMENT: None

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

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

HABITAT

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

Additional information here if needed.

CIRCADIAN CYCLE

- DIURNAL
- CREPUSCULAR
- NOCTURNAL
- OTHER

Additional information here if needed.

TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE



From 30° F to 90° F

Cold Tolerance: Can be maintained outdoors as long as they have access to moving water to keep their feet from freezing. **Heat Tolerance:** Can be kept outdoors as long as water and shade are available.

DIET

- FRUGIVORE
- CARNIVORE
- PISCIVORE
- INSECTIVORE
- NECTIVORE
- OMNIVORE
- FOLIVORE
- OTHER

Captive Dietary Needs: Captives can be fed commercial waterfowl diet, supplemented with greens

LIFE EXPECTANCY

	Median Life Expectancy	Maximum Longevity	
Within AZA	10	15	♂
In the Wild	Unknown	Unknown	

Within AZA	10	15	♀
In the Wild	Unknown	Unknown	

BREEDING INFORMATION



AGE AT SEXUAL MATURITY



Males 18 Months



Females 18 Months

Incubation period: 28-32 Days

Fledgling Period: 80-90 Days



CLUTCH SIZE, & EGG DESCRIPTION



5-10 cream-colored eggs, measuring 7.5 x 5 centimeters and weighing approximately 110-130 grams



COURTSHIP DISPLAYS

Females “incite” males to attack rivals by calling rapidly and walking around the male; in males, the primary sexual display involves puffing up the chest and walking very erect. Breeding often takes place in shallow water.



NEST SITE DESCRIPTION

Scrape on ground, usually near water. Captives may lay eggs in nest boxes.



CHICK DEVELOPMENT

Hatchlings are precocial. Their downy plumage is striped; they become fully-feathered at 3 months of age. Shortly after hatching, they are often led to the water by their parents.



PARENTAL CARE

Eggs are incubated entirely by the female, while the male stands guard. Both parents care for the young until they have fledged.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION



SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In the Wild: Small Flocks, Pairs in the nesting season

In AZA: Small Flocks

Minimum Group Size: Pair

Maximum Group Size: Small Flock



MIXED SPECIES EXHIBITS

Compatible in mixed species exhibits? YES

NO

Comments: The species has a reputation for aggression, especially males during the breeding season. That being said, it has been successfully housed in mixed-exhibits with other waterfowl, as well as South American camelids and Patagonian caviés



OPTIMAL HABITAT SIZE

200 Square Feet Per Pair



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Andean geese can behave aggressively towards exhibit-mates, especially during the breeding season. Due to their fondness for grazing in wet areas, Andean geese may be more susceptible to parasites. Andean geese are more terrestrial than many waterfowl species, and benefit from enclosures with more land areas than other ducks and geese. Because of

their size, Andean geese 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.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

As implied by their common name, Andean geese are found in the Andes Mountains of western South America, where they are present well above 3000 meters (small scale altitudinal shifts may occur over the course of the year). They are most often associated in short-grasslands near lakes and lagoons. Though they are often found close to bodies of water, they are predominately terrestrial, and usually only take to the water to escape danger. They are poor swimmers; when seen swimming, the breast is low in the water, the rump is held high, and progress is slow and awkward. The species is poorly studied in the wild, but it is believed to be predominately a grazer, as are the other *Chloephaga* species. Andean geese are sexually monomorphic, with both males and females being predominately white with black wings and tails, sometimes with a purple metallic sheen. The small, slightly-hooked beak is flesh-colored (with a black tip), as are the feet. The sexes are most easily distinguished through vocalization; they voice of the male is a high-pitched whistle, while the female's call is a lower-pitched cackle. The sexes also differ in size, with the males being slightly larger than the females. Immature birds look similar to the adults, but tend to be duller, both in the white portions of their plumage (which appear greyer) and the black (which appear browner). Adults measure 70-80 centimeters long with a wingspan of 140-160 centimeters; body weight is 2.7-3.6 kilograms. No subspecies are described. Andean geese are relatively uncommon in zoo collections, being better represented in European collections. They are hardy birds; their main drawback as a collection animal is the aggression which they can display towards exhibit-mates during the breeding season. Found over a large geographic range, the Andean goose does not appear to be in danger in the wild; the species is listed as being of Least Concern by the IUCN, and is not listed under CITES. They are sometimes hunted by humans, but their flesh is described as being tough and distasteful. The habitat is remote and relatively unused by humans. The wild population is estimated at between 25,000 and 100,000 individuals.

REFERENCES

- Duvall, Abigail. 2010. Andean Goose (*Chloephaga melanoptera*), Neotropical Birds Online (T. S. Schulenberg, Editor). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; retrieved from Neotropical Birds Online: http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p_p_spp=66311
- Johnsgard, Paul A. 1968. *Waterfowl: Their Biology and Natural History*. University of Nebraska: Lincoln.
- Johnsgard, Paul A. 1978. *Ducks, Geese, and Swans of the World*. University of Nebraska: Lincoln.
- Todd, Frank S. 1997. *Natural History of the Waterfowl*. Ibis Publishing: San Diego.

COMPLETED BY:

Name: Ian Shelley (Salisbury Zoo)

Date: 2/25/2015