

Egyptian Goose, *Alopochen aegyptiacus*



Overview

Short description of *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

The Egyptian Goose is a highly distinctive pale reddish-brown goose with long pink legs and a pinkish bill. There are variable dark reddish-brown patches around the eyes and another on the lower breast. In flight, the wings are broad and show extensive white across the covert area of the inner wing. Calls are loud and have a distinctive braying quality.

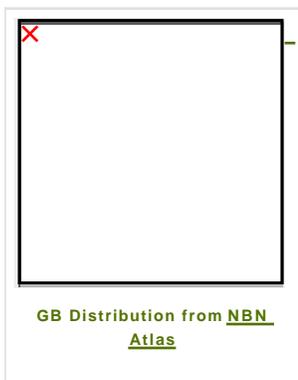
Description of *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose status in GB

The Egyptian goose is established in East Anglia and occurs more sporadically elsewhere in GB. The GB population is currently expanding steadily – in the 1990's there were estimated to be 1,000 birds across GB but during 2000–7 there were estimated to be 750–900 breeding pairs in Norfolk alone.

Habitat summary: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

The species occupies a broad range of wetland habitats and may also be seen far from water on agricultural land.

Distribution map



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Overview table

Environment:	Terrestrial
Species status:	Non-Native
Native range:	Europe, Africa, Southern Africa, Angola, Burkina, Burundi, Botswana, Central African Republic, Congo, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Senegal, Somalia, Swaziland, Chad, Tunisia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Functional type:	Herbivore
Status in England:	Non-Native
Status in Scotland:	Non-Native
Status in Wales:	Non-Native
Location of first record:	Thatcham
Date of first record:	1795

Invasion history: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

Origin

The native range encompasses almost all of Africa south of the Sahara Desert and formerly included the lower Nile in Egypt, Israel and parts of southeast Europe. Birds were introduced to England from the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa prior to 1785 (John Latham).

First Record

Egyptian Geese were first imported to GB in the late 17th century and the first record from the wild, from a specific time and place, appears to be from shooting at Thatcham in Berkshire in 1795.

Pathway and Method

Intentional introductions of Egyptian Geese have been made for ornamental reasons and not for hunting; the species is regarded as poor quarry. Similar introductions were made in Belgium and possibly Germany and other European countries. Escapes from captivity are also documented.

Species Status

The current winter population estimate for GB is 3,400 birds. Large non-native populations have become established in GB, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany and appear to be expanding rapidly, with potential deleterious effects on other wildfowl and on other hole-nesting birds. The largest non-native population (at least 4,500 pairs in 1998–2000) was recorded in the Netherlands, where breeding was first recorded as recently as 1967.

Ecology & Habitat: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

Dispersal Mechanisms

Within western Europe, populations, especially in the Netherlands and Belgium, have spread naturally to Germany and France and have perhaps been responsible for sightings in Italy and Romania. GB birds may be more sedentary but gather in moulting flocks in late summer.

Reproduction

Egyptian Geese nest on the ground, often on small islands, but also in burrows, in caves, among reeds, in trees and on buildings, at up to 3 km from water. In trees, they may use large holes or old stick nests of other birds, with a maximum recorded height above ground of 60 m. Young leap or slide to the ground from elevated nests within hours of hatching and are led to water by the adults. In GB, most lay in March or April and are earlier nesters than other non-native geese.

Known Predators/Herbivores

Occasionally birds are killed by foxes or larger birds of prey. Eggs and small chicks may be vulnerable to carrion crows and other predators.

Resistant Stages

None.

Habitat Occupied in GB

The species occupies a broad range of wetland habitats including lakes, ponds, reservoirs, estuaries, sewage works, swampy woodland and meadows. On farmland, birds can sometimes be found on arable fields some distance from water, and on silage clamps.

Distribution: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

The GB distribution has historically been centred on Norfolk, which still holds the majority of the population. Spread to new areas, and population increase, perhaps aided by new escapes or releases, has apparently accelerated during the recent two decades.

Impacts: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

Environmental Impact

Egyptian geese share feeding habitats with mallards and other ducks, and with coots, and may compete with them for food or territories. Competition for nest sites with hole-nesting species such as barn owl is also a possibility. Large groups of Egyptian geese may cause physical damage to habitats through grazing or trampling, and their droppings may cause eutrophication of still waters.

Health and Social Impact

There are minor health and social impacts of this species, associated with its contribution to fouling and trampling by waterfowl of public amenity grassland.

Economic Impact

Egyptian geese are regarded as agricultural pests in parts of their native range because they sometimes feed on or trample crops, but no economic impacts have yet been reported from the non-native range.

References & Links: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*, Egyptian Goose

Identification

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Biology, ecology, spread, vectors

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Management and impact

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/Nonnative_EgyptianGoose.htm

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General

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