



Common Name Spotted Whistling Duck

Scientific Name *Dendrocygna guttata*

FAMILY: Anatidae

ORDER: Anseriformes

AZA MANEGMENT: Provisional SSP

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

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

Found in Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Indonesia, New Guinea, and N. Australia

HABITAT

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

Freshwater Wetlands, Marshes

CIRCADIAN CYCLE

- DIURNAL

TEMPERATURE TOLERANCE



From 40° F to X° 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 shade are available

DIET

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



Within AZA 15 Years

In the Wild Unknown



CREPUSCULAR

NOCTURNAL

OTHER

BREEDING INFORMATION



AGE AT SEXUAL MATURITY



2 Years



2 Years

Incubation period: 28-31 Days

Fledgling Period: 8 Weeks



CLUTCH SIZE, & EGG DESCRIPTION



An average of 10 (but up to 16) round white eggs



COURTSHIP DISPLAYS

Spotted whistling ducks form strong pairs bonds, strengthened by allopreening. Pairs communicate with repeated, low whistling sounds.



NEST SITE DESCRIPTION

Tree cavities, often near water



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: Large flocks, sometimes mixed with other duck species



MIXED SPECIES EXHIBITS

Compatible in mixed species exhibits?

YES

NO

Comments: Often kept in mixed-species aviaries with other waterfowl, but have the potential to be aggressive towards other duck species, especially other whistling ducks.



OPTIMAL HABITAT SIZE

100 Square Feet/Pair

In

Captivity: Pair, Flocks (Single or Mixed species)

Minimum Group Size: Pair

Maximum Group Size: X



MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Spotted whistling ducks are sometimes aggressive towards other duck species, especially other whistling ducks, though they can be maintained together in enclosures of appropriate size. The whistling ducks are more arboreal than many other duck species and will often nest in tree cavities; they would be better suited for enclosures where they are not flight-restricted.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The spotted whistling duck is predominately brown with a pale grey throat and a whitish belly; the upperparts are darker than the underparts, with light red-brown edging to the feathers. The common name is in reference to the small white spots on the neck, breast, and flanks. The beak, legs, and feet are dark grey with a pinkish tint. Juveniles tend to be darker than adults. A small dark crest can be partially raised when the duck is excited. The eyes are very large with dark brown irises. Both sexes are alike in size and appearance. Body length is 43-50cm, the wingspan is 85-95cm, and the average weight is 800 grams. There are no subspecies, nor is there seasonal variation in plumage. The birds often make a whistling sound while in flight. This is caused by the deep notches in the primary flight feathers, which vibrate as air passes through them, producing a whirring noise. Spotted whistling ducks are nocturnal, spending their days roosting in treetops, where they congregate in large numbers. At dusk, they break off into smaller groups to feed and forage. They feed on a variety of grasses, aquatic plants, aquatic invertebrates, seeds, and small fish. Poorly studied in the wild, the spotted whistling duck is also one of the least common whistling ducks in captive collections. The first captive breeding took place at the Wildfowl Trust in England in 1959, and the species was not imported into American zoo collections until the 1980s. The wild population is largely secure over its large range, and in some parts of its range it is one of the most commonly encountered waterfowl species. In other areas, though, it is declining due to habitat loss as wetlands are converted into agricultural lands. The species is listed as “Least Concern” by the IUCN, and is not listed in CITES. Note: Some data in this fact sheet (i.e.: fledgling period, enclosure size, life span) is not available for the spotted whistling duck, and was extrapolated from data available on more commonly kept *Dendrocygna* species



REFERENCES

- Lovett, Keith. 2010 Oct 14. AZA Regional Studbook – Spotted Whistling Duck (*Dendrocygna guttata*)
Todd, Frank S. 1979. Waterfowl: Ducks, Geese, and Swans of the World. Sea World Press: San Diego.
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