

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Ciconiiformes
Scientific Name: Platalea alba

Family: Threskiornithidae
Common Name: African spoonbill

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other Madagascar

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other Lakes, marshes, reservoirs of inland waters.

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 [Click here to enter text.](#)

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

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

Captive Dietary Needs:

Flamingo Food	50-75 gm/day
Flamingo Breeder Food	50-75 gm/day
Fish Mix (Capelin/Lake Smelt, Silversides)	2 oz
Bird of Prey	1 oz
1 Adult mouse	.8 oz
Krill	.5 oz
Crickets / Mealworms	ad lib to whole flock

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

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: 29 (studbook) Females: 29 (studbook)

BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 3 years – males have longer beaks. Females: 3 years – females have shorter beaks.

Courtship Displays: Allopreening, nest building.

Nest Site Description: Sticks, reeds, grasses.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 3-4 eggs, white eggs with brownish-red spots.

Incubation Period: 22–24 days

Fledgling Period: 45-50 days

Parental Care: Chicks beg quite often. Both parents incubate, feed and brood.

Chick Development: Chicks hatch with a fluffy white down and they develop and gain weight quickly, fledging between 45-50 days. Juveniles have dark eyes that turn yellow by age 3.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Colonial

Social Structure in Captivity: Colonial nesting, males can get territorial. Not always monogamous.

Minimum Group Size: Can have one pair / breeding is unlikely.

Maximum Group Size: 12 or more birds depending on exhibit size; larger flocks have a tendency to be more aggressive during breeding.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes **Comments:** Have been housed in mixed flighted aviaries and with flamingos, storks and cranes.

Optimal Habitat Size: Outside habitat can be anywhere from 100' by 100' (pinioned birds) and 15' in height minimum (flighted birds). Offer birds nesting platforms that are 3-4' off the ground. Pool for foraging and bathing. Mud wallows are very entertaining for spoonbills.

Management Challenges: Breeding is more successful in large groups, chicks become impacted easily, and they are very difficult to hand-rear.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

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REFERENCES:

del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. & Sargatal, J. eds. (1992). Handbook of the Birds of the World. Vol. 1. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.

Picture of female spoonbill – taken 2013, Evangelio Gonzalez.

Picture of male spoonbill – taken 2010, Dean Fleischman.

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COMPLETED BY:

Name: Bonnie Van Dam – African spoonbill SSP
Coordinator and Regional Studbook Keeper /
Detroit Zoological Society

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