

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Ciconiiformes
Scientific Name: *Ajaia ajaja*

Family: Threskiornithidae
Common Name: Roseate Spoonbill

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None

Photo (Male):



Photo (Female):



NATURAL HISTORY:

Geographic Range: Europe Asia North America Neotropical
 Africa Australia Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

Habitat: Forest Desert Grassland Coastal
 Riverine Montane Other [Click here to enter text.](#)

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 110 F +

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

Captive Dietary Needs:

Although there are no commercial products specifically made for roseate spoonbills, commercial flamingo products are commonly used with great success. Small fish, such as lake smelt, silversides or

Species Fact Sheets

capelin, as well as krill, insects and even bird of prey diet, are recommended as a supplement to their pelleted diet.

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| Life Expectancy in the Wild: | Males: | Up to 10 years | Females: | Up to 10 years |
| Life Expectancy in Captivity: | Males: | Can live as long as 33 years, though many expired in their mid-late 20's. | Females: | Can live as long as 36 years, though many expired in their late 20's to early 30's. |

BREEDING INFORMATION:

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| Age at Sexual Maturity: | Males: | In the wild, 3 years. In captivity, have had offspring at 1-2 years, but more typically start reproducing at 3-4 years. | Females: | In the wild, 3 years. In captivity, have had offspring at 1-2 years, but more typically start reproducing at 4-5 years. |
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Courtship Displays: Male roseate spoonbills will bring gifts of nesting material, sticks and twigs, to attract a mate. Roseate spoonbills will perform a ritualized exchange of nesting material, dancing and bill clapping during courtship when their mate is chosen. Copulation takes place at the nest site. The female builds the nest from the materials the male brings to her. Roseate spoonbills are monogamous for the season. The pair will remain together through the successful rearing of their offspring. The following breeding season, mate choice will begin again.

Nest Site Description: The Florida populations prefers to nest in red and black mangroves, while the Texas and Louisiana birds often nest on the ground, due to loss of suitable arboreal nesting sites to development. This change puts their nest at a much higher risk of predation. In captivity, roseate spoonbills nest in trees.

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 2-5 eggs, cream colored mottled with darker brown throughout, 65mm in length

Incubation Period: 22-24 days. Eggs are laid every other day and incubation begins 1 day after the first egg is laid.

Fledgling Period: At one month, the chicks will begin exercising by exploring the area around the nest. They then fledge at 6 weeks.

Parental Care: Parents rotate incubation of the eggs. Once hatched, one parent will stay with the chicks while the other forages for food. When one comes back to feed the offspring, the other will leave to find more food. The parents feed the chicks by dribbling regurgitated food into the chicks' bills. Parents will continue to feed the chicks until they are about 8 weeks old.

Species Fact Sheets

Chick Development: Wild roseate spoonbills typically lay eggs in late April – early May. Chicks hatch at the end of May - June. The chicks hatch pink in color with sparse down and with orange bill, legs, and feet. Feathers grow in pink and white, with coloration identical to the adults' by the time they fledge, except paler and with feathered heads. Throughout maturity, the chicks will begin losing head feathers and maintain a bald head throughout adulthood.

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Roseate spoonbills are a very social species. They colonize with other Ciconiiformes for both feeding and breeding. This is thought to be for protection, as well as aid in searching for food.

Social Structure in Captivity: Roseate spoonbills exhibit the same behaviors in captivity as they do in the wild. They are very comfortable colonizing with members of their Order in addition to members of their own species.

Minimum Group Size: 2 if mixed with other Ciconiiformes species. Birds have successfully bred with as few as 2 roseate spoonbills housed with others in their order.

Maximum Group Size: Limited only by exhibit space. Roseate spoonbills have been successfully housed in colonies with over 100 individuals in a large outdoor aviary.

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes **Comments:** Very successful in mixed species marsh exhibits, as well as river exhibits. Can be pushy with smaller wading birds, but this can be combated by multiple feeding and nesting sites.

Optimal Habitat Size: Roseate spoonbills spend much of their day wading in water for food and spend evenings roosting in trees, in colonies. Their habitat should afford enough room for all members of the colony to perform these activities together.

Management Challenges: This species tends to have foot issues similar to other Ciconiiformes. Proper substrate and perching is required to prevent bumble foot. The feet are also prone to cracking in dry, cold weather. Access to warmed water in which the birds can wade may prevent cracking.

If birds are accustomed to people, roseate spoonbills will often be found in the public area of walk-through or open exhibits. They are not incredibly graceful on their feet, so can have trouble getting away from large groups of people. Larger groups of conspecifics will help to keep them with the colony and away from the general public.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Species Fact Sheets

Conservation: Starting in the late 1800's, roseate spoonbill feathers were highly revered for woman's fashion. By the 1930's, populations in Florida had fallen to 30-40 breeding pairs due to over-hunting for fan and hat production. In the 1940's, the government declared it illegal to hunt spoonbills and the population began to rebound. Now there are thousands of pairs that nest on the coasts of Florida, Louisiana, and Texas; however, coastal development is making their nesting site more and more scarce. The birds are combating this by nesting on the ground instead of in trees. This makes them much more vulnerable to predators.

The eggs of some roseate spoonbill populations show high levels of pesticides in their eggs, but thus far it has not impacted the thickness of their shell, like has happened with other avian species.

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COMPLETED BY:

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