

Species Fact Sheets

Order: Anseriformes
Scientific Name: *Anser indicus*

Family: Anatidae
Common Name: Bar-Headed Goose (Indian Goose)

AZA Management: Green Yellow Red None



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 [Can be maintained outdoors as long as they have access to moving water to keep their feet from freezing](#)

Heat Tolerance: To 30° F To 50° F To 70° F To 90° F
 To 110° F Other [Can be kept outdoors as long as water and shade are available](#)

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

Captive Dietary Needs:
 Captives can be fed commercial waterfowl diet, supplemented with chopped greens and with insects (crickets, mealworms)

Life Expectancy in the Wild: Males: 20 Years Females: 20 Years

Life Expectancy in Captivity: Males: Up to 30 Years Females: Up to 30 Years

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BREEDING INFORMATION:

Age at Sexual Maturity: Males: 3 Years Females: 3 Years

Courtship Displays: Males may engage in “triumph ceremony”, approaching female with outstretched head and neck after having defended nest site.

Nest Site Description: Usually nests on the ground, but will sometimes nest in trees. Nest is usually a shallow bowl of vegetation lined with down

Clutch Size, Egg Description: 3-8 (usually 4-6) white eggs, approximately 82 x 55 millimeters, 141 grams

Incubation Period: 28-30 Days

Fledgling Period: 65-80 Days

Parental Care: Female incubates the eggs, male guards nest site and helps raise goslings. Family groups tend to stay together through fall migration. Females have been reported to dump their clutches in the nests of other females.

Chick Development: Goslings leave the nest site two days after hatching and are capable of feeding themselves at 3-4 days of age. They are capable of flight at 53 days of age, and fledge at 65-80 days

CAPTIVE HABITAT INFORMATION:

Social Structure in the Wild: Large Flocks

Social Structure in Captivity: Pairs or Flocks

Minimum Group Size: Pair

Maximum Group Size: Flock

Compatible in Mixed Species Exhibits: Yes

Comments:

Less assertive/aggressive than many other geese. Can be housed with other waterfowl or cranes, as well as other birds in an aviary setting. In outdoor yards, they can be housed with ungulates, including cervids, bovids, camelids, equids, tapir, and rhinoceros

Optimal Habitat Size: 200 Square Feet Per Pair

Management Challenges: If displayed in mixed-species exhibits with hoofstock, particularly large ungulates, the geese will require a refuge from the larger animals, particularly in the nesting season. Bar-headed geese are considered an invasive species in some parts of the world, and care should be taken that they are not permitted to escape. They are capable of hybridizing with other geese species, including native birds that may fly into enclosures. Susceptible to Avian Influenza.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

The bar-headed goose receives its common name from the two black, horizontal bars – one connecting the eyes, the other on the nape of the neck – which stand out boldly on an otherwise white head. The remaining plumage is grey, approaching black on the back of the neck. The wings, which appear almost white while flying, are tipped with black.

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The beak, legs, and feet are orange or yellow. Males and females look alike; juveniles resemble adults, but are somewhat duller. Body length is 68-78 centimeters with a wingspan of 140-160 centimeters; weight is 2-3 kilograms, with males usually being slightly larger than the females.

Bar-headed geese are a migratory species, flying southward from their breeding grounds in Central Asia to their wintering grounds in South Asia. Vagrants have been reported as far away as Japan and Guam. This annual migration takes birds over the Himalayas, and birds have been observed flying at altitudes of 9,000 – 10,000 meters. Breeding in large colonies, the reproductive unit normally consists of a long-term monogamous pair. However, if there is a bias towards females in the population, males may form harems with up to 5 females.

Hardy and attractive, bar-heads are popular in zoos and private collections; flight-restricted birds can be included in exhibits with various Asian hoofstock, including camels, deer, antelope, wild cattle, and Indian rhinoceroses. They are considerably more tolerant of other birds (including other bar-heads) than many geese are, even during their breeding season. An unfortunate side-effect of their popularity, however, has been the establishment of feral populations in North America and Europe, and they have been declared an invasive or potential-invasive in some countries.

In their range countries, bar-headed geese are not considered threatened, but they are in decline due to habitat loss and disturbance, hunting, and egg collection. Newer threats include the construction of power lines along their migratory routes, as well as Avian Influenza, to which this species is susceptible; it is also a potential carrier. Bar-headed geese are also known to raid farmers' fields, which can result in some persecution, and is a possible cause for concern where feral populations have become established.

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COMPLETED BY:

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