

# Egyptian Goose

## Species Description

**Scientific name:** *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

**AKA:** Gŵydd yr Aifft (Welsh)

**Native to:** Subtropical Africa

**Habitat:** Inland freshwater bodies

A small, stocky goose with apricot breast, white wing patch and dark eye patch. Egyptian goose was first introduced into England in the late 17th century. During the 19th century birds became increasingly common on private estates, mostly in southern and eastern England from whence they dispersed to establish colonies elsewhere.

In its native range, Egyptian goose is a pest of arable crops and if numbers continue to increase it could become a similar nuisance in the UK. It shares the same habitat preferences as mallard and coot with which it might compete. Egyptian geese hybridise with native species in Africa and hybridisation with Canada geese (non-native) has been recorded in the UK. There is concern that it may hybridise with native species of goose, and threaten the conservation status of those species.

In the Netherlands the species is aggressive to nests of wading species. They could also potentially cause major damage to amenity grasslands, pastures and crops through grazing and trampling. Droppings could pose a health and safety risk to humans.

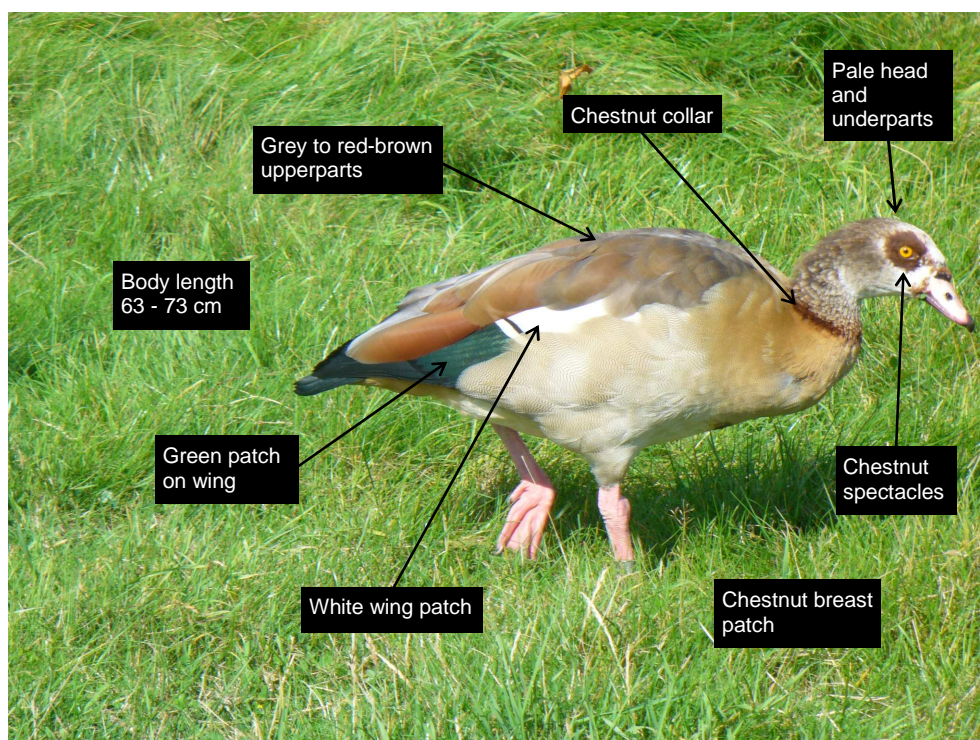
Egyptian Goose is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England, Wales and Scotland. As such, it is an offence to release or allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to [www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation).



## Key ID Features

Male and female Egyptian geese are identical in plumage and cannot be distinguished in the field. Juvenile birds are similar to adults but lack the distinct facial markings.



# Identification Throughout the Year

Egyptian goose is resident in the UK throughout the year and its appearance remains the same throughout.

# Field Signs

- Calls - Normally silent. Male - husky, wheezy breathing sound, female - harsh quacking or trumpeting.

The following field signs are shared by many species of wildfowl and should not be used for the purpose of specific identification as Egyptian goose:

- Breeding season - Eggs laid late-March to April.
- Nest - Usually a mound of grass or reeds, lined with down.
- Eggs - Rounded at both ends, creamy white, 8-9 in clutch.

# Distribution

An expanding population is present in the SE of England and the midlands. Small numbers are also present in the NW of England.



Source: Rowell et al. 2004

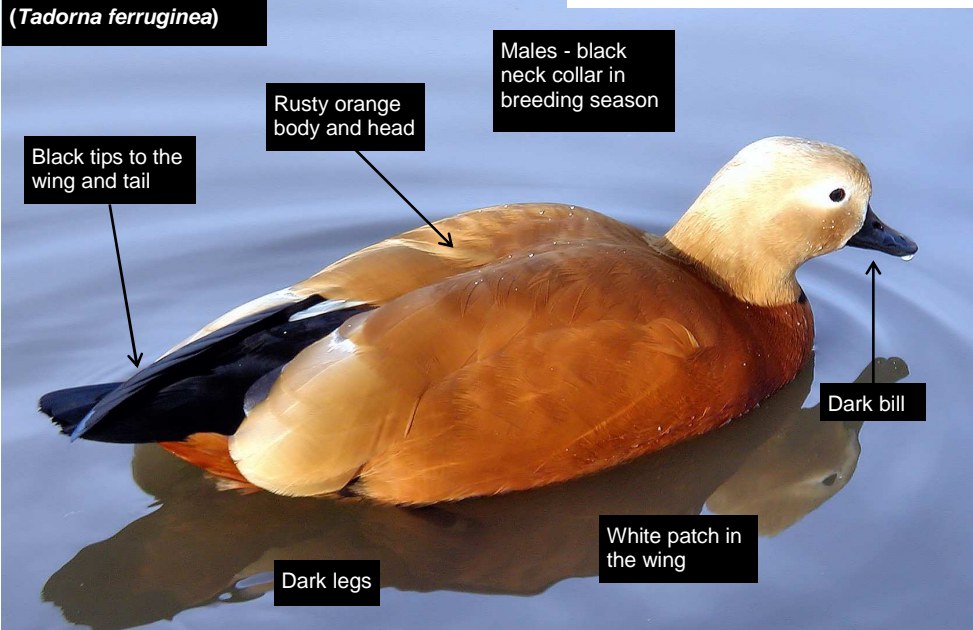
# Similar Species

The only species regularly encountered in the UK which is likely to be confused with Egyptian goose is ruddy shelduck. Ruddy shelducks are similar in size and general overall colouration to Egyptian geese.



**Egyptian Goose**  
Non-native  
(*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)  
For comparison

**Ruddy Shelduck**  
Non-native  
(*Tadorna ferruginea*)



## References and further reading:

Lever, C (2005) "Naturalised Birds of the World". T & A D Poyser

Madge, S and Burn, H (1992) "Wildfowl: An Identification to the Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World". Christopher Helm

Mullarney, K, Svensson, L., Zetterstrom, D and Grant, P J (2001) "Bird Guide." HarperCollins

Snow, D W and Perrins, C M (1998) "The Birds of the Western Palearctic". Oxford University Press

Rowell, H, Ward, R, Hall, C and Cranswick, P (2004) "Naturalised Goose Survey 2000" WWT Research Report