

Egyptian goose

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Alopochen aegyptiacus*

Native to: Subtropical Africa

Habitat: Inland freshwater bodies

A small, stocky goose with apricot breast, white wing patch and dark eye patch. There are occasional records of Egyptian goose in Northern Ireland, which are likely to have arrived from established populations in England. They were first introduced into England in the late 17th century but during the 19th century they became increasingly common on private estates.

In its native range, Egyptian goose is a pest of arable crops and could potentially become a similar nuisance in Northern Ireland. It shares the same habitat preferences as mallard and coot with which it might compete.

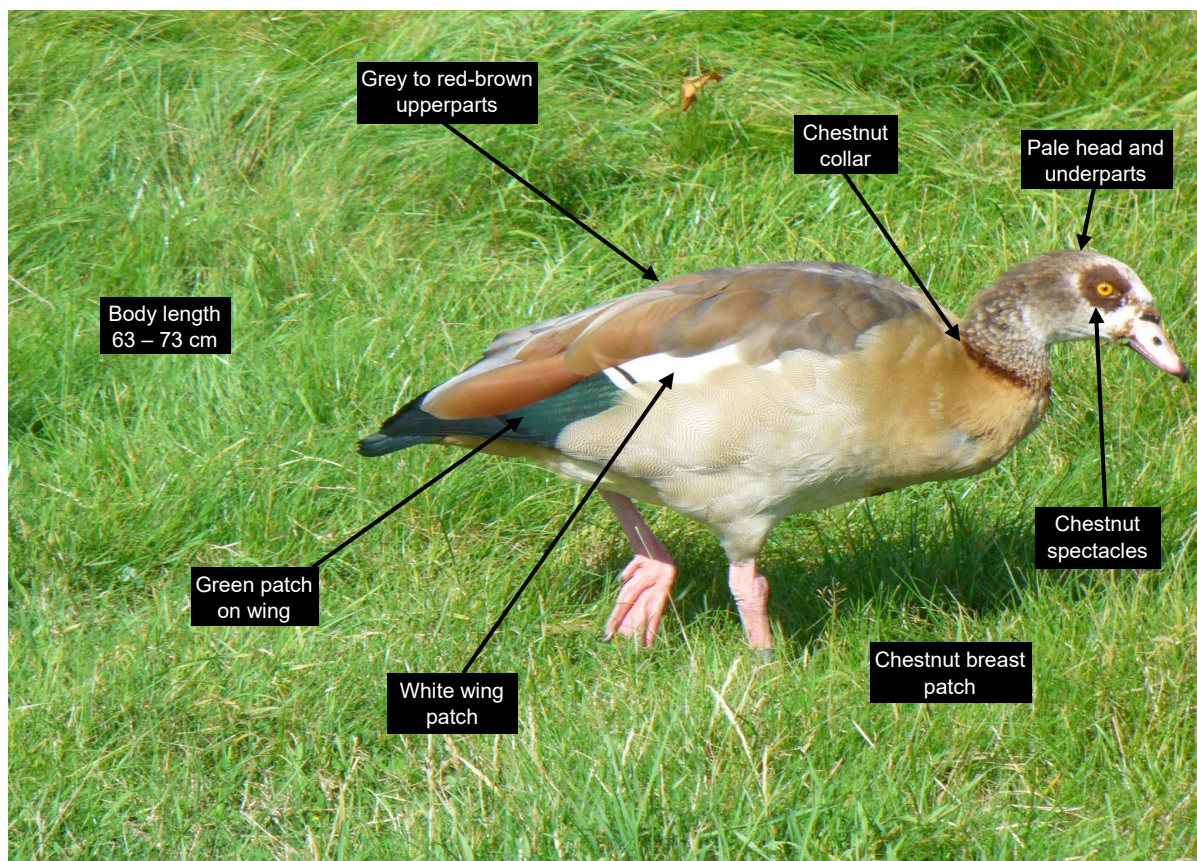
Egyptian geese hybridise with native species in Africa and hybridisation with Canada geese (non-native) has been recorded in the UK. There is concern that it may hybridise with native species of goose, and threaten the conservation status of those species. In the Netherlands it is aggressive to nests 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.

Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Egyptian goose; or to release it into the environment.



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.



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

Identification throughout the year

The appearance of Egyptian geese remain the same throughout the year.

Field signs

Calls are 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:

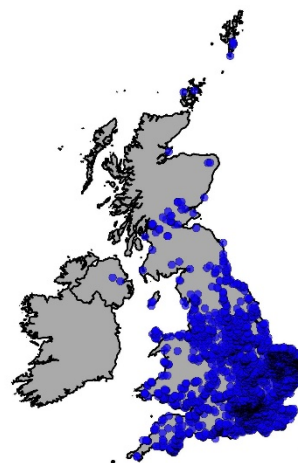
- Breeding season - Eggs laid late-March to April.
- Nest - Usually a mound of grass or reeds, lined with down.
- Eggs - Rounded at both ends, creamy white, 8-9 in clutch.

Similar Species

The only species regularly encountered in the UK (rarer in Northern Ireland) 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.

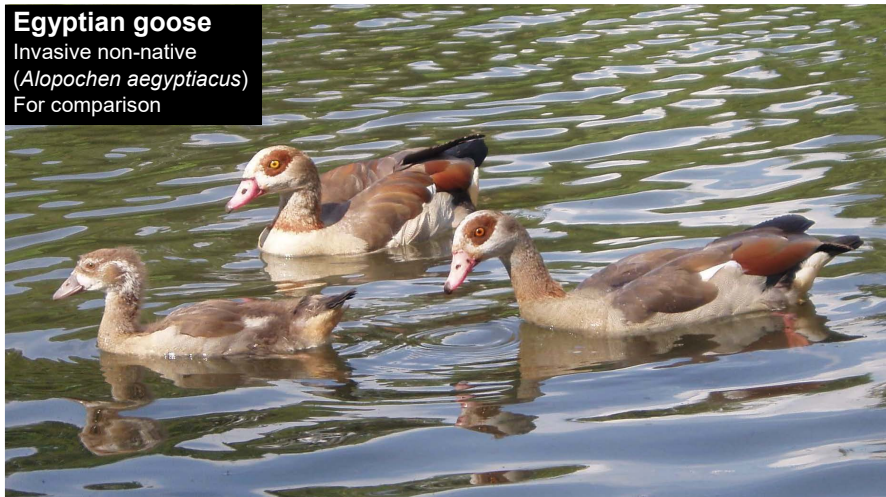
Distribution

Few records in Northern Ireland. Wide spread in England and Wales.

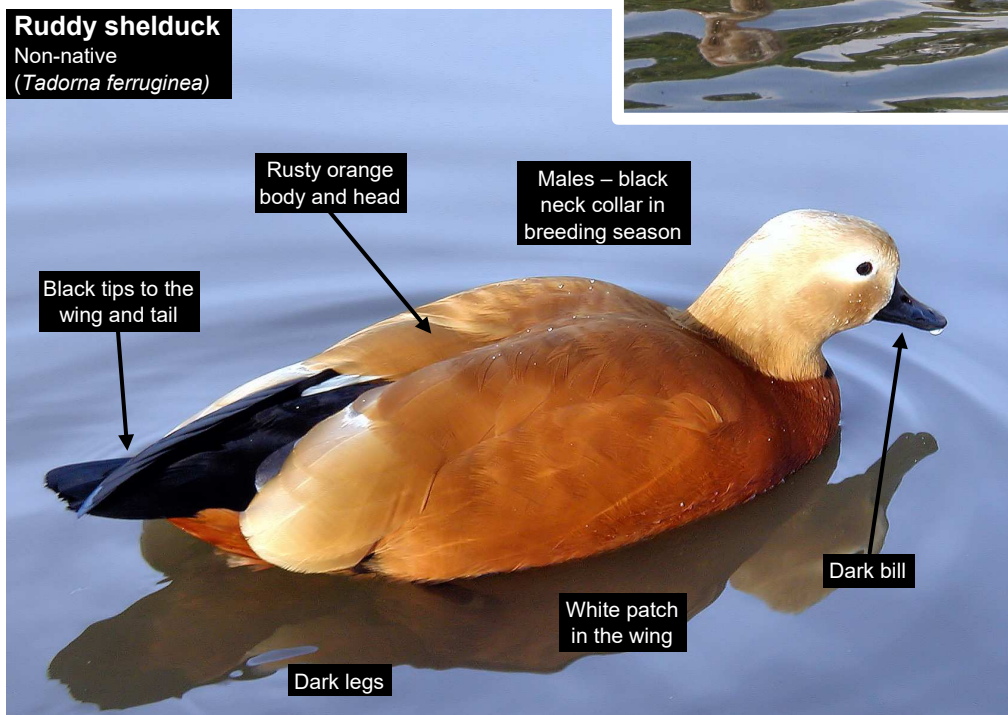


Source: NBN Atlas – available at <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0001689380>
Check website for current distribution

Egyptian goose
Invasive 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
Photographs from: Adrian Pingstone, Rob Martin, Roger Buisson, Sophie Smith

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Adapted for Northern Ireland
Environment Agency 2020