

GOOSE, NE-NE (HAWAIIAN GOOSE)



RANGE:

Island of Hawaii

HABITAT:

Lives mainly on land. It inhabits the mountain slopes between the volcanoes of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea, at an elevation of 800 meters. This is an inhospitable area with fog and frequent rain showers. Instead of green meadows, there are only fields of lava.

SIZE:

Weight: 4 – 5 lbs.

Length: 23 – 28 inches

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

Wild: 5 to 10 years

Zoo: 10 – 15 years

REPRODUCTION:

- The sexes look alike.
- Their nest is a down-lined hollow in a sparsely vegetated area on a lava flow. They lay 2 to 8 cream-white eggs.
- Males of all ducks, geese and swans have a copulatory organ which is invaginated from the cloaca during copulation. Such an erectile penis is found in only a few other orders of birds.

DIET:

Wild: Grasses and herbs

Zoo: Bird chow, escarole, cracked corn, greens

BEHAVIOR:

- The Hawaiian goose has become so adapted to the conditions of its habitat, that it has become a land goose with unusually long legs, long toes and much reduced webbing on the feet.
- They are poor swimmers.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The Ne-ne is the state bird of Hawaii and the only wild goose resident in Hawaii.
- Ne-ne are heavily barred gray-brown geese with a buff neck with dark furrows, and a black face.
- Their bill and semi-webbed feet are black.
- They honk like other geese and have a single molt each year.
- The lamellae, placed in a row in the interior of the beak, have become a sifting apparatus specialized for cropping grass.
- They are closely related to the Canada goose and are unique among northern geese in being non-migratory.

STATUS:

Endangered. In the 18th century about 25,000 of these birds lived in Hawaii. Around 1850 hunters and introduced wild predators such as feral dogs, pigs and banded mongoose began to decimate the population.

In 1918, Herbert Shipman, a farmer, started raising the geese on the big island. Just before WW II, the population was down to thirty birds in the wild and thirteen living on farms. The bird became protected during WW II. After 1950, Mr. Shipman sent Ne-ne to the British Wildfowl Trust which subsequently bred the birds and reintroduced them into the wild in Hawaii where about 350 now survive. There are about 1000 in captivity.

The reintroductions were funded by the United States government.

**PHOTO
COMING
SOON**

Order:	Anseriformes
Family:	Anatidae
Genus:	Branta
Species:	sandvicensis