



WHITE – FACED WHISTLING DUCKS

ANSERIFORMES

Family: Anatidae

Genus: *Dendrocygna*

Species: *viduata*



Range: Sub-Saharan Africa & Much of South America and Spain

Habitat: Lowland tropics

Niche: herbivore

Biomes:

Wild diet: grasses, seeds, rice & aquatic invertebrates

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild)
(Captivity)

Sexual dimorphism:

Location in SF Zoo: Puente al Sur, Rain Forest Building

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

These birds stand more erect than other ducks.

The adult's front portion of the head from behind the eyes to the chin and down the throat is white.

The back of the head and neck are black. The lower neck and breast are rich chestnut while the upper back is olive-brown and transversely barred rusty. The lower back, rump and upper tail coverts and the tail are black with a blue sheen.

Weight: M 1.4 lbs. (637g.)

F 1.3 lbs. (614g)

Ht: 18 inches (48 cm)

Wing span: 17 – 19 inches (46 – 50cm)

STATUS & CONSERVATION

With such a broad range they appear in no imminent danger though they are most likely affected by the loss of wetlands.

1/87 census in West Africa found 200,000 birds and 1,000,000 – 2,000,000 in East & South Africa. As for South America documentation has not been noted.

Global population estimated to be 1,400,000–2,600,000 individuals (Wetlands International 2002).

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/search/details.php/47126/summ>

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Contact call is loud 'swee-swee-sweeoo'

They forage mainly about 2 hours each, after dawn and before dusk

Allo preening is performed as the birds under go gregarious preening

They are very gregarious during the non-breeding season.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Breeding begins with the rainy season with small groups and loose colonies in the reed beds.

Nests on average are 75 m apart from one another. Both parents feed the chicks once they have left the nest 48 hours after hatching.

Incubation 26 –30 day primarily by males	Sexual Maturity:
# of Young: 4 –13 small creamy white eggs	Fledges in about 8 weeks

MISCELLANEOUS

Where did they start, Africa or South America? If Africa did people bring them to South America? Africa and South America separated from each other c.130 ma to present day. It seems unlikely that these ducks were around early enough to be separated at this time and not physically changed.

This bird is found in tropical South America and Africa south of the Sahara. It does not migrate across the Atlantic Ocean so the separation may have taken place when the two continents were much closer together or it may have been a small group of birds colonizing one continent from the other.

Sources:

Birds of Africa © 1980 – John Karmali p.78

Handbook of the Birds of the World Vol I © 2001 p. 576

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