



Chinese Geese

By: Denise Moss

Characteristics of Chinese Geese

Chinese Geese are quite different from ordinary geese – they look different, they sound different and their behaviour is different. They can become very tame and friendly and make excellent pets. There are two main types of Chinese Geese, the white and the grey (also called fawn or brown). The white form has blue eyes and orange beak and feet. The grey form has darker feet, brown eyes and a black beak. Blue and lavender forms are also being developed.

Chinese Geese, like their giant cousins, the African Geese, are descended from the Swan Goose of Asia, whereas the ancestor of almost all other domesticated varieties of geese is the Greylag Goose. Descendants of the Swan Goose have a raised knob at the base of the bill, although this feature is not present in the Swan Goose itself.

Chinese Geese are easy to keep and do not require large quantities of feed like the heavier breeds of geese. For breeding purposes, one gander can be kept with up to 6 geese. Although perfectly hardy, exhibition birds should be protected from severe frost, otherwise their beak and feet may become discoloured.

As well as making eye-catching show birds, they are useful watchdogs, raising the alarm if strangers approach. They are good foragers and will keep lawns, yards and orchards tidy. Chinese Geese do not fatten successfully into a typical roasting goose, but their lean meat is perhaps more suited to today's taste. Alternatively they can be crossed with other breeds such as Embden or Brecon Buff. This increases their size and gives a more traditional meat quality.

Pair of White Chinese Geese Photo: Denise Moss

Chinese geese mature at around 4-5 months of age, when the sexes can be distinguished by their behaviour. Additionally, the knob on the beak develops more quickly and is larger in the gander than



in the goose. The gander can also be distinguished by the higher pitch of his voice, the goose making a low croaking sound.



Lavender goose(l) and Grey gander(r). Photo's: Denise Moss

Chinese geese lay plenty of eggs. They lay throughout the traditional laying time from February till June and some may also lay in Autumn and Winter, as well as Spring and Summer.

The geese are usually avid sitters and they make good parents and will often adopt goslings if you have obtained some from elsewhere.



**Blue Chinese gander followed by lavender and blue goslings
Photo: Denise Moss**

The eggs from Chinese Geese hatch quite well in an incubator, too, and the resulting goslings will respond very well to human company. Like all geese, they will follow you round if hand-reared from being hatched, and will remain a friend for life. They will come up to you, not just for food, but to have a chat and to tell you about their little problems. Anyone who has doubts about keeping geese would do well to start with Chinese goslings.



White Chinese Geese in a River. Photo: Jenny Pritchard



Grey Chinese geese on a Pond. Photo: Jenny Pritchard

The Goose Club

Anyone wishing to know more about any sort of domestic geese can join The Goose Club. The Club's wish is to increase the popularity of goose keeping and the knowledge about their behaviour and requirements. The aims of the club are to bring together anyone with interests in keeping or breeding domestic geese, to encourage members to widen their knowledge and exchange experiences about geese, To promote the understanding of goose behaviour, to promote keeping and breeding of

domestic geese, both pure and crossbred, and to assist members in any way, particularly in the welfare of geese and to help preserve all breeds of pure bred domestic geese.

The club is chaired by Jenny Pritchard and is affiliated to the Poultry Club of Great Britain. Members receive a 32 page journal three times a year, full of information, news, anecdotes, shows, sales and members' adverts. The club also publishes a Year Book and Breeders Directory. All these publications are free to members. Although based in Great Britain, membership is international. Membership application forms can be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs D. Moss, Llwyn Coed, Gelli, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire SA66 7HW, United Kingdom. Alternatively, you can visit our website at www.gooseclub.org.uk where you can print out an application form.

