

Mandarin duck (*Aix galericulata*)



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ORIGIN: East Asia

IMPORTED WAYS AND IMPORTED VECTORS: In Europe, there are isolated, feral park populations that have developed from escapes from captivity.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS: The beak of the drake is red, a white band extends over the head. The head is metallic green iridescent. The cheeks and erect wing feathers are orange. The belly is white. The female is dull olive gray on the head and neck and grayish brown on the back. The belly is white with beige spotted sides. There is a white "spectacle" around the eye.

BIOLOGY: Mandarin ducks stay together during the breeding season, sometimes for several years. They lay their nests in tree hollows. Both parents and chicks are good climbers thanks to their strong claws. When the young are fledged after about 45 days, they leave the parental territory in groups and look for a new body of water. Mandarin ducks are not very choosy when it comes to their food. They eat worms, insects, beetles, mollusks, aquatic plants, cereal grains, nuts, acorns, seeds, among others.

STATUS: The mandarin duck is not endangered in Europe, but it is in its native East Asia. Since it has become very rare there, the artificially created population in Europe is very important for the preservation of the species.