



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DUCKS & GEESE

The following answers were generated from information by Nancy Townsend, the creator of the Duck & Goose Diaper. Her love of ducks and geese, and a general lack of information on how to care for them (not pluck or cook them!) led her to write her funny and informative reference book, "Duck! There's a Goose in the House!" To order one, just click on Duck and Goose Accessories.

Will a diaper harness harm my duck/goose?

When I designed the harness, I certainly took their welfare into consideration. I chose soft, stretchy Lycra material so it would be as comfortable as possible. Even if you tugged on the bird using the leash, the harness would not hurt, as it acts like a soft bag with no straps pulling on the bird anywhere. It covers as little of the body as possible because I didn't want anything to interfere with their heating and cooling systems. Laying eggs in the harness is no problem as it was designed for that. The diaper is a cushion for the egg to prevent any cracking and the pouch is deep enough to keep it from causing the bird discomfort. I have raised ducks and geese in the house, in diapers, for over 14 years.

As far as how long the bird may wear the harness, I do know that they can keep it on for two or three days without harm, as I have had to do it on trips on



occasion. Traveling across the country in an RV, they wore the harness all the time, except for baths. Of course, they should always be closely supervised.

Why does my duck run from me?

All babies run from anything moving towards them as this is a survival instinct. If they stop to ask questions in the wild, they will probably be eaten before they finish the sentence! They feel safest with "Mom," however, so they really want to be near Mom at all times. Don't give up.

When the duck is older, they may retain this running instinct for years. Others may run because they are being picked up incorrectly. They are very independent little characters and some do not want to be held, preferring freedom. This also does not mean they don't like you or want to be with you. One effective method is to pick up the duck, put it on your lap or right beside you and immediately remove your hands. Once the duck realizes it is free to leave if it wants, it will most likely stay there. The best way to keep a duck or goose is to let it go. At festivals, I put the duck on a child's lap, but tell them not to touch the duck, keeping their hands near their sides. Once the duck is on their lap, I tell them to gently pet the duck. Geese are generally more agreeable to being held in your arms or on your lap. Holding them helps you form a closer relationship with them.



We invite you to join our new on-line community for parents of ducks and geese, named after our book, *“Duck, Duck, There’s a Goose in the House.”* We hope to create a fun place where we can answer questions and provide tips & advice to help you with your wonderful pet. Just “Like” our page and be sure to introduce yourself and your duck or goose (we would love to see photos). We look forward to your participation!

– Alan & Melissa Townsend
(Father and Mother Goose)



Duck, Duck,
There’s a Goose in the House
JOIN US!

Should I get a male or female duck/goose for a pet?

I strongly advise getting a female. Females provide you with eggs that are great for eating and baking. But the main reason I advise against getting a male, especially a duck, is because they frequently start biting their "Mom" and sometimes everyone else during mating season. Mallard and Muscovy ducks seem to do less of this than the other ducks as they are closer to the wild and still adhere to a short mating season. But domestic ducks have been bred to have a very long mating season (lasting most of the year) in order to produce more eggs and meat. Therefore a drake may be mean most of the year.

Geese are different. In the wild, there is no incest among geese and they are monogamous. Therefore, a gander will rarely choose to mate with a family member and generally, geese are gentler in their mating habits than ducks. They prefer to spend months getting to know each other and deciding for themselves whether they want to mate or not. A pet gander that is imprinted on humans will want to mate with a human, but they usually fall for an acquaintance or family friend, not Mom. This can be a problem but not as serious as with the drake's biting. If you get two geese, I still recommend two females, as the gander will be imprinted on both geese and humans, but will not be afraid of humans and can be very aggressive when mated with a goose.

Why has my duck started biting me?

If you have a duckling/gosling that is nipping you a bit hard, you can correct this behavior by holding its neck very gently—just enough so it has to look at you—and tapping its bill gently, telling it, "No Skin! No Skin!" Always be sure to say "skin" as they use their bills to investigate their world. It is a lot like an elephant's trunk. It is their taster and feeler and you will be surprised what they can do with it. If you are consistent, they will learn the word "skin" and won't nip anyone's skin—not just yours. When they are older, a nip can really hurt and even leave a bruise.

If you are referring to a drake that is about four months old or older, then it's a problem. This is hormonal biting and is difficult to impossible to change. They target humans if they are imprinted on them. I believe the biting is worse the younger they are. They are full of testosterone and don't quite know how to handle it. As they get older, they tend to settle down some.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(continued)



Do ducks and geese have a pecking order?

Pecking orders don't exist in the wild with the ducks and geese because there is no reason for it. Females aren't looking for a big, strong guy. That's what starts everything in the first place. They are looking for a smart, friendly guy, who will be very loyal, trustworthy, caring, and a good father. They don't have to waste time competing for females or food. They mate for life so there is no fighting over females, and food is everywhere. If not here, then they fly elsewhere. There are leaders among the ducks and geese, but they didn't get there through force. They are the ones that are the wisest, have raised families successfully, and have the best personalities. They don't force the other ducks or geese to do anything. This is how they live so peacefully together.

The one thing a goose must have is companionship, and it is what makes them such great companions for humans. Since they are relatively independent, they want companionship for companionship's sake. Many times what looks like a pecking order among geese is the one goose that all the others follow and hang around. That is the goose they like and respect the most. There are levels of popularity in a gaggle and one thing they are based on is how many children a couple

has successfully raised. The best parents are the most respected. The young geese stay with their parents for at least a year, sometimes two, and have a loving relationship for life. We lived peacefully with three geese and a duck in a 30 ft. RV for nine years.

How does my duck/goose understand me so well?

This is a question I have pondered for some time, ever since I had my first duck, Matilda. It didn't take long for Matilda and me to form a relationship that didn't need many words. She could look at me and I would know what she wanted; I could look at her and she would know what I wanted. I have had and have been told of many instances where a pet duck/goose has reacted differently to someone with an illness or problem. I don't have an answer to this question and I don't think anyone does. I do believe that these birds have some abilities far beyond what we can understand. Enjoy the gifts Mother Nature has given these remarkable creatures and trust your own ability to recognize them, use them and appreciate them.