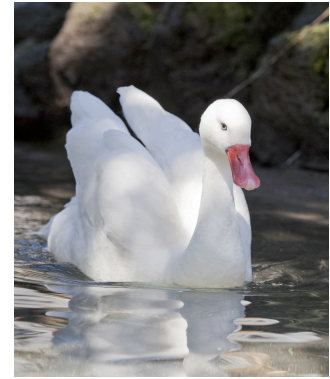




COSCOROBA SWAN

Anseriformes
Family: Anatidae
Genus: *Coscoroba*
Species: *coscoroba*



- Range:** South America from Tierra del Fuego to central Chile and Northern Argentina, Falkland Islands, winters in South East Brazil
- Habitat:** Prefers shallow areas of fresh water, such as ponds, lagoons, canals and swamps with sufficient vegetation for cover
- Niche:** Diurnal, aquatic, omnivorous
- Wild diet:** Aquatic plants and seeds with some shellfish
- Zoo diet:**
- Life Span:** (Wild) 20 years
 (Captive) 35 years
- Sexual dimorphism:** Males are longer, heavier and a wider wingspan. Female has darker eyes.
- Location in SF Zoo:** Puente al Sur

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

The smallest species of swan, the Coscoroba Swan is a white bird with striking coral-red legs and beak. They have six black primary feathers that appear as black tips on the end of their wings. Breast feathers appear centrally parted. The bird has a red beak, legs and feet. Eyes are yellowish to reddish-orange.

Swans feed by immersing their head and neck and sometimes “tipping up”. The bill has serrated comb-like structures called lamellae, which help filter food. Swans scoop up water and food, hold it in their mouth and squeeze out the water through the lamellae. Inside the upper bill is a hard, horny tip (known as the “nail”) that assists with breaking open mollusks.

Weight: M 8.4 – 11.9 lbs F 7 – 10 lbs
Length: 34.6 – 45.2 in
Wingspan:

Coscoroba swans walk awkwardly on land, as their short legs result in a clumsy waddle. Wings are relatively short, strong and pointed. To become airborne from the water, swans have large and well-developed wing muscles that join at the sternum and lend the birds their broad breast. To fly, they beat them continuously and quickly in order to gain or maintain momentum in the air. They only glide when landing.

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Not globally threatened. CITIES II. Still widespread and quite common locally; decreasing in some areas, especially Chile. Greatest threat seems to be loss of temperate marsh habitats. The Coscoroba Swan species is now a protected species under the Washington Convention and in the Chilean Red Book.

COSCOROBA SWAN

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

In flight they are often heard long before they are visible in the sky. These birds make a trumpeted “hon-carrar”. The Coscoroba Swan’s name comes from the loud, ringing “cos-cor-ooo” call with a longer and higher-pitched first syllable. Females utter higher-pitched calls than male. The Coscoroba Swan has a honking voice.

Swans are more aquatic than most geese, but like some geese they migrate in lines or in a V formation. Southern breeders migrate to lower latitudes in winter, as far north as Tropic of Capricorn, but other populations mainly sedentary.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

The male performs a unique series of courtship displays designed to woo the female. The coscoroba swan mates for life and usually in single pairs or small groups. Nesting consists of large mounds of aquatic vegetation lined with soft grasses and down situated on small islands, in reedbeds or in long grass, close to water. Four to seven eggs are laid at one-day intervals. Rain seems to be an important factor determining clutch sizes. The female incubates the eggs. The male does not bring food to the female, so she must leave the nest to eat. Males do not incubate while the female is absent. Instead, the female covers the nest to keep the eggs warm and hide them from predators while she is away. Against all but the largest and boldest predators, male swans are aggressive defenders of their chosen territory. Females defend only the nest-site, but more vigorously with direct attacks on intruders. The downy chicks are able to swim and feed themselves very soon after hatching. Adults defend them against predators and intruders.

Incubation: 35 days # of Eggs: 4 - 7	Sexual Maturity: 3 yrs Fledging: 3 – 4 mos
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MISCELLANEOUS

A distinctive species, to some extent between swans and geese, yet some scientists consider it to be most closely related to whistling ducks.

Sources:

The Handbook of the Birds of the World Vol I © 1996, Lynx Edicions, p 579.
Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica © 1998 Princeton University Press
<http://www.zoo.org/animal-facts/coscorobaswan>

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