

Emperor Goose

Species Description

Scientific name: *Chen canagica*

AKA: Gwydd ymeradwr (Welsh)/*Anser canagicus*

Native to: Bering Sea

Habitat: In its native range breeds in coastal saltmarshes and winters along ice-free coasts. In GB the species can occur on any inland or coastal water body.

A small, striking goose with orange legs, grey body and white head and neck.

Kept as an ornamental bird in GB with one or two feral breeding pairs being recorded annually since 2000. Small flocks have been noted at widespread geographical locations.

At present, due to the small numbers and scattered distribution of the feral population, this species is not having a deleterious environmental impact. If populations increase, the species could potentially cause damage to amenity grasslands, pastures and crops through grazing and trampling. Droppings could pose a health and safety risk to humans.

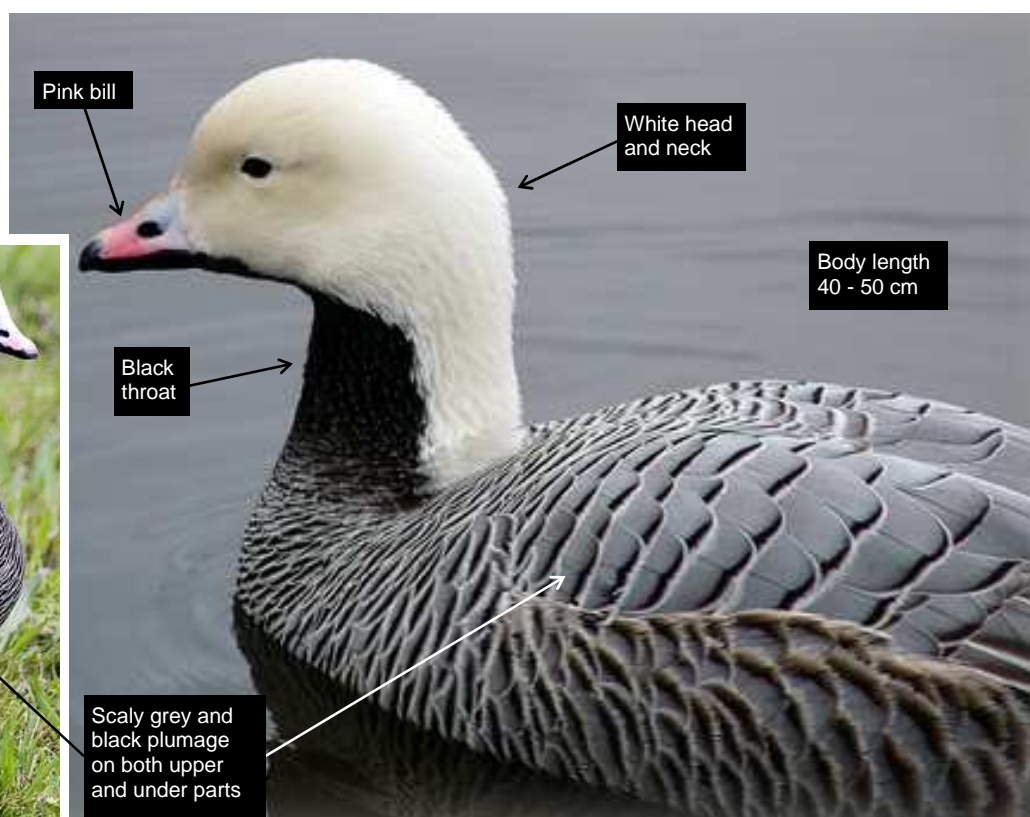
Emperor goose is listed under Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 with respect to England and Wales. As such, it is an offence to release or allow the escape of this species into the wild.

For details of legislation go to www.nonnativespecies.org/legislation.



Key ID Features

Male and female Emperor geese are identical in plumage and cannot be distinguished in the field.

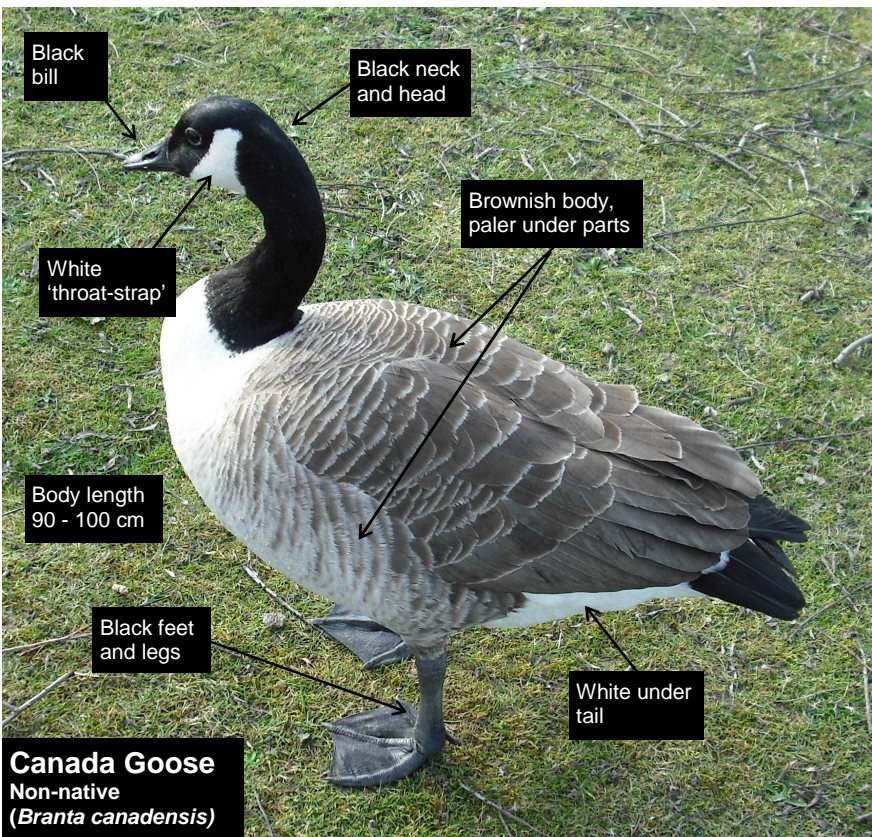
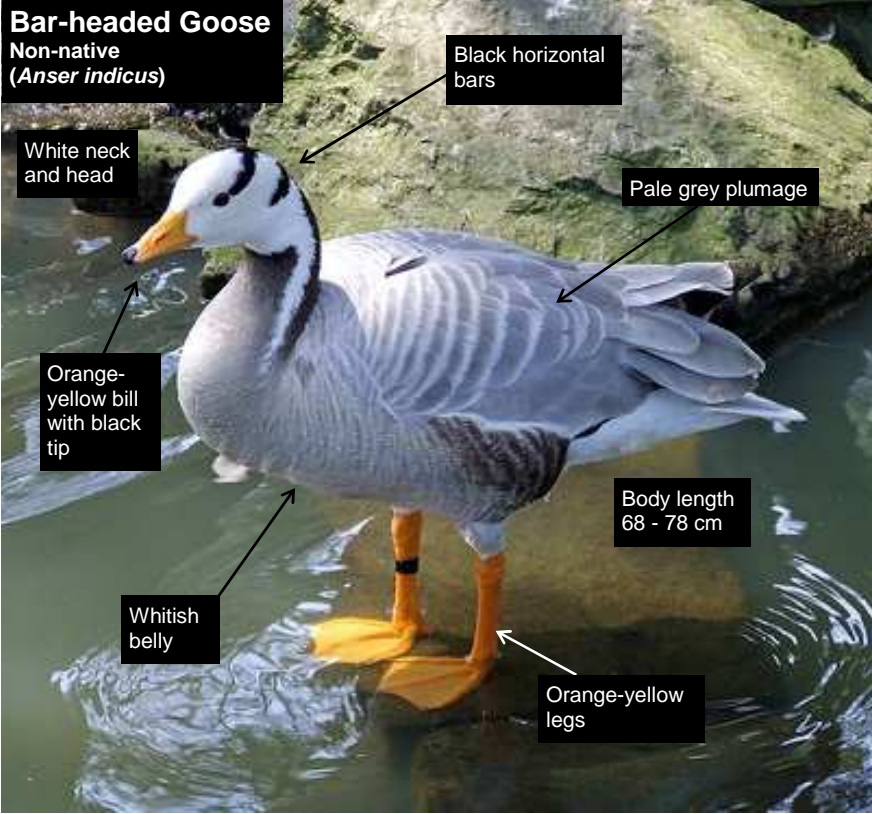


Identification throughout the year

Feral Emperor geese are present in the UK throughout the year and retain the same plumage characteristics throughout.

Similar Species

Emperor goose is a distinctive species although care should be taken to distinguish it from other 'white faced' geese.



Distribution

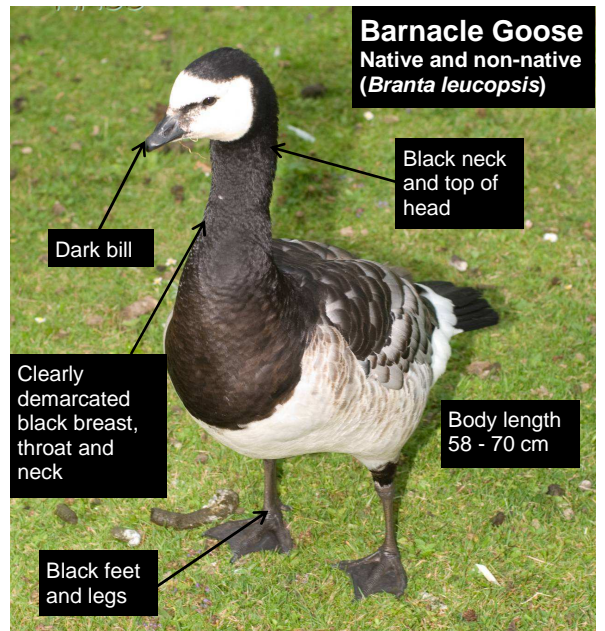
The only known successful breeding sites for emperor geese are in Cumbria.

Source: Holling, M & the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (2007)



Field Signs

- Call - A high pitched 'kla-ha'.
- Nest - Amongst vegetation close to water, usually a depression of grass, down and some feathers.
- Eggs - Usually 4-8 laid in May and June.
- Footprints - Large webbed footprint similar in size and shape to other common goose species.
- Droppings - Cylindrical, typical in size and shape to other common goose species.
- Social behaviour - Often encountered in flocks of other feral geese as well as independently.



References and further reading:

Holling, M and the Rare Breeding Birds Panel (2007) Non-native breeding birds in the United Kingdom in 2003, 2004 and 2005. *British Birds* 100: 638-649

Rowell, H, Ward, R, Hall, C and Cranswick P (2004) "The Naturalised Goose Survey 2000". WWT Research Report