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## Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

The Mute Swan is a Eurasian species that has been bred for avicultural purposes since ancient Greek times, and even free-flying birds exist primarily in domestic situations. The only confirmed breeding of the Mute Swan noted during the Atlas period was from a feral population that has existed since 1957 on various lakes in Lakeland. The city provides veterinary care and protection during nesting. The current population comprises approximately 80 birds.

In Florida a growing number of municipalities, property owner associations, and golf courses are placing swans on public or common property lakes. None of these introductions is expected to become anything more than a local, feral population similar to the Lakeland birds.

The Mute Swan's natural habitat is comprised of lakes and rivers with broad shorelines and ample vegetation for nesting. Its diet consists primarily of aquatic vegetation, occasionally grain and terrestrial grasses, and, rarely, aquatic invertebrates (Johnsgard 1978).

It nests on the ground, and the typical clutch contains 5 to 7 gray-green eggs, which are incubated by the female (pen) and occasionally the male (cob) for 35 to 37 days. Both parents care for the young, which fledge 100 to 120 days after hatching (Terres 1980).

Tom Palmer

# Mute Swan

