

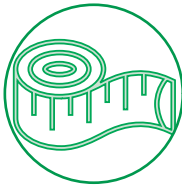
Mute Swan

Habitat Hero



Common Name: Mute swan
Irish Name: Eala bhalbh
Scientific Name: *Cygnus olar*

Seen in Ireland:
Year-round



Mute Swans are 1.25-1.6 m in length with a wing-span of up to 2m, and can be 1+ m tall, and they weigh between 11 and 14 kg.



Mute swans are very common and widespread throughout Ireland. They are found in wetlands such as lakes, rivers and estuaries across the country.

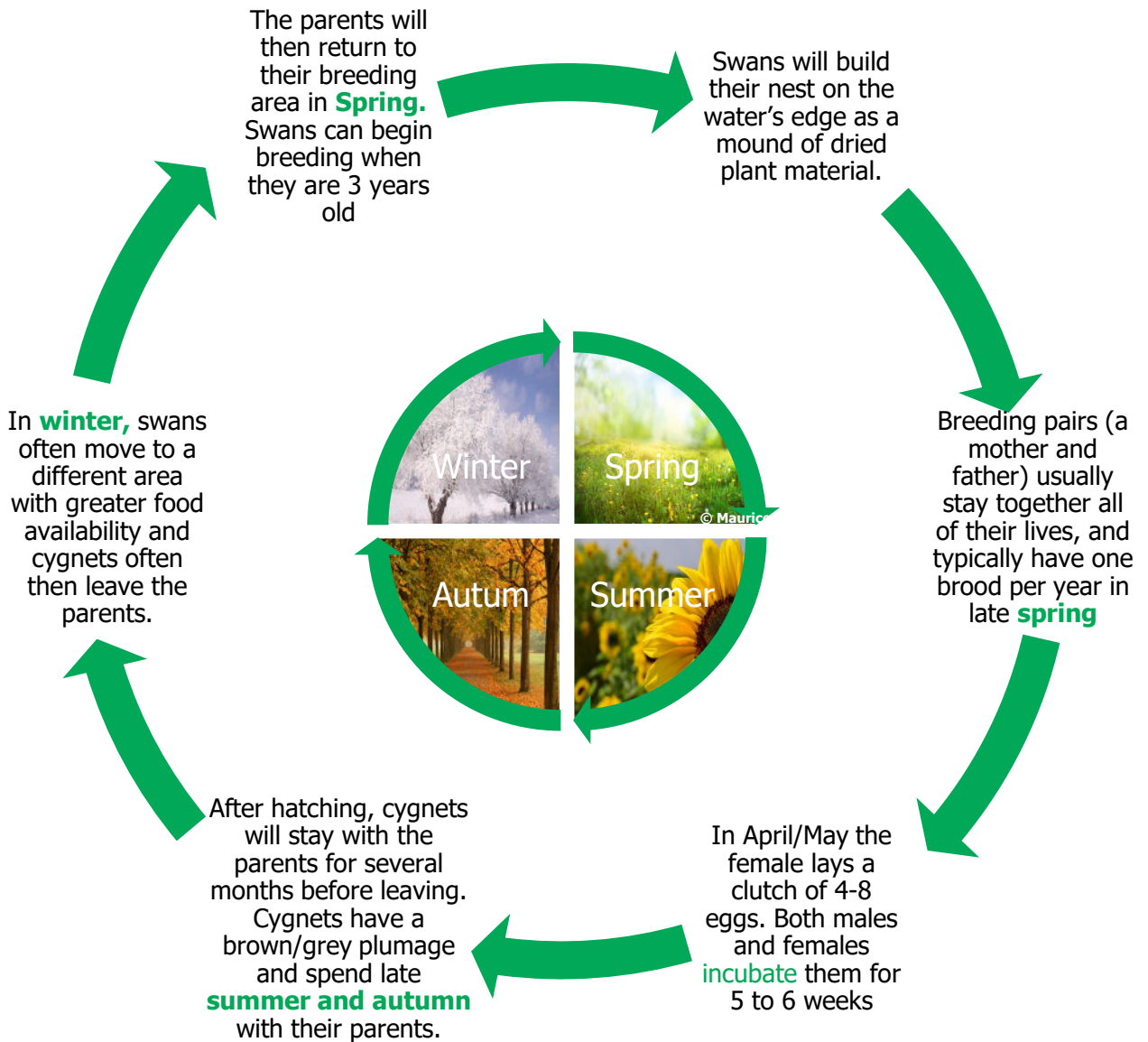


Swans mainly feed on water plants and invertebrates (like pond snails). They can use their long neck to reach deep into the water looking for food. They can also graze when they are on land, eating grass and other plants.



They live 11 years on average.

Mute Swan Life Cycle



Mute Swan

Some more Facts:

- Mute swans are very large, white birds with a long, curved neck, an orange beak and black, webbed feet.
- They are one of two species of swan in Ireland and the only species that live here year-round.
- In many species of bird, you can tell males and females apart based on their different colours. With swans however, it is based on their size (the male is larger) and the black lump on the top of the beak (again the male has a slightly larger lump).
- Did you know.... swans (and ducks) should not be feed bread? This is not a natural part of their diet and does not provide them with the nutrition they need.
- Too much bread is bad for them. If you enjoy feeding swans and ducks, try bringing lettuce or frozen peas instead. This is more similar to their usual diet, so it is better for them.
- Young swans (**cygnets**) are vulnerable to predation from foxes and large birds such as herons.
- They will generally stay close to their parents for protection.
- Despite the name mute swans are not silent! You may hear them making a few different noises.
- Adults make a low rumbling sound and will hiss when alarmed. Juveniles will make a high-pitched call to ask for food.
- Swans are strongly featured in Irish folklore. One of the most famous Irish legends is "The Children of Lir" which tells the story of 4 children being turned to swans for 900 years.

