

DUCK ADOPTION GUIDE



Finding your new companions

Step 1: Submit your application form (available on our website) and photos

We will need to see photos and measurements of your ducks' accommodation. Please email these to: smallanimals1@raystede.org

We will consider your application and contact you if we need a few more details or to invite you to Raystede for a chat. If you do not hear from us, we have everything we need for now, thank you.

Step 2: Wait for the magic to happen

Once you have registered with us, please keep an eye on our website for new arrivals and contact us if you feel someone might suit your home.

When animals arrive at Raystede, we get to know them through behaviour and medical assessments. Our expert animal care teams carefully use this information alongside your application to see if the match could be a success. Finding the perfect pet can take time. Please be patient; they will be worth the wait.

Step 3: Visit Raystede

We will invite you to Raystede as soon as we have found any potential matches for your home. We will discuss the animals' background, health and behaviour. This sometimes requires a few visits. You will need to provide photo ID, proof of address, and if applicable, written landlord permission to have a pet in your property.

Step 4: Take your new pet home

Once we have found your perfect partner, we will book an adoption appointment; our Rehoming Team will talk you through caring for your pet. Your adoption fee will help us continue our work to give animals a better life.

Rehoming criteria

Our housing requirements aim to ensure the best welfare standards for ducks. Our team are happy to offer advice in purchasing or adapting your set-up to provide the best home before adopting.

Ducks are social animals and should be kept in pairs or groups.

Ducks need a fully secure, fox-proof enclosure with a pond and a shelter

- The pond must include fresh, clean water, with separate drinking water.
- A shed, stable or outbuilding is ideal for shelter and nesting.
- The enclosure should include plenty of greenery/foilage for foraging and security.
- If allowing them to free-range, they must be supervised, and the garden must be secure.

Peace of mind when adopting

- All ducks are health checked regularly

You will also receive:

- A comprehensive adoption pack and appointment with our Rehoming Team to ensure you have everything you need to care for your new ducks

Follow-up advice from our expert team

Thank you for your adoption fee, which will help to cover some of our costs:

Adoption fee for ducks: £7.50 each

The average daily cost of care for our chickens, ducks and geese at Raystede is in excess of £70.

Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare, The Broyle, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5AJ.

Tel: (01825) 880467 Fax: (01825) 840995 E-mail: smallanimals1@raystede.org www.raystede.org

President: Morgan Williams. Registered Charity No. 237696. Registered Office: Raystede, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5AJ. Registered in England No. 816674

Duck care

Owning ducks can be very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long-term commitment. Did you know that ducks can live up to 12 years?

Ducks are very rewarding and interesting to watch – they are such characters. However, they need plenty of space, usually in a rural setting, and owners who are accepting of the mess they make.

Ducks are social animals and should be kept in pairs or groups. Depending on the sex-ratio and numbers, it may be necessary to separate the males and females during the breeding season, to prevent the males inadvertently injuring the females. This must be done carefully so as not to impact negatively on their welfare, for example, separating birds must be for minimal time and within a sufficiently sized enclosure with shelter and access to clean water for bathing.

Check your ducks for signs of injury or illness every day and seek veterinary advice if necessary.

- If your ducks become ill, a specialist vet would be required; do you know where your nearest exotic/farm vet practice is located?
- Ducks should be wormed at least twice a year.
- Ducks are prone to eye infections. The water should be kept as clean as possible to prevent these.
- Ducks are prone to feet and leg problems, such as bumblefoot and in larger breeds, arthritis. Plenty of clean, dry substrate will help.

Housing your ducks

Ducks need a fully secure, fox-proof enclosure, with a pond and a shelter.

Ducks spend much of their time foraging on both land and water, so they will need a large outside area to keep themselves occupied. This should be attached to their housing or offer secure free-ranging. Trees and plants within their outside area are a good source of shelter, food and enrichment.

A pond should provide clean, fresh water for feeding, bathing and enrichment. Ideally, it should have a mixture of shallow and deep areas. The number and breed of your ducks will be dictated by your pond size and type.

Ducks also enjoy sunbathing and dustbathing so their accommodation should include access to natural sunlight and either an area of naturally dry ground or something such as a shallow plastic paddling pool filled with a mixture of light soil and fine sand.

They will need a sizeable sleeping area that they can move around comfortably in; sheds, stables and outbuildings are ideal. Accommodation should be well ventilated, weather-proof and allow in natural light.

Settling in and introductions

When you first get your ducks home, you should leave them to settle in for a few days and allow them to get to know their accommodation and routine.

If you already own ducks, introductions should be made gradually to prevent fighting between groups. Females should not be introduced to a male during breeding season to prevent injury to the females.

Diet

- Your ducks/geese will find a lot of natural foods in their enclosure, but their diet must also be supplemented with corn, grit to aid digestion and small amounts of healthy treats such as fresh green vegetables, grapes and apples.
- **Fresh water** available at all times, as birds can drink a lot throughout the day. This must be separate to their bathing water. Ducks can also receive an apple cider vinegar supplement in their drinking water to promote general health and improve plumage.