



## Black Swan

<b>Name</b>	<b>Scientific</b>	<i>Cygnus atratus</i>
	<b>Common</b>	Black Swan
<b>Description</b>		Black swans have black feathers except for the white flight feathers. Eyes and beak are red, and there is a white bar across the beak near the tip. Cobs (males) have longer necks than the pens (females). Their cygnets have light grey down.
<b>Habitat</b>		Open water.
<b>What it feeds on</b>		They eat <u>aquatic</u> vegetation such as plants that are close to the surface or they may pull up growth from the bottom. They also graze on vegetation close to the water's edge.
<b>Where it feeds</b>		Black swans feed in freshwater swamps, rivers, <u>estuaries</u> and lakes, and on the banks of these waterbodies.
<b>Breeding</b>		Breeding mostly takes place between May-September but can occur at any time of the year. Both males and females build a nest of sticks and vegetation in shallow water, usually shaped like a low mound which rests on the bottom of the water. 3-9 eggs are usually produced and <u>incubated</u> by both parents. The eggs hatch after 39-45 days. Once the eggs have hatched the parents defend the young <u>vigorously</u> .
<b>Did you know?</b>		Black swans moult their wing feathers every year between September and February after breeding. While moulting they are unable to fly and can be seen gathering in large numbers on open lakes. Black swans mate for life and go through grieving periods if their mate dies. Nesting swans will also adopt any abandoned eggs and raise the chicks as part of their brood. The Swan River was named by the early European settlers after the black swan which was once found in large numbers on the river. Sadly, due to habitat loss, the sight of black swans on the river is not as common today as it once was.

