

Ducks

Anas platyrhynchos domesticus · Dual-purpose breed

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Poultry, kept for eggs and/or meat

PRODUCTIVE LIFE Lays from 5–7 months, productive several years



SPACE

0.4m² shelter, 2–4m² run with water access



DIET

Waterfowl or poultry pellets + foraged slugs/greens



WATER

Constant access, plus a tub for dabbling



TEMPERAMENT

Calm, hardy, good foragers

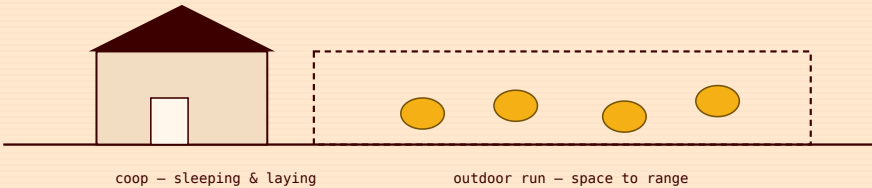


LIFESPAN

8–12 years

01 Water access matters

Ducks don't need a pond, but they do need enough water to dunk their whole head — this keeps eyes and nostrils clear and is important for their wellbeing, not just enjoyment.



02 Housing & setup

SHELTER	Simple, draft-free shelter; ducks are hardier in wet weather than chickens.
FENCING	Lower fencing usually sufficient — most breeds don't fly well.
BEDDING	Straw, changed often as ducks are messier and wetter than chickens.

03 Daily care

- Provide a tub or shallow pond deep enough to submerge the head.
- Let out to forage — ducks are excellent at slug and snail control.
- Feed a waterfowl-appropriate pellet, avoiding excess medicated chicken feed.
- Clean water areas regularly to avoid mud and disease build-up.

04 Health & problems

- **Muddy, fouled housing** — manage water areas to avoid a permanent bog.
- **Predator loss** — secure housing overnight, as with chickens.
- **Bumblefoot** — from wet, dirty housing; keep bedding drier where birds rest.
- **Egg-laying in odd spots** — ducks often lay away from nest boxes; check the run each morning.

05 Production & harvest

YIELD	Up to 300+ eggs a year in good dual-purpose laying breeds.
COLLECTION	Check the whole run each morning — ducks lay early and don't always use nest boxes.
MEAT BREEDS	Meat-focused breeds are typically processed at 7–9 weeks.
STORAGE	Eggs: similar to hen eggs, several weeks unwashed. Meat: fridge a few days, freezes well.

06 Compatibility & considerations

GOOD WITH

Vegetable garden (pest control)

Chickens (with separate water access)

AVOID KEEPING WITH

Areas without any water access

NOTE

Duck eggs are rich and excellent for baking; some people with egg sensitivities tolerate them better than hen eggs.