

Great white pelican

The Great White Pelican, a majestic bird with a wingspan that could rival the width of a small car, glides effortlessly over the tranquil waters of the African wetlands. Its pure white plumage glistens in the warm sunlight, as its long, curved beak dips into the murky depths below, emerging with a wriggling fish in its grasp.

This magnificent creature stands tall and proud, with a regal air about it that commands respect from all those who cross its path. Its eyes, a deep, soulful brown, survey the landscape below, searching for its next meal or potential mate.

Serial Number	Characteristics	Description
1	Common name	Great white pelican
2	Scientific name	Pelecanus onocrotalus
3	Colour	White with black primary feathers and a yellow-orange bill
4	Average length	140-180 cm
5	Average height	100-175 cm
6	Type of bird	Aquatic
7	Found in India in states	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh
8	Habitat	Lakes, rivers, marshes, and coastal areas
9	Status	Least Concern

Features

The Great White Pelican is a truly remarkable bird, possessing a number of distinct physical features that set it apart from other species. As its name suggests, this bird is predominantly white, with long, silky feathers that shimmer in the light like freshly fallen snow. Its wings are broad and expansive, measuring up to an impressive 3.6 meters in length, giving it the ability to soar effortlessly over great distances.

Despite its size, the Great White Pelican is surprisingly light on its feet, thanks to its hollow bones and buoyant feathers. It stands tall and proud, with a height that can reach up to 1.6 meters, towering above many of the other birds in its environment. Its long, slender neck is a distinctive feature, allowing it to reach deep into the water to catch fish with its powerful beak.

Speaking of its beak, the Great White Pelican's is a thing of wonder in and of itself. It's long and curved, with a distinctive pouch of skin that hangs from the base. This pouch, which is bright pink in color, is used to scoop up water and fish, allowing the pelican to swallow its prey whole.

Habitat and Food

The Great White Pelican is a highly adaptable bird, found in a range of habitats across Africa, Europe, and Asia. They are typically found near large bodies of water such as lakes, rivers, and wetlands, but have also been known to nest on islands and coastal areas. These birds are social creatures, often gathering in large flocks during the breeding season to mate and rear their young.

In terms of their eating habits, the Great White Pelican is a

carnivorous bird that primarily feeds on fish, although they will also consume amphibians, crustaceans, and even small birds. Using their long, curved beaks and distinctive pink pouches, they are able to scoop up large quantities of water and fish, swallowing them whole with ease. They are opportunistic feeders and will take advantage of any available food source, including scraps from fishermen and discarded bait.

Nesting and Nurturing

The Great White Pelican is a colonial bird that breeds in large groups, typically on isolated islands or along the shores of freshwater lakes and wetlands. During the breeding season, pairs of pelicans will work together to build a large nest out of sticks, reeds, and other materials, which is often located on the ground or in trees.

The Great White Pelican usually lays two to three eggs in each clutch, which are incubated by both parents over a period of about a month. The eggs are large and oval-shaped, measuring around 100 millimeters in length and 70 millimeters in width. The color of the eggs can vary, but they are typically pale blue or white with a rough surface texture.

After the eggs hatch, both parents take turns caring for the chicks, regurgitating partially digested fish into their mouths. The chicks are born with a thin layer of white down and have a distinctive pinkish-gray bill. Over time, they will develop more feathers and their bills will turn a deep shade of orange.

The baby pelicans are highly dependent on their parents for food and protection, staying close to the nest for the first few weeks of their lives. As they grow stronger and more independent, they will begin to venture further away from the nest and explore their surroundings. The parents will continue to care for their young for several months, until they are

fully grown and able to fend for themselves.

IUCN Status

The Great White Pelican is listed as a species of “Least Concern” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This means that, according to current knowledge, the population of Great White Pelicans is stable and not at risk of significant decline in the near future.

However, there are local threats to the species, such as habitat loss and degradation, hunting, and disturbance at breeding colonies. In some areas, pollution and human disturbance have also affected the availability of fish, which is the primary food source for these birds. Additionally, climate change and the resulting changes in water levels and temperatures may also impact the species in the long term.