

# Spot-billed Pelican

In the shimmering wetlands of Asia, there is a bird of grandeur and grace, a species of avian royalty known as the Spot-billed pelican. With a wingspan that stretches out to over 9 feet, this magnificent creature takes to the skies in a display of majestic elegance that leaves onlookers in awe.

Serial Number	Characteristics	Description
1	Common name	Spot-billed Pelican
2	Scientific name	Pelecanus philippensis
3	Colour	White with black wings and tail, yellowish-brown head and neck with a large pinkish-grey bill
4	Average length	130-150 cm
5	Average height	140-180 cm
6	Type of bird	Waterbird
7	Found in India in states	Throughout India, especially in the southern and northeastern regions
8	Habitat	Wetlands, lakes, rivers, estuaries, and coastal areas
9	Status	Near Threatened

## Features

The Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*) is a large waterbird species that is found in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia.

The Spot-billed Pelican is a large bird with a distinctive bill that is yellow with a red spot at the base. Its wings are

broad and long, and its body is bulky with a short tail. It has a bare patch of skin around its eyes and on its throat. The bill is flattened and has a hook at the tip, which is used for catching fish.

The overall color of the Spot-billed Pelican is white, with black feathers on the wings and tail. The skin around the eyes and on the throat is pinkish, and the bill is yellow with a red spot.

The Spot-billed Pelican is one of the largest pelican species, with males typically measuring around 150 to 180 cm (4.9 to 5.9 ft) in length and females slightly smaller, around 130 to 160 cm (4.3 to 5.2 ft) in length. They have a wingspan of 2.5 to 3 meters (8.2 to 9.8 ft).

## **Habitat and Food**

The Spot-billed Pelican is a large water bird species found throughout Southeast Asia, including India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia. These pelicans inhabit a range of wetland habitats, including marshes, rivers, lakes, and coastal lagoons.

In terms of eating habits, Spot-billed Pelicans are primarily piscivorous, meaning they feed on fish. They are known to use their large, expandable throat pouch to scoop up fish from the water. They also occasionally feed on amphibians, crustaceans, and other small aquatic animals.

## **Nesting and Nurturing**

Spot-billed Pelicans prefer to nest in colonies near large bodies of water such as lakes, swamps, and rivers. They usually build their nests on the ground using sticks, twigs, and leaves. These nests can be quite large and can measure up to 1.5 meters in diameter.

Spot-billed Pelicans typically lay 2-3 eggs in a single clutch. However, they have been known to lay up to 5 eggs in rare cases.

As mentioned, the Spot-billed Pelican builds its nest on the ground, usually in a flat area close to the water. The nest is typically located in a secluded spot within the colony.

Spot-billed Pelican eggs are white and measure around 80mm in length and 60mm in width. The eggs are quite large compared to other bird species, reflecting the size of the adult pelican.

Both the male and female Spot-billed Pelican take turns incubating the eggs for approximately 30-35 days. During this time, the parents will keep the eggs warm and protected.

Once the eggs hatch, the Spot-billed Pelican parents take turns caring for their young. They will regurgitate partially-digested fish to feed their chicks, and they will also provide them with water. The chicks are covered in white down when they hatch and will stay in the nest for around 2-3 months before they are ready to fledge. During this time, the parents will continue to care for their young, protecting them from predators and providing them with food and water.

## **IUCN Status**

The Spot-billed Pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*) is classified as “Near Threatened” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This species is facing a high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future if conservation measures are not taken to address the threats it faces.

The population of Spot-billed Pelicans has been declining due to several factors, including habitat loss, hunting, and egg collection. The destruction of wetlands and freshwater habitats, where the species primarily feeds, breeds, and

roosts, is a significant threat to their survival. The hunting of this species for their meat and feathers, as well as the collection of their eggs for food, is also a major concern in some areas.