

Duckling Husbandry 101



Ian Gereg, Curator of Birds, Reptiles and Amphibians
Philadelphia Zoo

Rearing options

- Parent rearing
- Dry brooding
- Wet brooding



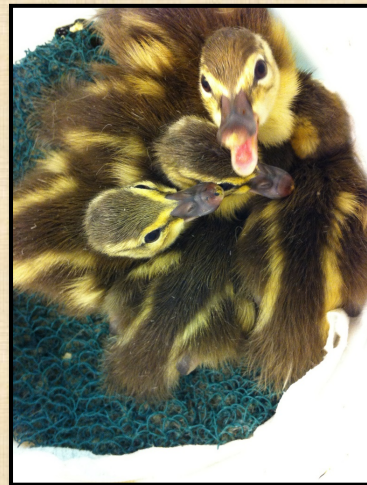
Some important general rules...

- Know your natural history, not all ducklings are alike in needs
- A species-appropriate diet is essential
- Running water is important for feather quality and overall health
- Avoid crowding and keep a sharp eye out for aggression/displacement
- Teacher ducklings – sometimes but not always



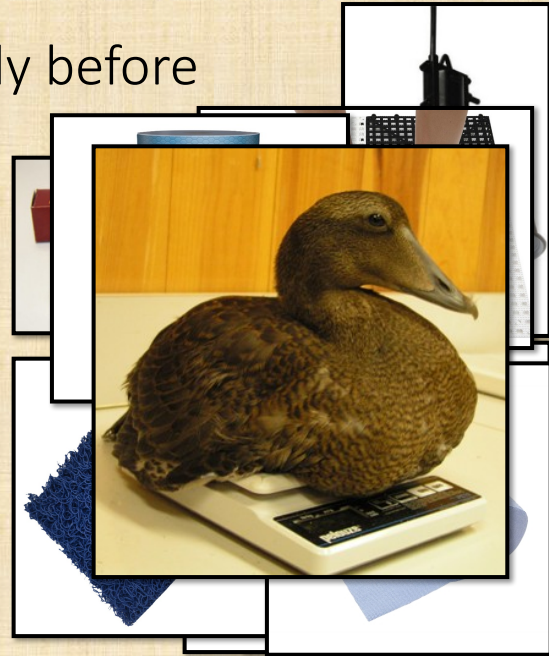
...more important general rules

- Mixing ducklings of various groups (dabbling ducks and mergansers, for example) is not recommended
- Mixing different ages of ducklings, even of the same species, is not recommended
- Single ducklings and those removed from their parents after hatch are more challenging
- Ducklings should be removed from the incubator as soon as they are dry and moving about the hatcher



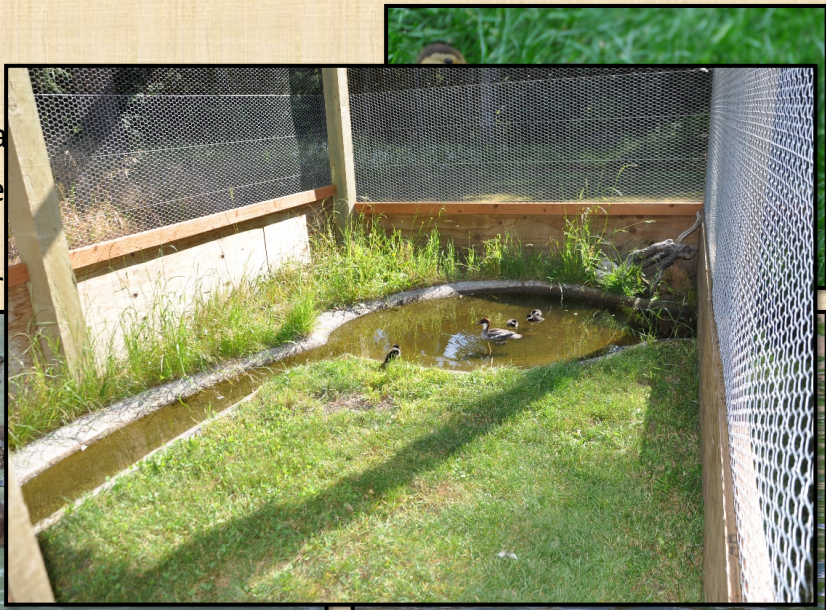
Some items to have handy before ducklings arrive

- Chick founts and tip-proof dishes
- Heat units, lamps and spare bulbs
- Temperature gun or thermometer
- Vinyl coil mat and dri-dek matting
- Shop cloth or heavy-duty paper towel
- Digital scale



Parent rearing

- A proven option for a
- Often higher risk of e
- enrichment for adult
- Generally poor exper



Dry brooding

- Most common method
- Proven to work well w
- Requires minimal buil
- Feather



Wet brooding

- Provides ducklings with swimming water soon after hatch
- Encourages natural feeding response and quality feathering
- Good choice for difficult to handle ducklings
- Requires



Moving out

- Species natural history again comes into play
- Consider moving ducklings when scapular and flank feathers begin to appear – weather is an important factor
- Use caution when introducing ducklings to adult birds. Ducklings should be fully-feathered or nearly so and adult birds should not be in breeding mode
- Keep a close eye out to ensure feeding begins and there is no long-term aggression
- When in doubt, wait longer



Good luck and happy hatching

