

The Nene

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The Nene or Hawaiian Goose is an amazing bird. It's unique characteristics and development of adaptations has allowed the Nene to survive in Hawaii. However, they are an endangered species and are very close to extinction. Knowing more about the Nene can help us understand how to help them.

The Nene has a very cool appearance. They have a long neck, legs, and, a fat body. The Nene's neck, beak, and feet are all black with a light-brown breast. The wings are gray-brown with white bars. The Nene's tail is black with a white coating on the other side. They also have yellowish cheeks and have rows of deep feathers running to their breast. The Nene can grow up to 20 inches tall and can weigh up to 5 pounds. Scientist, even say that the female and male look the same.

The Nene is part of the duck, swan and other geese family. They like the water like other birds, but they are also great flyers. They could fly from one side of the Big Island to the other in one day!

Another amazing thing about the Nene are their calls. When people hear the calls, they are usually soft. But a common, loud call is called the

“honk” or “hawah.” Another type of call they use is called the “nay-nay.”

These calls are used to communicate with each other.

The Nene has different ways of defending itself. Sometimes it will bend its neck, lower its body and start to hiss. Other times because of their feathers it is possible for the Nene to camouflage and sneak away. Some Nene are known to bite.

In the 1940's Nene were hunted for meat and feathers during the breeding season. They were endangered and almost extinct at that time. Soon the people of Hawaii realized what they had done. They started to put Nene in captivity hoping that they would breed. Some Nene was put on preserves. The state of Hawaii has made progress. One day they even want to restore them to their natural habitat.

The biggest thing that happened to the Nene was adaptation. Because of the lava here Nene had to adapt. Its feet became half-webbed, they had longer toes and their feet turned into a claw-like shape. The Nene also had to modify its wings for shorter flights.

There are many interesting things to learn about the Nene. Its long distance flights, ability to communicate with each other by calls, and similarities between the male and female are some interesting things about the Nene. Since they are almost extinct, we should help and save them.

