

Cape Shoveler

Spatula smithii



The Cape Shoveler is found in South Africa, and uncommon further north in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, southern Angola, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Zambia.

Cape Shovelers live in open wetlands, such as wet grassland or marshes with some emergent vegetation, and feed by dabbling for plant food, often by swinging their bills from side to side to strain food from the water. They get their name because of their large flattened beaks which resemble shovels. The nest is a shallow depression on the ground, lined with plant material and down, and usually close to water.

In times of drought, they may travel far from their regular territories to find suitable habitats. Out of the breeding season, they tend to form large flocks. During the breeding season through they are found only in pairs.



Lifespan: 15 Years
Weight: 470 - 830 g
Size: 51 - 53 cm
Breeding Season: Seasonal with rains
Incubation Period: 24 - 28 Days
Number of Eggs: 2-6
Diet: Aquatic Insects, Molluscs, Crustaceans, Tadpoles, Vegetation and Seeds of Aquatic plants
Problems They Face: Droughts and habitat change.
Conservation Status: Not Globally Threatened – Locally common