

BEHAVIORAL TRAITS OF A CORMORANT

Range and Habitat:

This cormorant breeds locally from Alaska, Manitoba, and Newfoundland south to Mexico and Bahamas. It winters mainly on the coasts, north to Alaska and southern New England. Preferred habitats consist of lakes, rivers, swamps, and coasts.

Breeding and Nesting:

The males have elaborate courtship dances, including dances in the water where he presents the female with material to build a nest. The male will also dance to mark out a nesting site for the couple. This bird will lose its double crest on the crown after pairing. Two to four pale bluish-white eggs with a chalky coating are laid in nests built of twigs or seaweed. Incubation lasts from 28 to 30 days and is carried out by both sexes.

Foraging and Feeding:

The majority of this cormorant's diet consists of fish, although crustaceans and amphibians from fresh water are also taken. Cormorants dive and catch their prey underwater. It swims underwater without aid from the wings except in braking. It may reach a considerable depth, but it commonly brings its catch to the surface before swallowing it.

Vocalization:

This bird emits deep guttural grunts.

Similar Species:

Loons are similar on the water, but lack hooked bills. Neotropical Cormorants can be similar, but are slimmer and longer-tailed, and have a differently shaped gular area. The Great Cormorant is also similar, but has a yellowish, pointed gular area surrounded with white as an adult.



Breeding Locations:

Lakes, Rivers, Rocky cliffs, Seashore, rocky or sandy

Breeding Type: Common

Breeding Population:

Lakes, Rivers, Rocky cliffs, Seashore, rocky or sandy

Egg Color: Blue White

Number of Eggs: 2

Incubation Days: 28 - 30

Egg Incubator: Both sexes

Nest Material:

Sticks and debris lined with leafy twigs and grass.

Migration: Migratory