

The Ducks and Geese of Summer 2017

I do not recall posting anything about the domestic waterfowl this summer.

So, I thought I would.

Here are four photos of the ducks and geese.

As always, these days, I took the photos with my phone.

Sorry, the photo quality varies.

The first photo is of the 14 geese we raised this year.

They are White Embden.

The ducks and geese have had a great life.

We buy them as chicks.

They spend their first several weeks protected in the poultry yard.

Then we move them to their very own pond and pasture.

The pond even has an island.

The pasture is surrounded with electrified woven fencing.

So far that has been 100% effective at protecting them from ground predators.

The only real threat is from eagles.

Both species grow incredibly fast.

Much faster than chickens.

Ducks and geese are much easier to raise than chickens or turkeys.

Because they are waterfowl, they virtually never succumb to wet or chill.

We very seldom lose a goose.

Occasionally, when they are small, a duck will fall prey to an eagle.

We try to protect them from that with overhead strings and other measures.

Eagles adapt and learn quickly, however.

A snapping turtle takes one duck each summer.

Turtles have to eat too.

I have raised a few geese on and off for many years.

But not for sale.

Several years ago, a customer asked if I would raise geese for "Christmas Goose".

His family had such a tradition and he wanted to restart it.

These 14 geese are all sold.



White Pekin ducks



White Embden Geese

Every one of them will have a special place at a family's Christmas Dinner.

Recently someone asked me how to determine the gender of ducks.

Of course, there are anatomical differences, but some species of animals and birds are more obvious than others.

Pretty much anybody can tell a bull from a cow with a little time.

Roosters and hen chickens are usually easy also.

Domestic ducks and geese, not so easy.

Well, actually ducks are easy if you know what to look for.

Male ducks, drakes, have curled feathers just above their tails.

You can easily see that in the second photo.

You can pick out two drakes and one hen.

These are White Pekin ducks.

They are non-dimorphic.

In this context that means the visible parts of their bodies are the same, male or female.

Bison for example are strongly dimorphic.

Their body shapes are not only different, male to female, but the males grow to fully twice the size of females.

That is not true in cattle.

A mature cow can be as large as a mature bull.

People are moderately dimorphic.

I am afraid I am meandering.

The last photo is of the ducks and geese in the livestock trailer.

Aaron helped me load them this afternoon.

I prepped the flock for a few days.

Then we set up several gates.

With a little feed and a little pressure, they walked right in.

We did not need to catch them or handle them.

The nights are getting cold.

Soon their pond will freeze.

They had a good life.

Tonight, they had a comfortable ride.

Next spring, there will

be another flock to enjoy the pond.

Life is a cycle.

Best regards.

Tom

p.s. I do not know why

one duck is brown.

I ordered White Pekins.

Pekins.

Things happen.



White Pekin Drake



Ducks and Geese