



Taking Care of New Ancona Ducklings

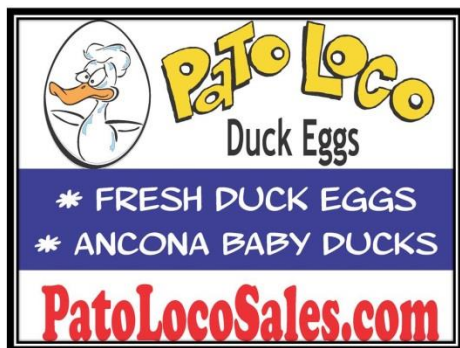
Steps:

- Keep ducklings in a warm and safe environment. A rabbit or guinea pig cage works great for the first few weeks. Keep it in a safe place away from predators, dogs & cats.
- Use a heat lamp (clamp lamp from hardware store) with a 125 watt heat bulb for 2-3 weeks. Ducklings cannot regulate their body heat until fully feathered. Adjust the height and wattage according to your duckling's behavior and make sure it is secure. If they seem warm and settled, not huddling under the lamp, they are probably warm enough. If they are scattered out, away from the lamp, take care of ducklings panting, etc., they are too warm. Common sense will tell you to lower the heat.
- Absorbent Pads or Straw can be used for bedding. Pine bedding can also be used but do not use cedar shavings because they are harmful to ducklings.
- Feed a commercially prepared waterfowl starter for the first 4 weeks that is 20-24% protein is required in a fine crumble form. Ducklings grow the fastest during these first weeks. This food be purchased at a farm supply store. Mix dry food with water to form a mash for the first week. Never feed medicated chick starter or poultry feed, as this is fatal to your ducklings. Also anything moldy is fatal to your ducks of all ages! Bread, although thought of as the ideal "duck food," is also dangerous to ducklings, because it expands and chokes them.
- Add Brewer's Yeast to ducklings food daily. Sprinkle some on their food. They require niacin for strong legs and bones. Also sprinkle on their food when they are adults.
- Always provide clean, fresh drinking water. The water must be shallow to prevent drowning the first 2 weeks. Ducklings must always have water to swallow their food. Once ducklings are 2 weeks old, they need to be able to bury their entire beak in a water bowl. Both food & water feeders can be purchased at a farm supply store.
- Always wash your hands after handling baby ducks & after cleaning their brooder cage.
- Do not let them swim unattended. They must be able to get out of the water quickly. Ducklings can and will drown if they get too wet or too cold. Their oil glands are not developed until 6-8 weeks so their feathers will get wet and stay wet. Never allow your ducklings to be unsupervised. Predators will quickly attack them.
- Know that if you have other adult ducks in your pond/water source, be advised the older adult ducks can be fatal to your younger ducks. Older ducks may drown the younger ducks.
- You can feed your adult ducks romaine lettuce, tomatoes, & watermelon. Search the internet for other recommended safe treats. Do not feed them bread!

- As ducklings will eventually grow into full sized ducks, always put your ducks in a safe cage at night, because they are very vulnerable to predators. A large dog kennel with roof or shed with a latched door is best in terms of room and space.
- Ducks produce large amounts of moisture, ammonia and heat so their coop requires enough ventilation to remove the ammonia fumes. Poor ventilation will lead to respiratory illness. Proper ventilation is vital even in the cold weather. This can be achieved with louvered vents, windows open (with predator proof screen), barn or workshop fan, or wind turbine. Opening the door or window during the day is not enough. Ventilation must always be used when ducks are confined inside a building.
- Winter care for ducklings should include an insulated wood dog house type enclosure or shed with straw for warmth. Ducks will also need a heated water bucket found at farm feed stores.

Warnings:

- NEVER release ducks into the wild. These are domestic ducks that cannot fly and require you to properly care for them year round.
- NEVER let your ducklings swim unattended (under 6 wks. old), as they may drown!
- NEVER feed your ducklings medicated poultry feed!
- Bread is bad for them, and anything moldy can be FATAL.
- NEVER feed them popcorn or they will choke.
- Always have clean water near food source, as ducks cannot swallow food properly without water.
- Always provide proper ventilation in their housing to avoid illness.
- Ducklings IMPRINT on people immediately. They look to you as their Mom. Be prepared to teach and train them, and to care for them properly.
- Ducklings are very social animals, so never get just one. They need at least one companion, but preferably three or four.



patolocoeggs@gmail.com

Nancy L. Martinez