

Fields welcome the world to Waterfowl of Chenoa



FAMILY UNIT — Mama and Papa Nene (pronounced nay-nay) are seeing their family grow. While the expectant father stands guard, warning away visitors to Waterfowl of Chenoa on Haygood Road in Martin, his mate goes through her periodic routine of turning the eggs in her nest. Such vigilance is necessary to prevent the yolk of the egg from adhering to the side of the shell and causing the death of the developing baby goose. The eggs must have a supply of air, heat and moisture to develop properly, and even then only about half the eggs in a nest will hatch. The Hawaiian geese — which he describes as more of a land-type goose than a water creature — are among Dr. Maurice Field's favorites because they came so close to extinction and are in the process of making a dramatic comeback. Dr. Field, who retired from his position as professor of education at the University of Tennessee at Martin in 2001, established Waterfowl of Chenoa to help build up

flocks of geese and ducks in danger of dying out and to provide children — and adults — a chance to be surrounded by birds they might never see otherwise. He frequently plays host not only to local groups of school children, but also to adult visitors from around the world who are fascinated by the beautiful winged creatures in his huge "yard" and the four-legged pets such as his pygmy goats. Field says the Nenes were down to 39 within the confines of their island state in the Pacific at one time. Today, their numbers have increased, at least in part because of the efforts of people like Dr. Field. "When something goes wrong with (geese or ducks) in the wild, you can come to people like me and know there is a good gene pool here," he said. He is in contact with others who share his interest here and abroad and has fascinating stories to share with his visitors about tracking down the rare geese and ducks he needs to round out his "waterfowl zoo."



LOOK LIVELY — In addition to his extensive collection of waterfowl, Dr. Maurice Field also has "feather leg" or "pajama leg" chickens, a pair of turkeys and some peafowl among his winged-creature friends at Waterfowl of Chenoa on Haygood Road in Martin. One of the distinctive roosters in his brood appears to be instructing other members of the flock to "move on." The chickens have distinctive "shaggy" legs. Field says the best part of his work is discovering the interest people around the world have in birds. He receives frequent questions at his Internet site, which has had over 1 million hits since it went up in 1995. Just last year, there were 340,000 visitors

to the site at www.utm.edu/waterfowl. Field encourages as many as possible of those who visit the site to actually come to Chenoa and visitors from as far away as Russia have taken him up on his offer. As many as 2,000 guests a year have made the actual trek to northwest Tennessee. Among the most frequent questions he has received at the Web site are: "What are female ducks called?" (Susies or hens). "Does a duck have teeth?" (No. That's why they peck at and eat dirt. The grit they pick up this way helps grind down the food they eat, thus accomplishing what people do by chewing.)



JUST VISITING — Moffitt's geese watch as five Ross's geese, living in the wild, take off from Waterfowl of Chenoa on Haygood Road in Martin. The waterfowl habitat is overseen by Dr. Maurice and Carla Field. It includes four lakes of one to three acres each and six small ponds, with plans for another body of water being put into action. "When we started, I tried to come up with something that would let children see 'all' of something. Zoos need variety and so can only have a few of something because of space limitations," Field says in explaining why he chose to concentrate on waterfowl. Visitors both local and from around the world are able to enjoy his collection of the six types of shelducks, the 15

species and 37 sub-species of true geese (he has all 15 and 27 of the 37) and 29 different kinds of ducks. All his waterfowl are pinioned, in accordance with federal law, so that they can be distinguished from those that fly in to enjoy the habitat and leave again after their "vacation" is over. He secures his feathered friends by removing the last section of a wing on one side that is critical to the birds' flying skills. With this feather-section removed, the ducks and geese can only "fly" in low circles. Field says predators are not usually a problem at his large waterfowl habitat. He is currently finishing up work on a new enclosed area that will serve as a welcome station for the 15 pair of new ducks he has recently received.



FEEDING TIME — Dr. Maurice Field aims a scoop full of waterfowl feed toward some of the four-legged friends such as the pygmy goats who share space with the rare and popular ducks and geese at his home on Haygood Road near Martin. The food bill for Chenoa comes to around \$500-\$600 each month. Field orders a special duck food made up of small pellets so that it can be easily consumed by his more petite feathered friends as well as their larger cousins. Field and his wife, Carla, at one time were very involved in showing

dogs. He says the thrill of loading up dogs and traveling to shows around the country gradually began to dim and the couple looked for a "hobby" they could enjoy closer to home. Raising geese and ducks — many of whom have been threatened with extinction — has been the answer. The Fields originally selected the name "Chenoa" for their kennel. It is an Indian word meaning "white dove" or "the place where the moon and stars rest." The name somehow seemed appropriate for their waterfowl habitat as well.

Waterfowl at Chenoa

Ducks

African Black
American Black
Bahama Pintail
Baikal Teal
Blue-winged Teal
Canvasback
Chestnut Breasted Teal
Chilean Teal
Chilean Widgeon
Eurasian Widgeon
Falcated Duck
Ferruginous White-eye
Garganey
Green-winged Teal
Laysan Teal
Mallard
Mandarin — Normal
Mandarin — White
Maned Goose
Marbled Teal
Mottled Duck
Muscovy
Northern Pintail
Red-crested
Redhead
Ring-neck
Rosy-billed Pochard
Wood Duck — Normal
Wood Duck — Silver

Shelducks

Australian
Cape
Common
Paradise
Radjah
Ruddy

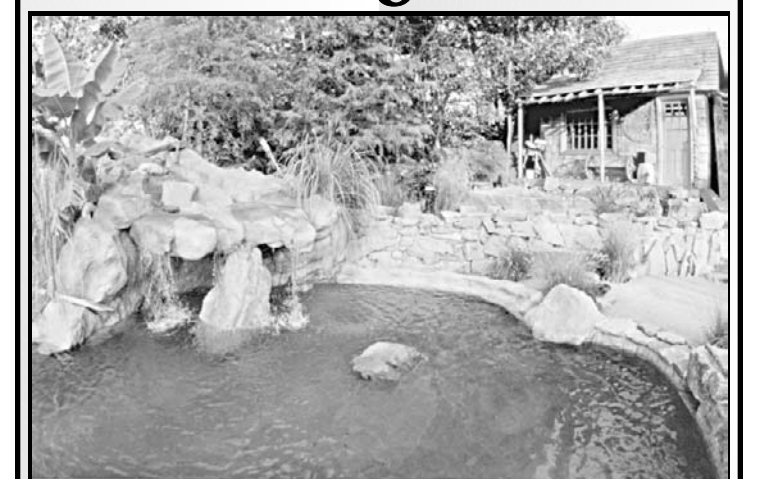
True Geese

Bar-headed
Barnacle
Bean Western
Brant Atlantic
Brant Pacific
Canada Atlantic
Canada Aleutian
Canada Cackling
Canada Dusky
Canada Giant
Canada Interior
Canada Lesser
Canada Moffitt's
Canada Richardson's
Emperor
Greylag-Eastern
Greylag-Western
Hawaiian (Nene)
Pink-footed
Red-breasted
Ross's
Snow Greater
Snow Lesser Blue
Snow Lesser White
Swan Goose
White-fronted Lesser
White-fronted Pacific
White-fronted Tule



COLORFUL FOWL — The Red-breasted geese who reside at Waterfowl of Chenoa on Haygood Road near Martin are among the most brightly ornamented of those who Dr. Maurice and Carla Field number in their collection. "Waterfowl of Chenoa has been constructed so that few adult birds are kept in small pens. Instead, the birds reside in large areas where the environment is as close to the wild as is possible under artificial conditions. This management decision makes possible wildlife study which simulates investigations that might be carried out in the natural state," Field says on his Web site at www.utm.edu/waterfowl. Field says most of the waterfowl are sociable and will follow guests around the habitat — on their own terms. They do not like to be pursued, however, and tend to shun physical contact with humans. Pairs of geese usually mate for life, so long as they are in a situation where they can hear each other.

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