

## Description

These birds are also known as shags or yellow-faced cormorants. They are about 70-75cm in size with an orange face & throat, and characteristic white front with black wings. They have a specialized membrane that protects their eyes underwater. The immature birds are browner in colour with duller face colourings. Cormorants have a hook tipped bill, and small gular sac (throat pouch).

## Distribution

The Pied Cormorant is found throughout Australasia. In Australia it is common in the south and along the coast of south-western Australia. It is also found in New Zealand. These birds occur most frequently in marine or saltwater habitats around the coast but can also be found in freshwater environments such as large wetlands inland of Australia.

## Diet

Cormorants are diving birds that are capable of diving 20m deep in search of their food, primarily consisting of fish, but it may also include the occasional prawn and shrimp. Because they are diving birds they don't have waterproof feathers, therefore they are commonly seen standing on the shore with their wings spread out in order to dry them before flying. In the Orient these glossy black underwater swimmers have been tamed for fishing.

## Breeding

Breeding occurs between July to December each year. The nests may be made of seaweed and guano on cliffs or in bushes or trees, usually in a crowded colony. Shags lay between 2-4 chalky eggs which are pale blue when fresh, and hatch within three to five weeks. The young mature in the third year.

## Threats

Humans are a threat and Cormorants are continually found entangled in fishing line with hooks embedded in their flesh which can cause serious injuries, disabilities and infections for the animal.

**NAME:** *Phalacrocorax Varius*

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Chordata

**Class:** Aves

**Order:** Pelecaniformes

**Family:** Phalacrocoracidae

