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Front Cover: **MUTE SWAN**

The biological (scientific) name of the Mute Swan is **Cygnus olor**. It belongs to the duck, goose, and swan family, **Anatidae**.

CLASSIFICATION:

- Kingdom: Animalia
- Phylum: Chordata
- Class: Aves
- Order: Anseriformes
- Family: Anatidae
- Genus: *Cygnus*
- Species: *Cygnus olor*

The mute swan is the large white swan with an orange bill and a distinctive black knob at the base of the bill.

This was photographed in Copenhagen.

This appears to be a **swan** sitting on a nest. Given the location (Copenhagen) and the appearance, it's most likely a Mute Swan, which is very common in Denmark and often nests in reed beds or on small islands of vegetation in lakes and ponds.

A FEW CLUES:

- The bird is entirely white with a long curved neck.
- The nest is a large platform of reeds and plant material built right at the water's edge.

- The visible eggs are relatively large and pale, matching swan eggs.

AS FOR THE EGGS:

- They are almost certainly **swan eggs**, laid by the bird on the nest.
- A typical mute swan clutch contains **5-7 eggs**, though anywhere from 4-10 is possible.
- The eggs are usually pale grayish-white to bluish-white and are quite large—around 10-12 cm (4-5 inches) long.
- Incubation lasts about **35-41 days**, mostly by the female while the male often stays nearby guarding the territory.

ONE CAVEAT: a nesting Mute Swan is by far the most likely identification.

It's a nice photo because it captures the nest and several eggs clearly—a behavior that's often harder to observe than the birds themselves.