

DUCK DESCRIPTION

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)



© Richard Bartz/CC 2.5

Mallards have bright orange legs and feet, orange and brown bills and a blue speculum edged with white at both the front and back.

Drakes have a glossy green head and are grey on their wings and belly. Hens have mainly brown-speckled plumage.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

The mallard is a dabbling duck.

Mallards were **introduced** to New Zealand.

They live in wetlands all over the country and congregate in groups or flocks of varying sizes.

They eat water plants and small animals.

This species is the main ancestor of most breeds of domesticated ducks.

The mallard is considered an **invasive pest** and is the most common duck in New Zealand.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

New Zealand scaup/pāpango (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*)



© Raewyn Adams/NZ Birds Online

Both sexes of scaup/pāpango are a dark brown/black colour.

A white wing bar can be seen while they are flying.

Male scaup have yellow eyes and a greenish head. Females don't have yellow eyes and have a white-patched face during breeding season.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

The scaup/pāpango is the only true diving duck in New Zealand.

They are **endemic** to New Zealand.

They are found in many lakes and rivers across mainland New Zealand, especially on large, deep, freshwater lakes. They are becoming increasingly common also on shallow lowland lakes, slow-flowing rivers and saltwater and often congregate in sheltered areas.

Most of their food is obtained by diving and includes snails, caddisfly larvae and plant material.

Scaup/pāpango are also known as black teal, matapōuri, tītipōurangi or raipo.

They are **not threatened** but are **protected**.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

Grey teal/tētē (*Anas gracilis*)



Grey teal/tētē are mostly grey-brown with pale cheeks, chins and throats, a dark grey bill and bright crimson eyes (especially in adult males).

They are smaller than mallards and grey ducks.

You can tell the grey teal from the other New Zealand teal species because they have not got a white eye-ring.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

The grey teal/tētē was **naturalised** in the mid-19th century and is now more widespread throughout New Zealand than the other three teal species.

Although grey teal/tētē came originally from Australia, they are **native**.

They tend to occur in areas below 300 metres above sea level, on freshwater lakes, lagoons and swamps with extensive marginal cover. At times, they can also be seen on salty or brackish water.

They are normally nocturnal feeders but can be seen at dawn and dusk feeding on small aquatic invertebrates and the seeds of swamp plants.

They are **not threatened** but are **protected** from hunting.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

New Zealand shoveler/kuruwhengi (*Anas rhynchos variegata*)



The bill of the shoveler/kuruwhengi is spoon shaped in both males and females, and this is the easiest way to identify this duck from other species.

The male has variegated, colourful plumage with a blue-grey head and neck, black bill, yellow eye, bright orange legs and a brown chest that turns white after breeding and during moulting.

Females are mottled light brown with dull brown bills and eyes and brown-orange legs.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

The New Zealand shoveler/kuruwhengi is **endemic** to New Zealand.

They mainly occur on large freshwater wetlands but may also be found in estuaries, brackish lakes and sewage ponds and are found throughout all three large islands.

They are filter feeders, eating small plankton, invertebrates and fine seeds sifted through their bill.

The New Zealand shoveler/kuruwhengi is **not threatened**, and as they are classed as a game bird, they are **not protected**.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

Brown teal/pāteke (*Anas chlorotis*)



Brown teal/pāteke are darkish brown with bars of colour on their wings and a green speculum.

New Zealand teal species have an obvious white eye-ring and dark brown eyes that distinguish them from other species that come from overseas.

They have dark grey legs and bills.

Breeding males have a greenish colouring on their heads and a chestnut chest.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

The brown teal/pāteke is a dabbling duck.

They are **endemic** to New Zealand.

They were common in kahikatea forest swamps and a range of other watery habitats.

They are omnivorous, with a diverse diet including terrestrial, freshwater and marine invertebrates and vegetation including seeds and the leaves of both land and water plants.

They are reluctant fliers.

There are two subspecies of pāteke that have different conservation status: the South Island subspecies is **now extinct**, and the North Island subspecies is **at risk – recovering**, with the lowest numbers of any duck on the mainland.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

Blue duck/whio (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchos*)



The blue duck/whio is a small, blue-grey duck with a slightly brown chest, yellow eyes and a soft rubbery white bill that has black 'flaps' on either side.

They have webbed feet that fold backwards to allow better streamlining in the water.

They are very well camouflaged in freshwater streams.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

Blue ducks/whio are **endemic** to New Zealand. They are one of very few torrent duck species in the world.

They live in fast-flowing, rocky-bottomed, clean rivers and streams.

They eat invertebrates that live in fast-flowing water by scraping them off the surface of the rocks with their soft bill.

The whio/blue duck is a **nationally vulnerable** species and is **protected**.

It is pictured on the \$10 note.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

Paradise shelduck/pūtangitangi (*Tadorna variegata*)



The paradise shelduck/pūtangitangi is a large goose-like duck.

Both the male and female have striking plumage with green, chestnut and white wings.

The male has a black head and black body, and the female has a white head with a chestnut body.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

Paradise shelducks/pūtangitangi are **endemic** to New Zealand.

They usually live as pairs and inhabit a wide range of habitat in New Zealand.

They graze on grass and weeds, including pasture, tussock grasslands and wetlands. They have benefited from human modification of the landscapes throughout the country, unlike many other native ducks.

They are **not threatened** and are prized game birds and even considered a pest in some places due to their habit of raiding crops.

They are also known as pūtakitaki or paradise ducks.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

Muscovy duck (*Cairina moschata*)



Wild Muscovy ducks in New Zealand are mostly white with a red-wattled face around a pale brown beak, and they have orange legs.

Some also have black markings, and many that live overseas are mostly black.

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

The Muscovy duck is an **introduced** species.

They live in swamps and freshwater and on adjacent pasture. They often roost in trees at night.

They eat plant material obtained by grazing or dabbling in shallow water and small aquatic organisms.

They are territorial and competitive regarding food sources.

They have not established wild populations throughout New Zealand but are commonly seen, probably originally having escaped from domesticity.

They are **not protected**.

© Copyright. 2017. University of Waikato. All rights reserved. | www.sciencelearn.org.nz

DUCK DESCRIPTION

HABITAT, HABITS AND OTHER FACTS

Grey duck/pārera (*Anas superciliosa superciliosa*)



© Raewyn Adams/NZ Birds Online

The grey duck/pārera is darkish brown with pale buff-edged body feathers, a grey bill, khaki legs and dark brown eyes. The face is a warm buff colour with two well defined black stripes. The upper wing is brown with an iridescent green speculum with a trailing narrow white band.

These ducks are very similar to the mallard. The two main identifying features that set them apart is that the speculum of the grey duck is green, and it has brown legs. The mallard has a blue speculum and orange legs.

Grey ducks/pārera are **endemic** to New Zealand but have relatives in the Pacific and Australia.

They inhabit wetlands, streams and sometimes estuaries and like some cover.

They eat mostly plant material, including seeds and soft tips of most aquatic plant species. Animal foods (such as insect larvae, snails and worms) make up about 10% of their diet.

They are also sometimes called the black duck.

Grey ducks/pārera are extensively hybridised with introduced mallards and so few pure grey ducks may now exist.

They are **not protected** although they are **nationally critical**, as it is hard to distinguish them from mallards and the hybrids. They are still on the game bird list.