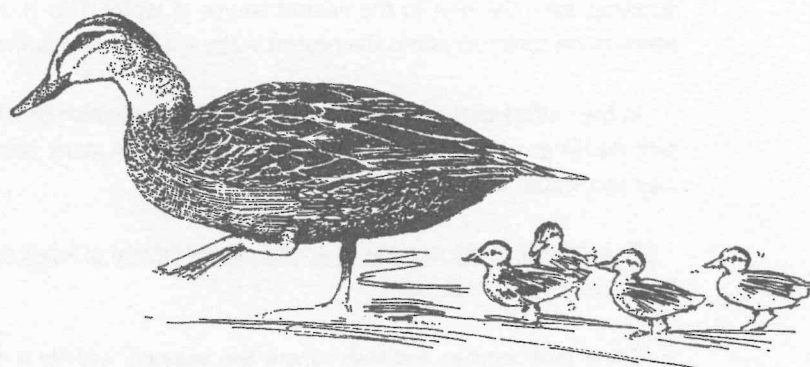


PACIFIC BLACK DUCK

(*Anas superciliosa*)



Description: This medium-sized, dark brown duck is about the size of a small domestic fowl. Each feather is tipped buff, giving the plumage a scalloped effect. The throat is pale cream to white. A dark stripe passes through the eye, which has a white line above and below it. A glossy green wing patch, called a speculum, shines purple from certain angles. The legs are olive-yellow and the beak is grey. Males and females have the same colouring.

Habit: Black ducks may be found wherever there is fresh or brackish water. They are also seen occasionally on salty stretches of water, or along seaweed strewn beaches. Black ducks are not timid and quickly adapt to being in close proximity to people. This is obvious in summer, when large numbers can be seen around urban lakes and ponds. In late autumn and winter, the ducks begin courtship and nesting throughout the south-west of the State. They may nest in large tree hollows, among bulrushes and reeds, under bushes or in long grasses, sometimes hundreds of metres from the nearest wetland. The nest chamber is lined with downy feathers, which partially cover 7–13 cream eggs. The eggs are incubated for 26–28 days. Ducklings can swim soon after hatching. They grow quickly and can fly within three months. Seeds of aquatic plants and their stems are their main food source. Their specially designed bills strip the plants and filter seeds from the water. Aquatic insects such as beetles are eaten by both adults and ducklings. Snails are also eaten.

Status and distribution: The black duck is a protected species and is the State's best known wild duck, as well as being widely distributed throughout Australia. It belongs to the dabbling group of ducks and is also found in New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the South Pacific Islands.



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WILDLIFE CROSSING ROADS

Black ducks nest when there will be plenty of water and fresh green grass by the time their ducklings hatch. Between July and October each year, nesting black ducks walk their newly hatched ducklings from the nest to the nearest source of water. This is usually a nearby lake or pond, although on some occasions the nearest water is a backyard swimming pool.

In their effort to reach suitable wetland habitat in which to raise their young, mother ducks with ducklings often cross busy roadways, resulting in many being injured or killed. Ducklings may also scatter and become lost.

To help reduce the number of animals being injured or killed on local roads CALM and Main Roads need your assistance.

Some metropolitan wetlands where this seasonal activity is known to occur include Lake Monger, Herdsman Lake, North Lake, Bibra Lake, Hyde Lake and Perry Lakes.

CALM and Main Roads would like people who see adult ducks with ducklings approaching local roads to quietly usher them away from the road until the traffic is clear before allowing them to cross. In such instances, local police officers have been called to help control traffic and allow the safe passage of the ducks across the road in the direction of the wetland. Any attempt to capture the ducklings will only cause them to scatter and the adult may take flight.

DO NOT GO ONTO OR NEAR THE EDGE OF ANY ROAD TO RESCUE A DUCK OR DUCKLINGS.

Extreme caution should be exercised by anyone venturing near a road. Do not attempt to go on to busy roads after ducks. Drivers are asked to be particularly careful when driving alongside wetlands.

For more information: People living close to wetlands where signposting is considered inadequate can call Main Roads on (08) 9311 8333. If you find injured ducks, orphaned ducklings or ducks with ducklings in your yard call CALM's wildlife enquires on (08) 9334 0224 for advice or directions to your nearest wildlife carer.



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