Pacific Black Duck

(Anas superciliosa)

Also known as the ‘Black Duck’ or ‘Grey Duck’ in New Zealand

QUICK FACTS

- The only black plumage on the Pacific Black Duck is a bold stripe that runs across its face.
- They mainly stick to a vegetarian diet, but do occasionally feed on crayfish and insects.
- They use an oil produced from a gland at the base of their tail to become fully waterproof.

Length: 50–60cm
Weight: 1–1.4kg

Identification:
Despite being called the Pacific Black Duck, this duck is mostly brown with their only black plumage being a bold stripe that runs across their face. This black stripe is bordered with cream above and below and a dark brown crown atop the head. When in-flight the Pacific Black Duck reveals its bright green plumage and also its white underwing.
BEHAVIOUR

Pacific Black Ducks are one of Australia’s most widespread and abundant duck species and are often found in habitats with Chestnut Teal Ducks. They are usually found in pairs or small flocks and while they love to mingle with other ducks, they are wary of humans. However, Pacific Black Ducks that frequent urban ponds and waterways have been known to become tame.

They get their food by ‘dabbling’, where they plunge their head and neck under the water and graze using their bill. Their tongues work like small pistons where water is sucked up in the tip of their bill and pushed out again through filtering plates at the side and rear of their bills. Sometimes they will look for food on land in damp grassy areas. They mainly stick to a vegetarian diet, but sometimes feast on yabbies, shrimps and crustaceans. Insects make up the primary part of Pacific Black Duckling diets.

DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

The Pacific Black Duck is found in all regions of Australia, except arid regions. They are also found in areas outside of Australia such as New Zealand and Malaysia. They can be found in almost any form of wetland such as ponds, dams, sewage ponds, rivers or channels.

WHERE CAN I SPOT PACIFIC BLACK DUCKS IN VICTORIA?

Because of their abundance and adaptability, Pacific Black Ducks can be found all over Victoria. Head over to our Duck Detector map at discoverducks.org.au to find out where you can spot some Pacific Black Ducks.

BREEDING

Pacific Black Ducks usually breed between June and September, which coincides with the availability of food and water and often occurs where there have been heavy rains and waterways are at their peak. Females will instigate courtship by displaying preening, bobbing and wing-flapping behaviours. They lay anywhere from 7 to 12 eggs and often two broods can be laid in one year. The female will incubate her eggs for 26-30 days. Ducklings hatch with their eyes open, covered with down and they can swim and walk – but they always remain safely by their parents near the nest.

Pacific Black Ducks usually nest near water, with their nests hidden in tall grasses or rushes. They also sometimes nest in hollowed trees and like to line their nests with grass and feathers.