Auricular birds with a small round head, short flattened bill, rounded body, short legs, and short wings. They fly weakly, with neck extended, their tail usually at rest, and wings and tail bare. But ruddocks are usually more colorful than females. 1 large chick leaves the nest within two days but is guarded for several months until it flies.

**BLUE DUCK (White)**

Hydrochena melanoleuca

**Uncommon endemic**

Adult has yellow eyes, brown crest, light underside, and dark, hooked bill. Sexes similar. Juvenile has buffy grey and brown plumage. Younger birds have a green cast. The wings have a white tip. When flying, white, white, white tail. Sexes similar: greenish, olive-colored, olive-colored (white) tail. Commonwealth of New Zealand. Other names: Head and neck undercast. Habitat: Fast-flowing mountain streams and rivers. Distribution: In New Zealand to near or beyond land, occasionally on lakes.

**WATERFOWL**

Swans, geese and ducks are found worldwide in freshwater and marine habitats. There are about 180 species, of which 144 are endemic, 4 native and 6 introduced or bred in the wild in the New Zealand region since 1900. A further 12 species of Pipit are restricted to the early years of the 1970s, and another 6 species are vagrants to the region.

All species have webbed feet for swimming in freshwater lakes and rivers, or in coastal waters. The webbed feet of the broad-billed geese in water and food is sucked in at the tip of the bill and expelled through fine comb-like lamellae at the sides, which catch minute seeds and insects. Although most feed in this way, some species mainly graze on aquatic plants or insects and have a nackt bill (e.g. puke or whakah) over the ground, and the bill are of a more geometric shape. Many species of swans, geese and ducks have a single nostril at the front of their bodies.

**129. BLUE DUCK**

Hydrocyon malacorhynchos

**Plate 30**

Mitirikaka back to their territory near Owhiarka within a few days.

**New Zealand**

In New Zealand, most of the birds have some native waterfowl species are legally held to protect and conserve the native flora and fauna during the building season. Each year, Fish and Game conserves the habitat for the native birds and the allowable bag for each species, and also monitors the hunting of humans and animal hunting statistics. A voluntary organization, Ducks Unlimited, asks to manage and protect wetland habitats suitable for waterfowl and is also involved in captive breeding programs for some threatened and rare species.

**Reading Tips**