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Paradise shelduck: pp 104-105.



PARADISE SHELDUCK

Family Anatidae

Species *Tadorna variegata*

Common names Paradise Shelduck, Paradise Duck or Parry

Status Endemic, but closely related to the South African Shelduck and the Chestnut-breasted Shelduck of Australia.

Abundance Common

Size 630 mm (cf sparrow 145, Mallard 580 mm)

Habitat Frequents ponds and dams but also found along rivers especially where they run through farmland. Sometimes seen along forest rivers in inaccessible places. In recent years they have ventured into park areas in towns. Over the summer months they flock in large numbers on lakes, such as the Rotorua lakes in the North Island and places like Lake Alexandrina in the South Island. Here they seek sanctuary while they become temporarily flightless during their moult.

New Zealand range Found throughout New Zealand.

Description – male

Head and neck Black with a metallic greenish sheen. **Upper and underparts** Black lightly barred with white. **Wings** Black with prominent white upper and underwings wing-coverts and a large green speculum. **Abdomen** Reddish-brown. **Undertail** Orange-chestnut. **Bill** Black. **Legs and feet** Black.

Description – female

Head White with black eye. **Breast and underparts** Orange-chestnut tending to brownish when not in breeding plumage. **Wings** Black with prominent white wing-coverts upper and under the wings and a large green speculum. **Undertail** Orange-chestnut. **Bill and legs** Black.

Description – ducklings

Overall body Zebra-striped brown and white when first born. They have a habit of sitting in pyramid-like heaps when very young, always within sight of parent birds. If disturbed they quickly scatter.

Description – immatures

Overall Body Fledglings of both sexes resemble the male.

Conspicuous features

- The white on the head of the female.
- The white on the wings of in-flight birds.

Conspicuous characteristics

- For much of the year this species is usually seen in pairs.
- After the breeding season family parties are encountered.
- When disturbed birds take to the wing and circle calling all the time in a duet manner.
- Generally a nervous bird ever-alert.

Call Male – a deep “klonk klonk”. Female – a high-pitched “ziz zik”.

Nest Usually nests in holes in the ground or in old rotting stumps or rock crevices but sometimes in holes in trees. Up to 9 white eggs are laid.

Where to find – North Island

Auckland – Western Springs lakes. P. 297.

Auckland – Lake Pupuke Takapuna. P. 297.

South Auckland – Miranda in roadside ponds. P. 302.

Hauraki Plains – Lake Patetonga. P. 308.

Rotorua – Lake Rotoehu. P. 323.

Bay of Plenty, Matata – Large populations here. P. 320.

Kapiti Coast – Waikanae Estuary. P. 339.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Lake Elterwater. P. 346.

North Canterbury – St Annes Lagoon Cheviot. P. 347.

South Canterbury – Lake Alexandrina. P. 354.

Otago – Hoopers Inlet near Dunedin. P. 360.