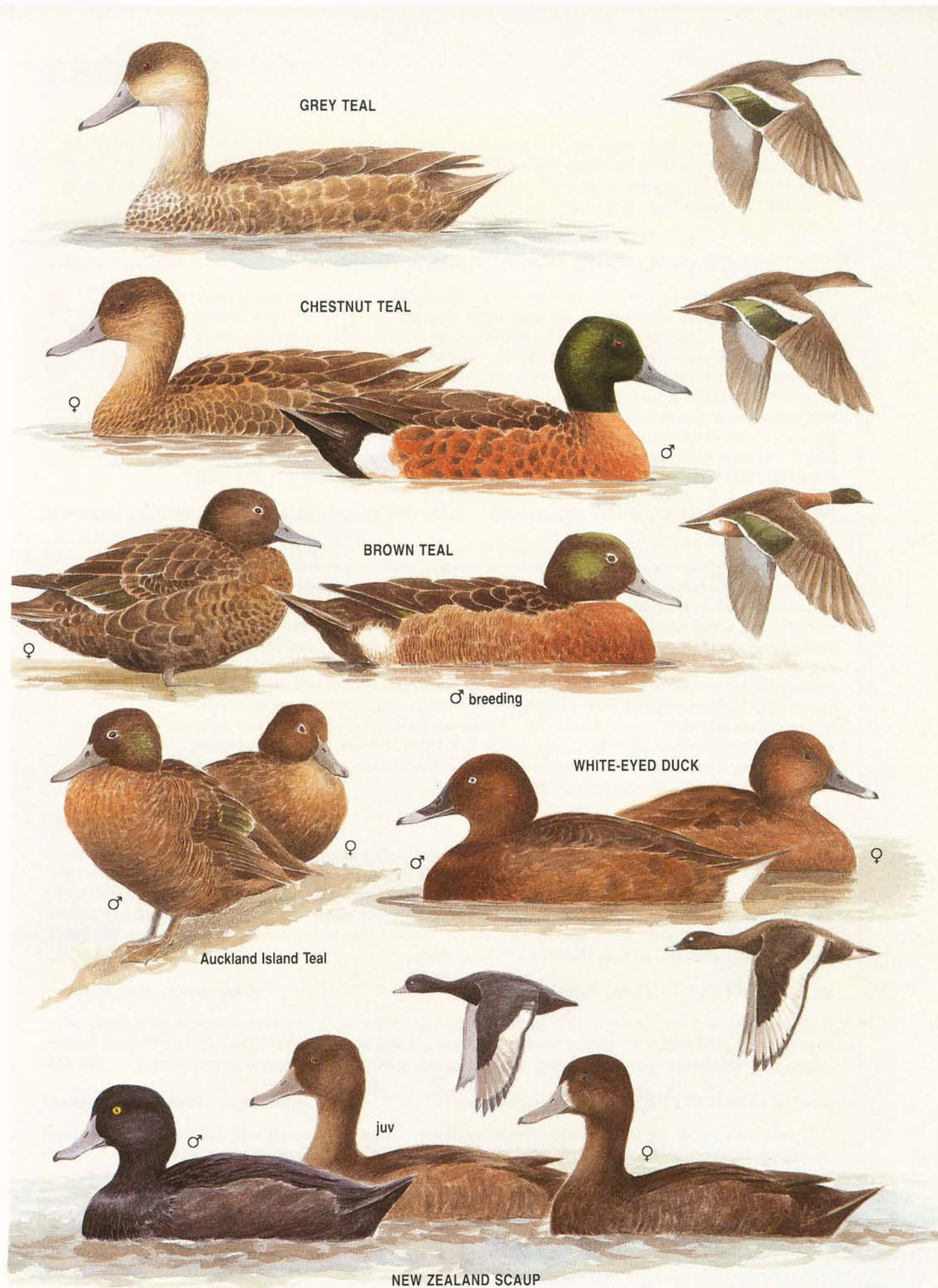


Aquatic birds with a small rounded head, short flattened bill, rounded body, short legs, webbed feet and a waddling gait on land. They fly strongly with neck outstretched. Sexes alike in swans and geese, but male ducks are usually more colourful than females. Lay large clutches. Chicks leave the nest within days but are guarded for several months until they can fly.

CHESTNUT TEAL *Anas castanea*

Rare Australian vagrant

45 cm, 650 g. Like larger and darker-faced Grey Teal. Breeding male has *dark glossy green head and neck, bright chestnut underparts, a large white flank patch and a black undertail*. Female and juvenile like Grey Teal, but *pale buff rather than whitish chin and throat*, and dark crown is less distinct. Eclipse male like a dark female, but traces of colour are usually apparent. Bill blue-grey; *eye red*. In flight, wing pattern like Grey Teal. **Habitat:** Lowland lakes and estuaries. [Sp 133]



WATERFOWL

Anatidae

Swans, geese and ducks are found worldwide in freshwater and marine habitats. There are about 160 species, of which 14 (4 endemic, 4 native and 6 introduced) breed or have bred in the wild in the New Zealand region since 1920. A further endemic species (*Mergus australis*) became extinct in the early years of the 1900s, and another 6 species are vagrants to the region.

All species have webbed feet for swimming in freshwater rivers and lakes, or in coastal waters. Their bill is modified for filter-feeding; 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 invertebrates. Although most feed in this way, some species mainly graze on aquatic or terrestrial vegetation and pick seeds (e.g. peas or wheat) off the ground, and the mergansers have serrated bills for catching fish.

In New Zealand, most introduced and some native species of waterfowl are legally harvested during a strictly controlled shooting season. Each year, Fish and Game Councils determine the length and timing of the season and the allowable bag for each species, and monitor the licensing of hunters and annual hunting statistics. A voluntary organisation, Ducks Unlimited, works to create and protect wetland habitats suitable for waterfowl and is also involved in captive breeding programmes for some threatened and rare species.

Reading Frith, H.J. 1982. *Waterfowl in Australia*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson. Madge, S. & Burn, H. 1988. *Wildfowl: An Identification Guide to the Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World*. London: Christopher Helm. Johnsgard, P.A. 1978. *Ducks, Geese and Swans of the World*. Lincoln: Univ Nebraska Press. Williams, M. 1981. *The Duckshooter's Bag*. Wellington: Wetland Press.

133. CHESTNUT TEAL *Anas castanea*

Plate 32

Size: 45 cm, 650 g
Distribution: Breed only in Australia, mainly in the southwest and southeast, and particularly in coastal wetlands of Victoria and Tasmania. Most breed on small freshwater

lakes but move to large lakes and estuaries after breeding, and they are among the few ducks that regularly use very saline habitats. Vagrant to northern Australia, New Guinea, Lord Howe Island and New Zealand. One

possible Chestnut Teal was seen at the Waikanae Estuary on 31 January 1991, and an immature bird subsequently wintered at the Manawatu Estuary; in winter 1992, up to three birds (two immature males and an immature female) were seen at the Manawatu Estuary. As a few adults or immatures have appeared there in most subsequent years during the annual influx of Grey Teal during the duck-shooting season, Chestnut Teal may be breeding somewhere in the Manawatu

wetlands. Singles at Kowai River, Canterbury (1993) and Balclutha (2003).

Feeding: In Australia, their preferred habitats are coastal wetlands, including estuaries and brackish lagoons. They eat seeds and invertebrates by dabbling in shallow water or by dredging in mud on exposed mudflats or at the front edge of the rising tide.

Reading: Moore, J. & Moore, M. 1992. *Notornis* 39: 289-292.