

Grey duck *Anas superciliosa*

55 cm

NEW ZEALAND NATIVE, SERIOUS DECLINE

The plumage of both sexes of grey duck is similar to that of a female mallard, but grey ducks are slightly darker and have a pale head with a conspicuous dark eye-stripe and cap. They have a glossy green speculum on the upper-wing, which is visible in flight and sometimes when preening. Grey ducks interbreed with mallards, and many birds are hybrids. Grey ducks prefer freshwater habitats such as small lakes and slow-flowing rivers although they are sometime seen in tidal areas. They tend to avoid waters surrounded by farmland or close to human habitation. Grey ducks breed on Chatham and Pitt Islands and occasionally on Rangatira. Numbers have declined with the increase in introduced predators, shooting, and establishment of black swans. Grey ducks in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands are now severely threatened through hybridisation with introduced mallards.



Grey duck.

Photo: Jeremy Rolfe.