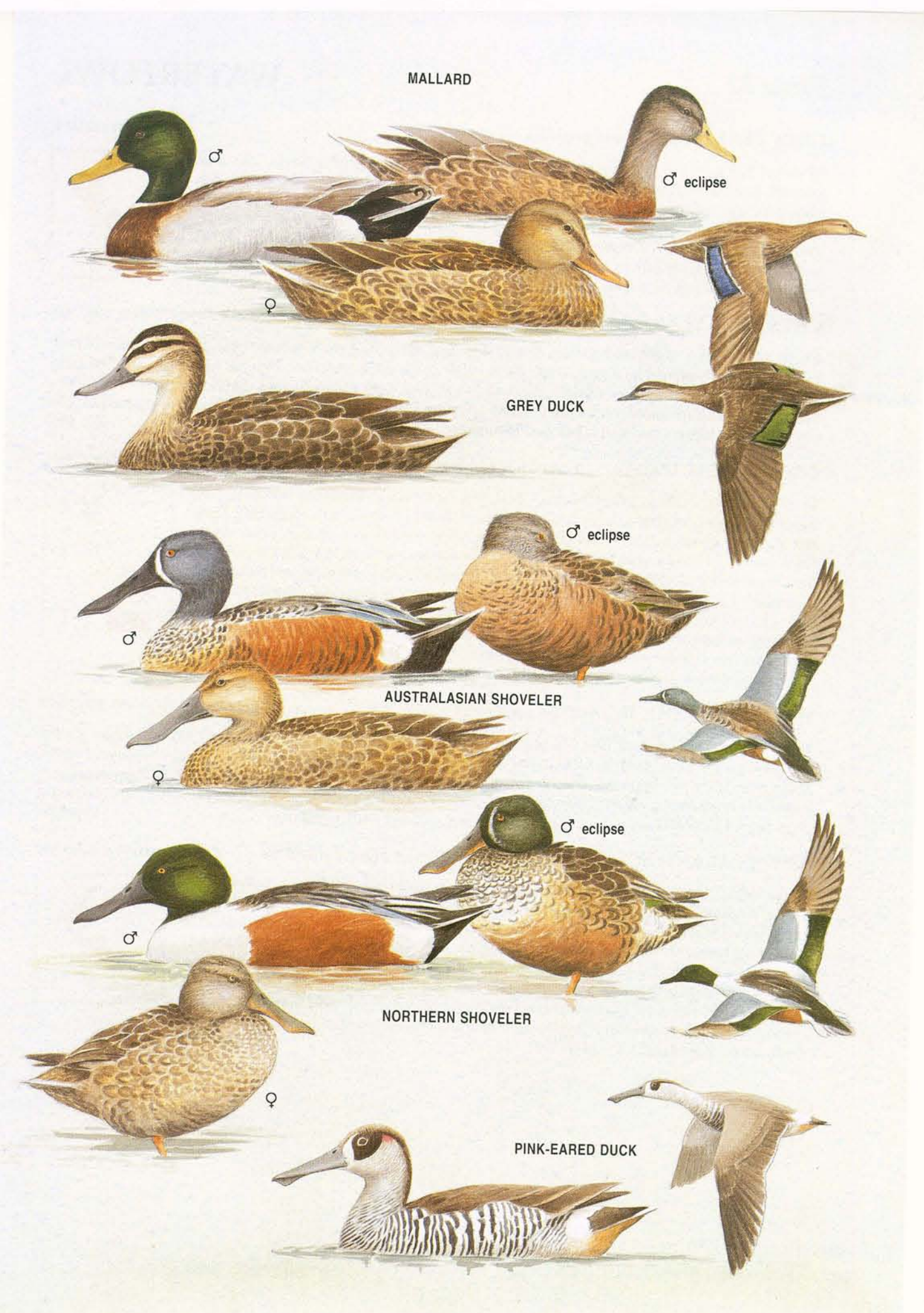


Aquatic birds with a small rounded head, short flattened bill, rounded body, short legs, webbed feet and a waddling gait on land. They fly strongly with neck outstretched. Sexes alike in swans and geese, but male ducks are usually more colourful than females. Lay large clutches. Chicks leave the nest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

NORTHERN SHOVELER *Anas clypeata*

Rare Arctic vagrant

50 cm, 650 g. Like Australasian Shoveler, including the same profile and upperwing pattern, but male in breeding plumage has *pure dark green head, and clean white breast extends to shoulders*. Eclipse male can have crescent on face, but head greener and flanks and undertail paler than Australasian Shoveler. Female paler and greyer than Australasian Shoveler, and usually has more orange on sides of bill and more white on outer tail. **Habitat:** Lowland wetlands. [Sp 136]



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.

136. NORTHERN SHOVELER

Anas clypeata

Plate 31

Size: 50 cm, 650 g
Distribution: Breed in the cool-temperate Northern Hemisphere from Iceland and England across northern Europe and Asia, and into western North America. They migrate to southern Europe, the Rift Valley of Africa, southern Asia and central America, and are vagrants to Micronesia and occasionally to Australasia. Seven confirmed records in New Zealand, all of males in breeding plumage (when most easily distinguished from Australasian Shovelers): Waikato (May 1968), Horowhenua (May 1969,

August 1971), Wanganui (August 1989), Southland (May 1991), Bay of Plenty (May 1993) and Gisborne (June 1995).
Feeding: In their natural range, Northern Shovelers prefer shallow, reed-fringed, high-fertility freshwater or brackish lakes, sewage ponds and flooded paddocks. They feed on minute invertebrates, seeds and plant material obtained by dabbling in shallow water or mud.

Reading: Kinsky, F.C. & Jones, E.B. 1972. *Notornis* 19: 105-110.