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Chestnut-breasted shelduck: pp 105-107.



CHESTNUT-BREASTED SHELDUCK

Family Anatidae

Species *Tadorna tadornoides*

Common name Chestnut-breasted Shelduck

Status Native

Abundance Rare

Size 630 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Paradise Shelduck 630 mm)

Habitat A bird of coastal lagoons, coastal lakes, ponds, dams and open pasture.

Range worldwide An Australian species which has been regularly seen in New Zealand since 1982 when it was first recorded on Lake Ellesmere. Records of breeding success have been confirmed from the South Island.

New Zealand range Northern South Island appears to be the most regular habitat although isolated sightings have come from many places including Canterbury, Westland and Southland and from South Auckland in the North Island.

Description – male

Head and neck Black with a metallic green sheen and a white ring around the edge of the black at the base of the neck. **Upperback and breast** Orange-chestnut. **Wings** Black, with prominent upper and under wings white wing-coverts and a large green speculum. **Underparts** Brown, finely barred with white. **Bill** Black, with small white patch at base. **Legs and feet** Dark grey.

Description – female

Overall body Similar to the male except for a white eye-ring and a larger amount of white around the base of the bill.

Conspicuous features

- Bright chestnut breast separates it from the male Paradise Shelduck.
- White neck-ring and white ring around bill separates it from the male Paradise Shelduck.
- In flight, birds show large areas of white on both upper and underwing.

Conspicuous characteristic

- Usually in pairs on pasture or near water but sometimes in family groups.

Call Male bird makes a “zizzing-zonk” sound, while the female makes a high pitched two syllabic “ong-chank” sound. When put to flight both birds usually call in an agitated manner not unlike the Paradise Shelduck.

Nest In a hole in a tree or stump. Up to 9 white eggs are laid.

Moult In Australia birds congregate in large numbers on inland lakes where they seek the sanctuary of deep water during the moult and flightlessness. This habit is similar to Paradise Shelduck behaviour in New Zealand. Moulting sites for New Zealand birds is unknown.

Where to find – North Island

(Places worth a try)

North Auckland – Kaipara Lakes north of Helensville. P. 294.

Auckland – Puketutu Island causeway Mangere. P. 298.

Hauraki Plains – Lake Patetonga. P. 308.

South Auckland – Lake Whangape, Lake Waikare and Falls Road. P. 309.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Lake Elterwater. P. 345.

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

Otago – Hawkesbury Lagoon, north of Dunedin. P. 359.

Otago – Hoopers Lagoon near Dunedin on Otago Peninsula. P. 360.