In Australia, breeding is closely linked to rainfall, but in New Zealand it is more seasonal although still related to water levels. Laying is mostly in June-September, but replacement clutches can be laid throughout the year. The nest is a bowl of grass with a ground depression in it. It is lined with feathers, grass, and long grass. It is generally located in a tree, hedge, or on a fence or pole, or in tall heather, sparrows' nests, or raven's nests. The female incubates for 25-28 days, the young fledge at 10-12 days and disperse widely at about 8-10 weeks. Adult birds winter over except for some northern birds. Some birds may migrate to the south in winter.

Behavior: Normally seen in small flocks of 2-10 birds, but flocks of 100s are recorded in autumn and winter in south-western Australia. They are very active, often being observed in large flocks on the ground or in trees. They are mostly silent, but occasionally give a short, sharp, and rapid "cackling" call. They are mostly found near water, including impoundments, estuaries, and wetlands.