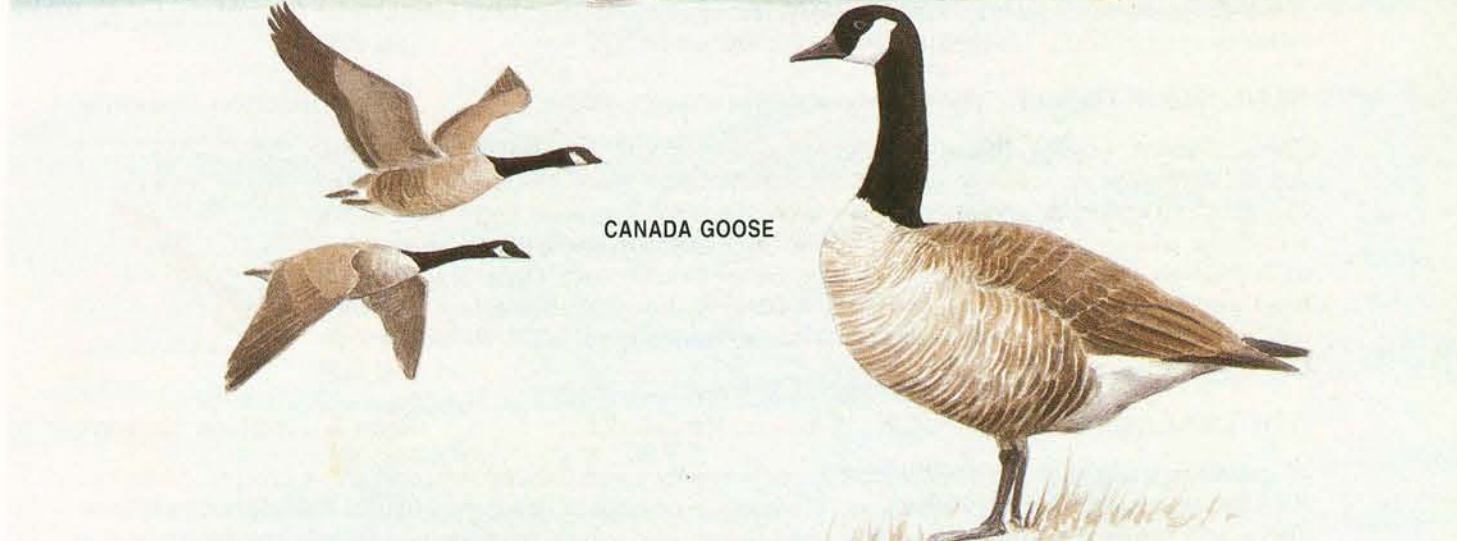


Aquatic birds with a small rounded head, short flattened bill, rounded body, short legs, webbed feet and a waddling gait on land. They fly strongly with neck outstretched. Sexes alike in swans and geese, but male ducks are usually more colourful than females. Lay large clutches. Chicks leave the nest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

CAPE BARREN GOOSE *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Rare Australian introduction

87 cm, 5 kg. Large bulky pale grey goose with dark spots on scapulars and wing coverts. Bill short and largely covered by a greenish-yellow cere; legs pink and feet black. In flight, uniformly grey with black tail and wingtips. Grazes on pasture plants. **Habitat:** Parks, occasionally on lakes. Vagrants may occasionally reach NZ. [Sp 124]



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.

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.

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.

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.

124. CAPE BARREN GOOSE *Cereopsis novaehollandiae* Plate 29

Size: 87 cm, 5 kg
Distribution: Natural range is southern Australia, where they are rare but increasing with improvement of habitat on their main breeding islands. They breed mainly in grassland or wetlands on islands in Bass Strait, in the Spencer Gulf of South Australia and in the Recherche Archipelago off Western Australia, and many birds migrate to the mainland of Australia after their winter breeding season. They were first liberated at Lake Hawea in 1914, and a few persisted in open grassland and tussockland in the district until about 1946. Birds recorded from Fiordland in 1947, 1967 and 1990, Ahuriri River

(1966), South Auckland (1986) and Takaka (1998) are considered vagrants from Australia, but most other sightings are probably of birds released from captivity. A few have become established in the wild near Waikanae and in South Canterbury.
Behaviour: Generally feed on land, and only rarely swim. They are usually silent on the ground, but both sexes give a low-pitched grunt in flight, and the male also gives a high-pitched trumpet call.
Feeding: Mainly graze grasses, legumes, weeds and herbs in the open, often well away from standing water.
Reading: Williams, G.R. 1968. *Notornis* 15: 66-69.