

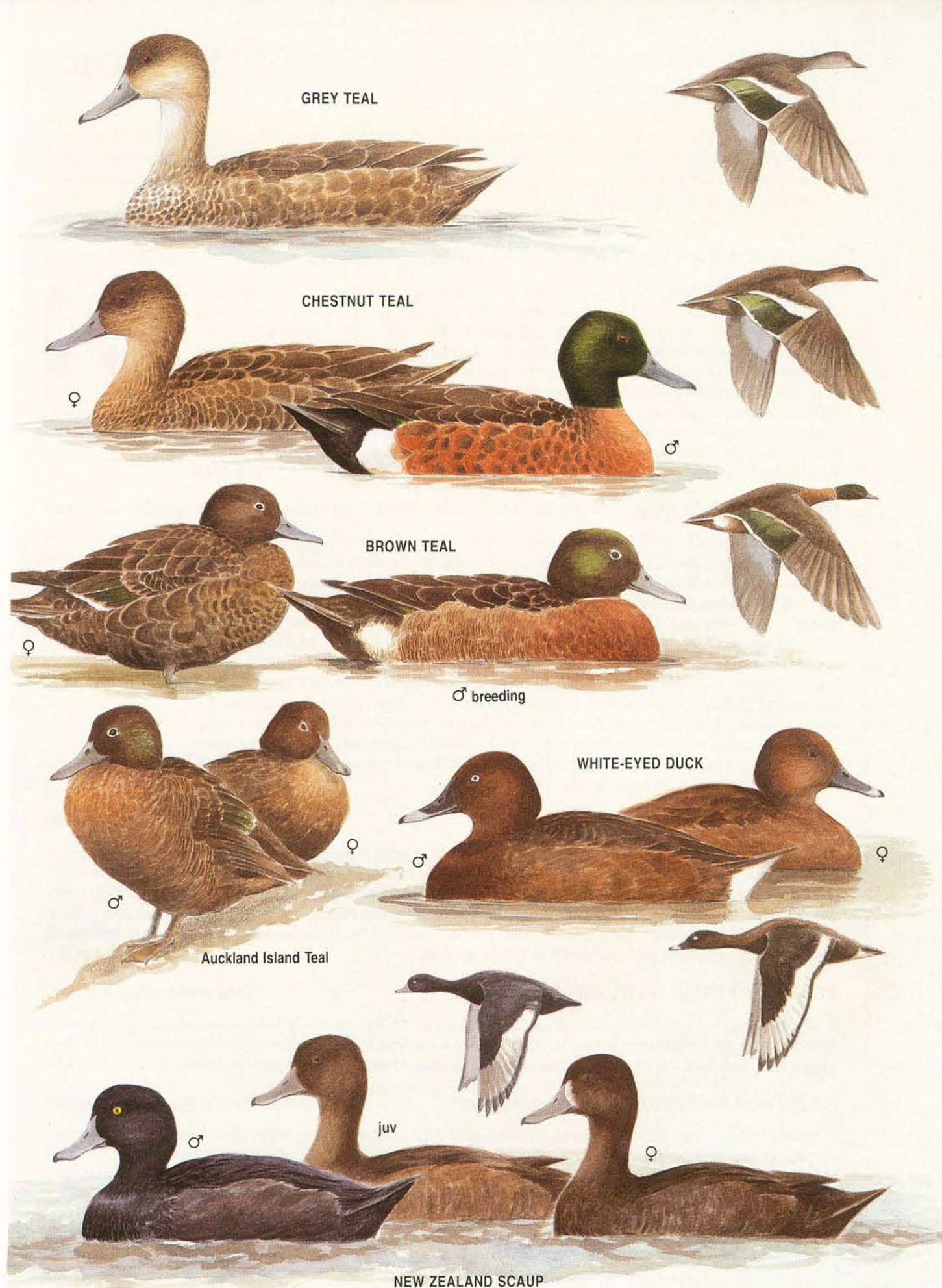
Aquatic birds with a small rounded head, short flattened bill, rounded body, short legs, webbed feet and a waddling gait on land. They fly strongly with neck outstretched. Sexes alike in swans and geese, but male ducks are usually more colourful than females. Lay large clutches. Chicks leave the nest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

NEW ZEALAND SCAUP (Papango) *Aythya novaeseelandiae* Uncommon endemic

40 cm, 650 g. Small blackish diving duck with rounded toy 'rubber duckie' profile and a steep forehead. Male glossy black, maroon on flanks and brown on belly. Bill blue-grey, tipped black; eye golden-yellow. Female blackish brown, usually with vertical white band at the base of the bill. Bill with faint black tip; eye brown. Juvenile like female but lacks white on face and bill dark grey. In flight, upperwing has a broad white trailing band from wingtip, but not reaching body; underwing white. Patters along water when taking off and flies low to the surface. Feeds on bottom weeds and invertebrates by diving. **Habitat:** Large deep freshwater lakes, including hydro lakes; also coastal dune lakes. **Breeding:** Oct-Mar.



[Sp 139]



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.

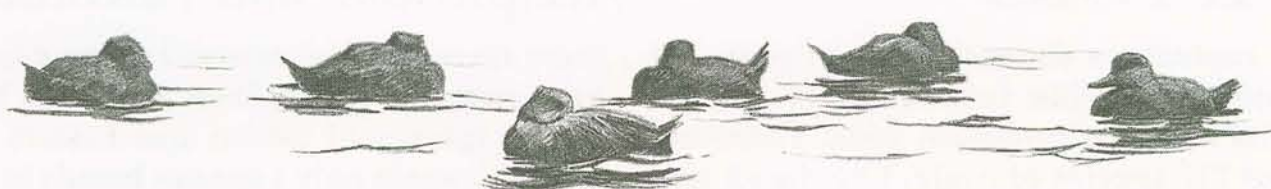
All species have webbed feet for swimming in freshwater rivers and lakes, or in coastal waters. Their bill is modified for filter-feeding; water and food is sucked in at the tip of the bill and expelled through fine comb-like lamellae at the sides, which catch minute seeds and invertebrates. Although 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.

139. NEW ZEALAND SCAUP *Aythya novaeseelandiae* Plate 32

Other names: Papango, Black Teal
Size: 40 cm; 650 g
Distribution: New Zealand only. They are widespread but have a patchy distribution. Most are on dune lakes of Northland, hydroelectric lakes in the upper Waikato, and on lakes in the Rotorua district, Taupo, Hawke's Bay, West Coast, North Canterbury and on the high-country lakes and tarns of the Southern Alps. Elsewhere they are rare, and are not recorded from offshore or outlying islands. Scaup prefer large deep lakes and are rarely found on shallow coastal lakes, lagoons, estuaries or rivers. Little information is available about movements of Scaup within New Zealand, but they are presumed to be mainly sedentary.
Population: c. 20,000 birds in the 1990s.
Conservation: Protected endemic. Midden evidence suggests that Scaup were formerly more widespread, including being on the

Chathams. Numbers and range have declined since European settlement through modification of habitat, shooting and the introduction of predators. However, they have recovered some ground since they were partially protected in 1921 and fully protected in 1934. In the North Island, hydroelectric dams have provided valuable new habitat. Ducks Unlimited has carried out a captive breeding programme and established new populations (e.g. in dune lakes from southern Taranaki to Waikanae).
Breeding: By September, most paired birds have left the winter flocks and the males become territorial. The nest is a bowl of grass and rushes, lined with down, in dense cover close to water. Sometimes Scaup form loose colonies where suitable breeding habitat is scarce. Laying is mostly from late October to December, but a few late or replacement clutches are laid until February. The clutch is



of 2-7-8-15 creamy-white eggs (64 x 45 mm, 71 g), but clutches of 12+ eggs are probably laid by more than one female. Only the female incubates, for c. 30 days. The female broods the ducklings on the nest for up to 24 hours before leading them to water; they are immediately capable of diving to feed. They are initially covered in pale brown down but with white underparts, and the bill is reddish brown. The female guards the brood during their c. 75-day fledging period. Occasionally, rafts of up to 50 birds are formed by several females and their similarly aged broods. Age at first breeding and survivorship is not known, as few New Zealand Scaup have been banded.
Behaviour: Usually seen in flocks in autumn

and winter, sometimes 200+ birds at traditional moulting and wintering sites such as Lakes Rotorua, Taupo and Tutira, Bromley Sewage Ponds (Christchurch), and the Ashburton lakes. They are often silent, but males have a 3-4-note high-pitched whistle, and females 'quack'.
Feeding: They dive to at least 3 m, probably much deeper, to feed on aquatic plants and invertebrates such as freshwater snails, although they occasionally up-end or dabble in shallow water or mud. Most dives last 15-20 seconds, but some last over a minute.
Reading: Soper, M.E. 1976. *New Zealand Birds*. Christchurch: Whitcoulls. Stokes, S.J. 1991. MSc thesis, Univ Canterbury.