

CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Scaup: pp 117-118.



### SCAUP.

**Family** Anatidae

**Species** *Aythya novaeseelandiae*

**Common names** Scaup, Black Teal.

**Status** Endemic

**Abundance** Common

**Size** 400 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Mallard 580 mm)

**Habitat** A bird of deep and clean fresh-water lakes throughout New Zealand including those bordering the coastal sand dunes.

**New Zealand range** Found through many parts of New Zealand. Common in the Rotorua and Taupo areas. Well spread on the lakes of the South Island.

**Discussion** The Scaup is an endemic species and New Zealand's only true diving duck. It is related to the Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) of North America and the Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) of Europe. Its ancestry does not lie with the Australian White-eyed Duck (*Aythya australis*). Although lacking the white flanks and underparts of these two Northern Hemisphere species, and the black tuft on the head of the male Tufted Duck, the Scaup is nevertheless very similar in size, shape, bill configuration and colour. It also shares the yellow eye of male birds, and the overall brownish colouring of female birds. Female scaup also

share a white marking at the base of the bill and both sexes share a degree of white on the upperwing secondary feathers.

### **Description – male bird (above)**

**Upperparts and underparts** Glossy black. **Wings** Black, with a broad white wing-bar on primaries and secondary feathers. **Eye** Iris is yellow. **Bill** Blue-black.



### **Description – female birds (above)**

**Head and neck** Dull brown. **Wings and back** Black, with white wingbar as for the male. **Underparts** Dull brown. **Eye** Brown. **Bill** Black, with a white crescent-marking at base of bill.

### **Conspicuous features**

- White band on wings when birds are in flight.
- Yellow iris on male birds.

### **Conspicuous characteristics**

- Flies very quickly just above the water.
- When not swimming in breeding pairs, birds are usually to be found in large loafing flocks in sheltered water.
- When feeding, continually diving and reappearing at about 15 second intervals.
- Young birds dive with their parents.

**Call** Male birds continually utter a high-pitched rattled whistle.

**Nest** A bowl of grass or rushes, lined with down, and close to the water. Up to 8 cream eggs are laid.

**Where to find – North Island**

**North Auckland** – Waiwera at Strakas Refuge. P. 291.

**Bay of Plenty** – Matata Lagoon. P. 320.

**Bay of Plenty** – Lake Rotorua behind Centennial Gardens.P. 324.

**Bay of Plenty** – Lake Okareka near Rotorua. P. 325.

**Lake Taupo** – Turangi end. P. 316.

#### **Where to find – South Island**

**Marlborough** – Lake Elterwater. P. 345.

**North Canterbury** – St Annes Lagoon, Cheviot. P. 347.

**Otago** – At Lake Wakatipu there are always a lot of birds around the wharf at Queenstown. In this very clear water they can be watched diving to some depths. They can also be timed diving. One stayed under for 25 seconds. P. 359.

**Southland** – Lake Te Anau. Common on the lake-front. P. 369.

**Fiordland** – Eglinton Valley at Mirror Lakes. P. 370.