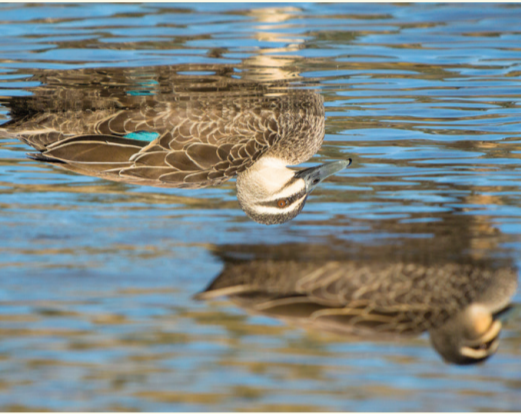




AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK (*Chenonetta jubata*)
Goose-like duck, with small head and long legs. In breeding season, male is chestnut on head and upper neck, with black mane on back of neck. Female has less striking body pattern, and grey head. In the scientific name *Chenonetta* means "goose-duck", from ancient Greek, and *jubata* "maned", from Latin. Feeds mainly on grass and other green herbage, mostly on land; also will take insects on land or on water. Most feeding is at night. Nests in tree hollow. When ready to leave nest, ducklings jump, "float" to ground, then are led to water by parents.



PACIFIC BLACK DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*)
A large duck with a blackish crown, a bold black stripe through the eye, and another black stripe starting from the chin. The specific name *superciliosa* is from the Latin for eyebrow, and refers to the pale eyebrow. Flight reveals a large amount of white in the underwing. Feeds mostly on plant material, but also aquatic insects and crustaceans, obtained by dabbling at surface or up-ending to reach submerged food, and also grazing. Feeds both day and night. May make use of any pool or puddle, no matter how small. Nests on ground hidden in vegetation.

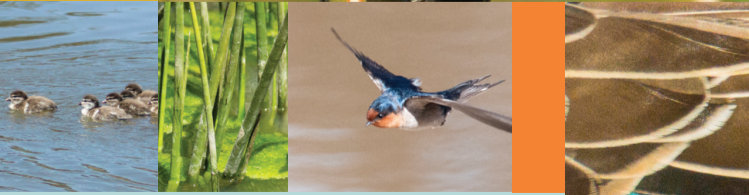


HARDHEAD (*Aythya australis*)
Neat chocolate-brown duck, with white bum, and largish high-crowned head. Iris of eye white in male, dark brown in female. Bill of male blackish, crossed by blue-white band near tip. Female has plainer brown body, and less distinct bill markings. Floats low on water. Of the four ducks on this brochure, this is the only diving duck. Most food obtained by diving, then swimming up to 40 metres underwater. Feeds on mixture of aquatic plants and animals, particularly mussels and freshwater shellfish.



COMMON BIRDS OF CANBERRA WETLANDS

wetlands for our suburbs



This brochure is a joint initiative between the Dickson Wetland Carers and the ACT Government and aims to enhance awareness of birds using Canberra's constructed wetlands.

Bird photographs and text by Tony Howard 2014.

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03/14 DESIGN www.design-edge.com.au Printed on recycled paper.

Constructed wetlands were built in Canberra's suburbs to improve the quality of urban stormwater. One of the added benefits of the wetlands is they provide habitat for birds, frogs, turtles and macro-invertebrates. Wetlands are also quickly colonised by waterbirds – Wood Ducks or Black Ducks are usually the first to discover the water.

Twelve commonly occurring birds are featured in this brochure. Photographs show birds in their typical environs and are accompanied by a description of their appearance, size and diet.

This brochure can be used as a resource for schools and the broader community.

PLEASE DO NOT FEED THE BIRDS



The birds living here are wild birds, not pets, and are good at finding their own food. Feeding birds might seem kind, however:

- human food is bad for their health
- it encourages them to become dependent on people and less fearful of predators like cats and dogs
- birds which lose their fear of people may become aggressive
- it pollutes the water.



COMMON BIRDS OF CANBERRA WETLANDS



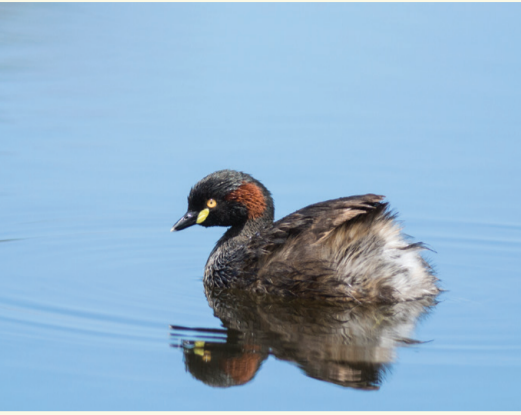
GREY TEAL
(Anas gracilis)

Small slender duck. Crown darker than chin, throat and upper neck, which are off-white; remainder of body uniformly dark grey with each feather edged paler, giving scaled appearance. Bill blueish-grey. Eyes dark crimson. Two small white wing-patches in flight. Feeds on insects and plants by filtering at surface of water or in soft mud, up-ends in shallow water. Strips seed heads from aquatic plants.



LITTLE PIED CORMORANT
(Microcarbo melanoleucos)

Black-and-white fishing bird, with bill hooked at tip, long and flexible neck, and long tail. White underparts often stained rusty from impurities in water. Although not a small bird, the smallest of the Australian cormorants. Swims low in water; during dive closes wings and is propelled by its feet, with wings closed. Sparse plumage becomes wet easily, so dry wings while perched on a rock or bare branch. Usually fishes alone. Food mostly freshwater crayfish and other crustaceans, with smaller numbers of fish.



AUSTRALASIAN GREBE
(Tachybaptus novaehollandiae)

Small waterbird. Compared to a duck, appears sharp-billed, slender-necked and tail-less. Rear half has fluffy appearance, so sometimes mistaken for duckling. When breeding, generally dark plumage above, with conspicuous yellow oval facial mark. Dives often, but also feeds much on surface and in shallows. To escape danger, often dives rather than flies. Flight appears feeble, with shallow fluttering wing beats and trailing feet, but travels widely, usually at night. Legs are set well back, so walks with difficulty, and seldom seen ashore. Feet are lobed rather than webbed. Young is striped and rides on the back of a swimming parent, hanging on during dives. Food mostly fish, snails, and aquatic insects.

WELCOME SWALLOW *(Hirundo neoxena)*



Small songbird, with dull tan forehead, face and throat. Upperparts glossy blue-black, underparts mid-grey. Tail deeply forked,

with lace-like white spots on inner tail feathers. Flight swift and agile, catching insects, including flies, mosquitoes, gnats and wasps, often low over water or land, also high in air. Usually perches on wires, fences, or bare branches. Sometimes drinks in flight, skimming low over water.

AUSTRALIAN REED-WARBLER



(Acrocephalus australis)
Smallish songbird, plain pale olive-brown above, with faint fawn eyebrow, plain fawn-white

below. The generic name Acrocephalus means "highest head" a reference to the peaked crown. Often clings to reed-stems. The rich, varied, melodious song of spring and early summer is often the best indication of presence. Some migrate to northern Australia for the winter, but some remain. Food insects, spiders, molluscs, occasionally seeds.

MASKED LAPWING *(Vanellus miles)*



A large shorebird or wader, almost never seen swimming. Likes areas of short grass near water. Yellow facial wattle. Crown and back of

neck black, extending as "lapels" to sides of upper breast. Upperparts and inner wing grey-brown, outer wing black. Also known as "spur-winged plover", from sharp bony spurs on wings. When nesting, vocal and aggressive, diving at intruders; the specific name miles means "soldier" in Latin. Often calls at night. Feeds on molluscs, worms, insects, crustaceans and occasionally seeds, leaves and frogs.

EURASIAN COOT *(Fulica atra)*



Medium-sized rail, similar in size, but more robust, than Dusky Moorhen. Wholly slaty-black, with white bill and frontal shield. When

swimming, small head jerks back and forward. Takes off with long pattering run across water, with large feet trailing behind tail. Often comes ashore to graze on short pasture. Food almost entirely vegetarian: aquatic vegetation, seeds and grass, but occasionally eats aquatic insects, molluscs and crustaceans.

DUSKY MOORHEN *(Gallinula tenebrosa)*



Medium-sized rail, with bill and frontal shield red, bill with yellow tip. Head, neck, and underparts slaty-black, upperparts

dark olive-brown. Two lateral white stripes on bum. Feeds on vegetable matter, seeds, fruits, molluscs, insects, spiders, carrion and faeces. While swimming, glean from surface, and up-end for some seconds, with tail and legs in air.

PURPLE SWAMPHEN *(Porphyrio porphyrio)*



Large rail with massive red triangular bill and frontal shield. Deep-blue head and breast, and black upperparts. When

walking or swimming flicks tail, exposing large central white patch on bum. Swims with tail high. When disturbed runs or flies heavily, legs trailing. Feeds mainly on aquatic vegetation, gripped with long toes, but also on seeds, fruits, insects, frogs, young birds, eggs and small mammals.

