

THE AUSTRALIAN WOOD DUCK

Chenonetta jubata



Photo: "Fir0002"

The Australian Wood Duck or Maned Duck, is found throughout much of the continent. It is the only living species in the genus *Chenonetta*, and has traditionally been included with the dabbling ducks (*Anatinae*) but it might actually belong in the Shelduck family (*Tadorninae*). It has been suggested that the South American Ringed Teal, *Callonetta leucophrys*, is its closest living relative.

This abundant species frequents lightly wooded swamps and marshes. It nests in a tree hollow, where 8-12 eggs are laid.

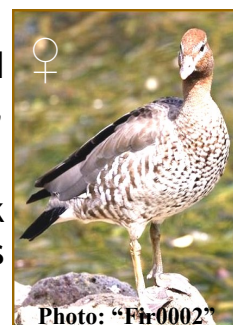


Photo: "Fir0002"

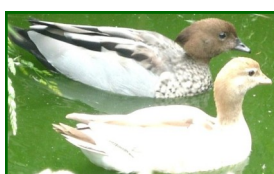


RINGED TEAL

Photo: J. Beniston

The drake is predominately grey with a dark brown head and mottled breast. The duck has white stripes above and below the eye and mottled underparts. Both sexes have grey wings with black primaries and a white speculum*.

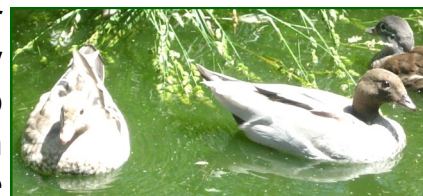
The Wood Duck is 45-51cm in length and resembles a small goose. It is usually seen grazing in flocks, often in suburban parks and on ovals. A peculiarity of this duck species is that it rarely swims.



CINNAMON MUTATION

Photo: D. Barrington

An attractive cinnamon mutation of the Wood Duck has been reported in the wild on a number of occasions. This mutation is now held by a few aviculturists, who are attempting to establish it in captivity. There is also a dilute phase held in captivity.



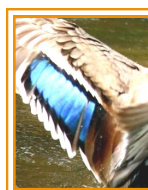
DILUTE PHASE

Photo: D. Barrington

The extinct flightless New Zealand species, Finsch's Duck, *Chenonetta finschi*, is the only other member of the genus *Chenonetta*. Judging by the extensive remains of the species found in Māori middens, it may once have been the most common duck in New Zealand. Little is known about it as it disappeared before New Zealand avifauna was comprehensively studied and recorded. However, it may have survived until as late as 1870, as there is a report of a flightless "goose" being caught near the North Island town of Opotiki in that year.

R.V.C. with help from Wikipedia

*The speculum is a patch on the inner flight feathers of some birds. Bright wing speculums are present in many duck species. Several parrots of the genus *Amazona* feature red or orange speculums.



THE WHITE-TIPPED BLUE AND BLACK SPECULUM OF A MALLARD DRAKE
Anas platyrhynchos

Photo: "Rror"