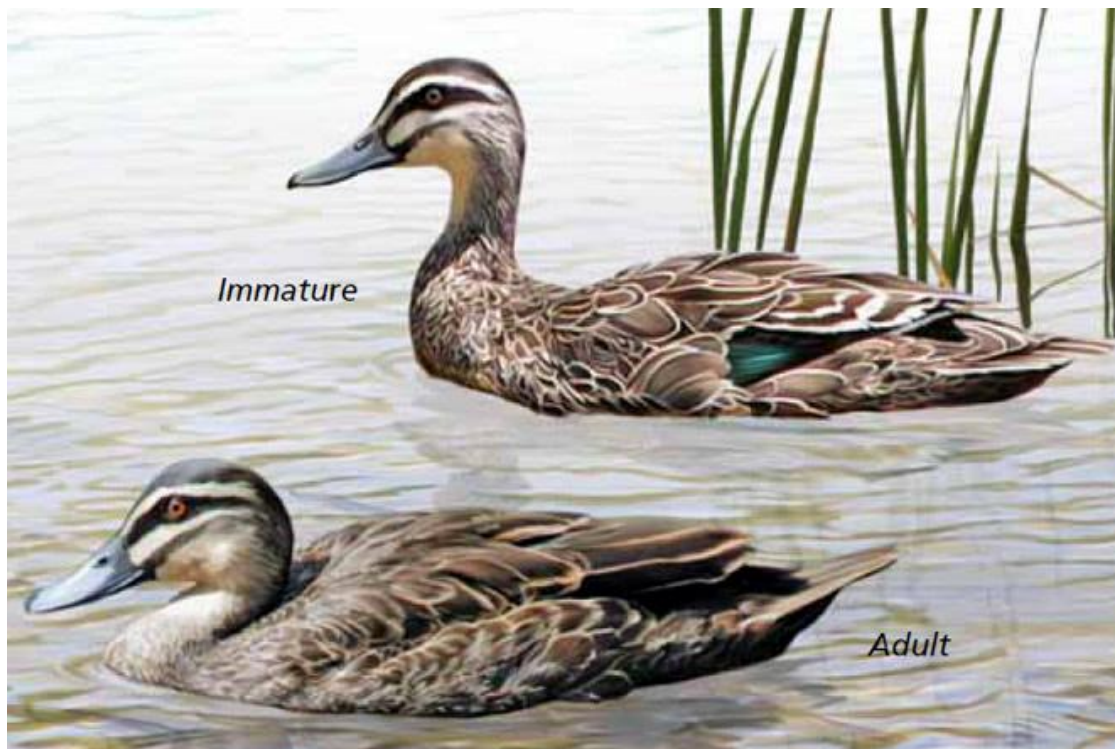


Common Name/Scientific name: **Pacific Black Duck/*Anas superciliosa***

Despite being predominantly brown, the Pacific Black Duck has always been known as the 'black duck'. Its only black plumage is a bold stripe that runs across the bird's face, from its bill to behind its eye, giving it a distinctively striking pattern.



Description: The Pacific Black Duck is mostly mid-brown in colour, with each feather edged buff. The head pattern is characteristic, with a dark line through the eye, bordered with cream above and below and a dark brown crown. The upper wing colour is the same as the back, with a bright glossy green patch in the secondary flight feathers. The white underwing is conspicuous in flight. Young Pacific Black Ducks are similar to the adults in plumage.

Where seen in the gardens: The Pacific Black Duck is found in all but the most arid regions of Australia, frequenting all types of water, from isolated forest pools to tidal mudflats. Pacific Black Ducks are usually seen in pairs or small flocks and readily mix with other ducks. In the wild, these birds are often very wary of humans and seldom allow close approach. In the gardens they are usually seen swimming on the lagoon, but occasionally seen moving across nearby grassy areas. When feeding on the lagoon, they are usually where the water is shallow - around the edges.

Feeding & Behaviour in the gardens: The Pacific Black Duck is mainly vegetarian, feeding on seeds of aquatic plants. This diet is supplemented with small crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic insects. Food is obtained by 'dabbling', where the bird plunges its head and neck underwater and upends, raising its rear end vertically out of the water. Occasionally, food is sought on land in damp grassy areas.

Nesting: Nests range from scrapes in the ground to well-woven cups in grass or reeds also holes in tree stumps, in deserted nests of other water birds or flat surfaces in staghorns and other large, low ferns. The female plucks soft small feathers from her breast to line the nest area and also to cover the 7-13 eggs when she leaves to go off and feed, accompanied by the male. Mating in Pacific Black Ducks coincides with availability of sufficient food and water, and often with the onset of heavy rains or when waterways are at their peaks. Courtship is accompanied by ritualised displays including preening, bobbing and wing-flapping. This behaviour is often initiated by the female, and, other than copulation, the male helps little in the breeding process.

Similar Species in the gardens: The birds seen often on the lagoon are the Australian Wood Duck, the Pacific Black Duck, the Australasian Grebe and Little Cormorants (Black and Pied).