



How well do you know the local water birds?

If you go for a walk around Spring, Regatta or Discovery Lakes, you might see a number of different types of wild water birds swimming in the water or sitting on the banks. How many of these different species have you seen?

Pacific Black Duck

Found all over Australia, these ducks are a mottled brown colour, rather than the black suggested by their name. They are versatile birds and will live in any water source, feeding on the seeds of water plants, and small water insects and molluscs.

Australian Wood Duck

Another common species, wood ducks nest in hollow trees close to water. You might see them foraging in shallow water or on grass near the lakes.

Australasian Swamphen (also known as Purple Swamphen)

Swamphens don't fly well, but they live together in groups and will shriek loudly at threats to their nests. In New Zealand, this same species is known as pu'keko. They sometimes steal eggs from other birds nests and may eat ducklings if they catch them.

Eurasian Coot

Another common visitor to our lakes is the Coot. They eat aquatic plants, feeding on the surface and under the water. They sleep while floating on the water, and build their nests in the water reeds.

Hardhead Duck

These dark brown ducks are more common in winter than in summer on our lakes. Males have a white eye, while females' eyes are dark brown. They are able to dive deep to eat shrimp and small fish as well as water plants at the surface.

Cotton Pygmy Geese

The Cotton Pygmy Geese seem to visit Springfield Lakes for only a couple of months each year. Over the past two years, these birds have been recorded to have been sighted in only two other places within a 50km radius from Springfield. The geese make their nest in a hollow tree up to ten metres above the ground, close to water. What brings them to our neighbourhood?

Little Black Cormorants

Cormorants are often found in flocks, fishing together by diving under the surface or just sitting on the bank in the sun, drying their feathers. Their presence on our lakes means that our aquatic life is healthy.

Should you feed wild ducks?

Feeding ducks has been a favourite activity for kids for generations but unfortunately, it isn't good for the birds. It is Ipswich City Council's policy to discourage people from feeding wild birds, and various other wildlife organisations also recommend not feeding them. It displaces the foods that the birds should be eating, disrupts the natural ecosystem of the lake, and can be really bad for the birds' digestion.

Please do not feed our wild ducks bread! Even though they love eating it, it can make them sick. Lettuce, peas or corn (raw or cooked) are better alternatives, but it's best to not feed them at all. Admire them as you're walking or sitting by the lake instead.

The Springfield Lakes Nature Care Group meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 6.30pm at Cr Ireland's Meeting Room, Level 2, Main Street, Orion Town Centre (near the Post Office). You're welcome to come along to help us plan environmental activities and projects for our community. You can follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SpringfieldLakesNatureCare. Please feel free to share any photos you've taken of our local wildlife there.

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