



FACTSHEET

Australian Shelduck

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Common Name: Australian Shelduck

Scientific Name: *Tadorna tadornoides*

Noongar Name: Nyimarak

Conservation Status: Not listed under IUCN (2016). All Rottnest Island's fauna is protected under the *Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987*.

Habitat: Wetlands, Salt Lakes, Swamps.

Body length: 62-70 cm

Weight: 1.0-2.1 kg

Gestation period: 31 days

Number of young: 1-19 (6-19 eggs)

Description:

The male Australian Shelduck is slightly larger than the female.

Both the male and female have a black head and neck. They have a white strip around the base of their necks. The remainder of the body is black except for a prominent white patch on the wings, a chestnut area behind the white patch and a vivid green diagonal bar below the white and chestnut patches.

The male has a broad orange band around his chest and shoulders. The female has a chestnut band around her chest and shoulders. She also has white ring around her eyes and the base of her bill.

Diet:

Algae, seaweed, grass around lakes and swamps, other plant material, invertebrate larvae, beetles, dragonflies.

In the Wild:

The Australian Shelduck forms the biggest duck population on Rottnest. A population of ducks made up of paired adults live on the Island permanently.

Shelduck numbers fluctuate with the season. December to January sees the largest number of ducks being just after breeding season and before the hot weather and July sees the lowest.

Two days after ducklings hatch, the parents take them from the nest site to the brood territory. The ducklings have not yet fledged so they walk or swim the entire journey. Some birds nest at the West End so the family's journey can be 6 km.

The call of the Shelduck is also quite distinct, with a loud honk from the male being answered by a buzzing call from their female.

Threats:

On Rottnest Island:

- Invasive species
- Pest bird
- Climate change causing habitat change
- Uncontrolled fire

DID YOU KNOW?

The Shelduck is also known as Mountain Duck, Chestnut-breasted Shelduck or Sheldrake.

The best spot to find the Shelduck is Garden Lake, Bulldozer Swamp and the grassy west edge of Lake Baghdad.