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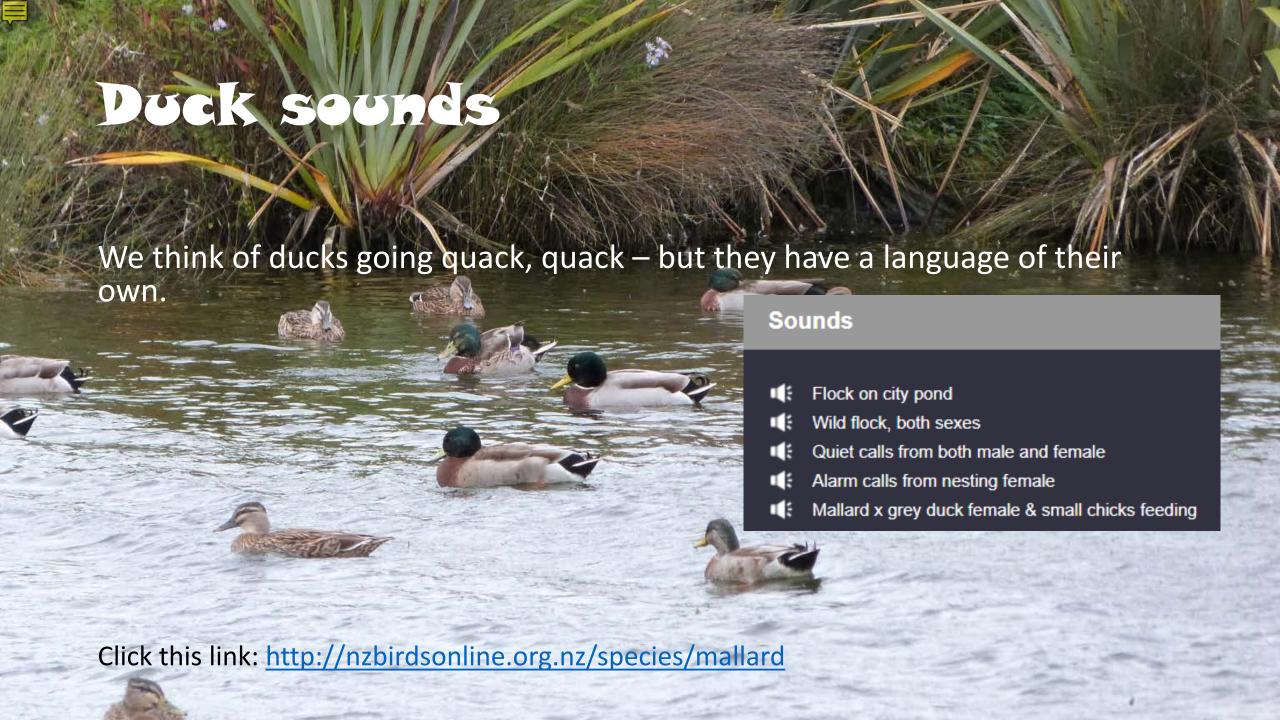
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Activity time

Activity 7: Mallard Duck Lifecycle





What do ducks eat?

Mallards will eat from the wetland or the dry land.

They eat mostly plant material, including seeds, grains, grasses, clovers and the tips of most aquatic plants.

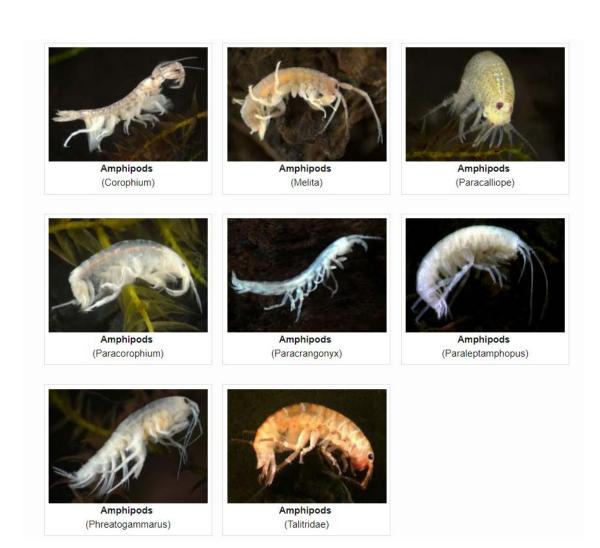
They will also eat any food scraps that humans give them like bread – although too much bread is not good for them because it has high levels of salt.

Mallards will also eat a wide range of insect larvae and adults, freshwater snails and worms, and estuarine invertebrates.

Lets take a look:



Amphipods







Water Boatman

Corixidae: Diaprepocoris



Corixidae: Sigara



Photos courtesy of: Landcare Research. http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/resources/identification/animals/freshwater-invertebrates/species-list



Snails





Lymnaeidae: Lymnaea



Lymnaeidae: Pseudosuccinea



Worms



Where do they find all this food?

Ephemeral wetlands provide a good place for them to find worms, as they will come up out of the ground.



Plant life in the pond

Ponds will produce plant life at different times. This plant life provides homes for the insects and can provide food for the ducks.

These photos were taken at monthly intervals from October to December. Notice the difference in emergent plants.

Photos courtesy of: E Garrick & C Stewart, Southland Fish & Game.









Breeding/Nesting

In New Zealand:

 Mallard ducks nest in late July to September and then they can nest again in October to November. This means they can produce two broods per year.

How many ducklings could that be?

The nests are on the ground hidden in vegetation and close to water







Duckling Habitat

A recent research project by Fish and Game has shown that to increase survival rates of ducklings they need:

- Ephemeral water near their nesting site (the research showed that the survival rate almost doubled!)
- A large area of shallow water that gives the ducklings a feeding zone. The shallow water must be less than 43cm deep
- Plants that provide shelter from the weather –on the West Coast our bad weather comes from the North West and South West
- Plant cover to protect them from predators like hawks. This pond has
 overhanging willow on the west edge, and a mix of carex secta, toe toe,
 flax, rank grass and surrounding larger trees for shelter.
- Fencing to keep stock away from the water



Research by Fish & Game



Click here to play: https://youtu.be/yk3NRtLdczw