

# Albert Park

## Bird Feeding - Not All It's Quacked Up To Be

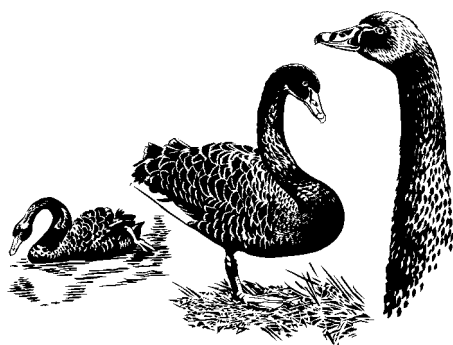
Albert Park is home to a wide diversity of birdlife that make their home on the lake. The lake and associated parkland is an important breeding and feeding habitat for these species. Although currently a popular pastime, feeding birds bread and food scraps is harmful to the birds. Please read below for more information.

### Feeding the birds is harmful

Birds naturally feed on a variety of vegetation, insects and fish present in the lake and surrounding parklands. Bread and other food scraps are not a dietary requirement for birds and can cause them health problems. It can also cause them to become dependent on humans feeding them. This can cause a loss of their natural instincts to forage for food and adults failing to teach juveniles how to find natural foods.

### Upsetting the natural equilibrium

Feeding encourages more birds to congregate in an area of the lake. Some birds are naturally territorial, and with an increase in bird species into an area, may result in aggressive behaviour, competition for resources and displacement of key bird species.



Black Swans © MT

### Vulnerable to predators such as foxes, cats and dogs

Birds can become conditioned to being fed by humans, which leads to a decline in their wariness of predators such as dogs, cats and foxes. Feeding the birds significantly decreases their chances of survival.

### How to interact with the birds at Albert Park

- Use some binoculars while relaxing on the lake's edge. See how many different birds you can spot on Mud Island amongst areas of vegetation.
- Close your eyes - how many different bird calls can you hear?
- Look out for baby cygnets and ducklings – visit the park regularly and watch them grow!

### Albert Park bird species may include:

- Australian White Ibis *Threskiornis molucca*
- Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*
- Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*
- Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*
- Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*
- Great Egret *Ardea alba*
- Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*
- Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*
- Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*
- Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*
- Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*
- Hardhead *Aythya australis*
- Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*
- Hoary-Headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*

### So what do birds eat naturally?

Please see overleaf to find out what some of the more common birds found in Albert Park like to eat, along with a description of what the bird looks like and the sounds they make....



## Caring for the environment

Please place all rubbish in one of the bins provided

Please observe all regulations relating to dogs and keep them on a lead unless otherwise stipulated

Please clean up after your dog using one of the pooper-scooper Stands located around the park

Please do not feed the birds

Remember all flora and fauna within Albert Park are protected

No vehicles are permitted on the ovals or open grassed areas at any time

Camping is not permitted within Albert Park Reserve

Golf is only permitted within the Golf Course and Golf Driving Range

## For further information contact

Parks Victoria  
Information Centre  
Phone: 13 1963

Albert Park Office  
Albert Road Drive South  
Albert Park VIC 3206  
Phone: 9695 9000

## Pacific Black Duck

The Pacific Black Duck have a black crown and a white face with two black stripes, one of which is through the eye. The body is a dark brown colour with purplish-green colours on the upper wings.

They reach a size of between 47-60 cm and are generally found within heavily vegetated areas such as lakes and swamps.

Their voice comprises of harsh quacks and strong 'laughing' calls.

The Pacific Black Duck mainly feeds on seeds and aquatic plants supplemented by small crustaceans, molluscs and aquatic insects. Food is obtained by 'dabbling', plunging its head underwater raising its rear end out of the water.

## Eurasian Coot

The Eurasian Coot is a dark grey-slate colour with a white bill and frontal shield on a black head. They have lobed toes and red eyes. Juveniles have similar plumage which is paler compared to the adults. A hatchling is black in colour with yellow tips, with a red face and cream bill.

Their habitat includes swamps, estuaries and open expanses of water.

Their voice is comprised of various shrills with a distinctive loud "kawk" sound.

The Eurasian Coot feeds mainly on vegetable matter, supplemented only with a few insects, worms and fish.

## Black Swan

The Black Swan has a large body with a long slender neck. It is black in colour with white tips on both wings and a red bill. The female is smaller in size and has paler features.

Juveniles are grey-brown in colour and have the white flight feathers tipped black. Cygnets are pale-grey with a downy feather appearance.

They reach between 106-142 cm with a wingspan of 160-200 cm. Their primary habitat is large wide-open expanses of water.

Their voice is a musical trumpeting call.

The Black Swan is a vegetarian. Its food consists of algae and aquatic plants. They will also occasionally graze on land.

## Musk Duck

The largest of all Australian ducks, the Musk Duck, has a sooty-brown appearance with fine spots on the head. The male can be identified by the bulbous lobe of skin that hangs down under its bill. This increases in size during the breeding season. The name comes from the musky odour released from the male's tail base. Juveniles are similar in appearance to the adults, with paler plumage, a yellow tip on the bill and no bulbous lobe.

The male can grow to 60-73 cm, while the female grows to 47-60 cm. Their main habitats include swamps, lakes tidal inlets and bays that have some dense vegetation cover.

Musk Ducks are excellent divers and search underwater for most of their food including aquatic insects, crustaceans, snails, fish, frogs and ducklings. Some seeds of aquatic plants are also eaten.

## Australasian Grebe

The adult is predominantly a dark brown colour with a chestnut stripe extending from the neck along the back and a silver-grey underbody during the breeding season. Its head and neck is black, with yellow eyes and a dark bill tipped cream. Juveniles have a black and white striped face.

They reach a size of 25-27 cm and can be found in areas of fresh water.

Their voice comprises of shrills and chittering.

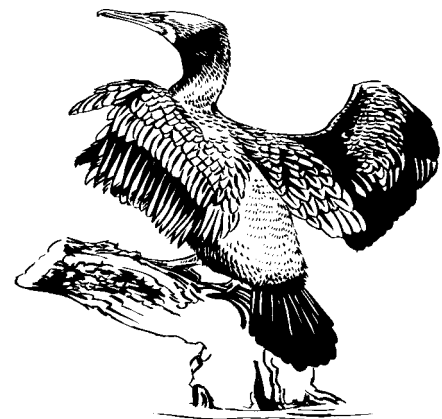
Food consists of mainly small fish and water insects. They are often seen eating their own feathers and feeding them to their young, this is thought to help prevent injury from any sharp fish bones they may eat.

## Great Cormorant

An adult Great Cormorant is black in colour, with a white and yellow chin. During their breeding season they have a small patch of white on both thighs, which is absent during winter. Juveniles are a dusky brown colour and closely resemble the adults.

They reach a size of between 70-90 cm and are generally found within coastal and aquatic habitats. Their voice comprises of croaks, grunts and hisses.

Like other Cormorants they feed on fish, supplemented in fresh water by crustaceans, aquatic insects and frogs. They are excellent swimmers and capture their food in shallow underwater dives.



Great Cormorant © MT

Please utilise an Australian bird guide for other bird species.