

well as the southwest of Western Australia. They prefer freshwater swamps and creeks that have areas of dense vegetation to hide in. During dry periods when wetlands and swamps dry up, the Freckled Duck moves to other locations in search of water.

What Does a Freckled Duck Eat?

Being so shy, the Freckled Duck likes to feed in the cover of dawn or dusk and even at night. It eats a variety of swamp/wetland plants including sedges and grasses, algae as well as small invertebrates. It may also move to feed in open water after breeding or during periods of drought.

Fascinating Facts

The Freckled Duck is one of the world's rarest waterbirds.

During the breeding season, the male Freckled Duck has a bright red patch at the base of his bill.

A Freckled Duck's Family Life

The Freckled Duck commonly breeds from September to December in large temporary swamps created by flooding in the Bulloo and Lake Eyre basins and the Murray Darling System.

Nests are hidden at the water's edge in dense vegetation and are made of twigs and lined with a cosy layer of feathers. Between five and fourteen eggs are incubated by the mother for 28 days. Chirping can be heard from the eggs a few days before they are due to hatch.

Like all ducks, Freckled Duck chicks hatch with a covering of down (soft feathers) and with their eyes open. They learn to walk and swim within a few hours and will forage close to their mother. She keeps watch for danger as

they forage and sometimes helps her chicks find food.

At one to two years old, they reach sexual maturity. During the breeding season, the male Freckled Duck has a bright red patch at the base of his bill. The courtship display involves a forwards head-thrust from the male with soft buzzing quacks followed by a good 'tail wag'. The female responds by raising her head with a throaty kind of quack... then the whole process begins again!

Where to see a Freckled Duck in Victoria

The Serendip Sanctuary west of Melbourne is a great area to see the Freckled Duck. A wetland environment has been developed in the park to encourage breeding and to provide the public with the opportunity to view and learn about one of the rarest duck species in Australia.

Want to Know More?

www.dse.vic.gov.au (search: Freckled Duck)