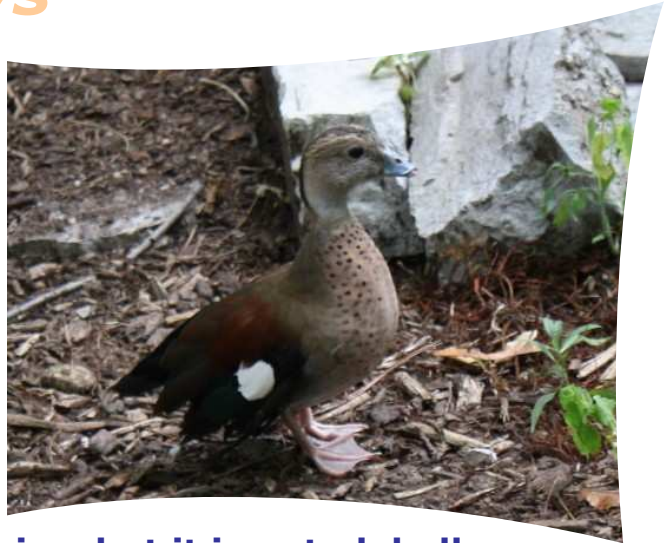


# Ringed Teal

## *Callonetta leucophrys*

Kingdom Animalia  
Phylum Chordata  
Class Aves  
Order Anseriformes  
Family Anatidae

Native to: South America.



### **Status: Least Concern**

**The Ringed Teal is not a common species, but it is not globally threatened. Little is known about their numbers in the wild, but they appear to be locally abundant in some areas. Their main predators are raptors, foxes, wild cats, and humans. They are also threatened by deforestation.**

### **Appearance & Lifespan**

The Ringed Teal is a very small duck, up to 15 inches in length and weighing only 11-12 ounces. The male has a dark chestnut back, pale grey flanks and a salmon-coloured breast speckled in black. A black band runs from the top of its head down to the nape, this band comes forward around the base of the neck to form an incomplete ring. Females have an olive-brownish back with the head blotched and striated in white, with penciled barring on a pale chest and belly. Both have a dark tail, a contrasting pale rump, and a distinctive white patch on the wing. The eyes are brown, bills are grey and legs and feet are pink in both the male and female. Ringed teal have strong, pointed claws on their feet and so can readily perch in trees. The webbed feet support the bird on mud and floating vegetation and, of course, allow for easier swimming.

The lifespan of the ringed teal in captivity is around 15 years. The lifespan in the wild is unknown due to insufficient data collection.



## **Behavior & Reproduction**

The male exhibits preening as part of his courtship display, which flashes the iridescent wing colors toward the female to attract her attention.

Almost all ringed teal nests are in holes or other cavities in trees. The nest is lined with down. Clutches consist of 5 to 12 whitish eggs. The incubation period is about 29 days. Both the male and female take turns incubating the eggs and caring for the young. Hatching is timed to the weather and food availability, synchronizing with the best conditions. The ducklings are distinguished from other species by little, pointed claws and long stiffened tail feathers. The plumage of the ducklings needs to be water repellent when they leave the nest so they get oil off their mother as they rub against her abdominal plumage. They are called from the nest a day or two after hatching. They bounce and tumble on hitting the ground, but aren't usually injured. They eat on their own, eating aquatic vegetation and insects. They can fly 50 to 55 days after hatching and follow the adults to the winter feeding grounds.

Ringed Teal are "puddle ducks," surface feeding ducks also known as dabblers. Dabblers obtain their food by up-ending, immersing the head, neck and front of the body under water with the tail in the air. They maintain this position while grazing on submerged bottom plants. Surface feeding ducks are differentiated from diving ducks, but that does not mean that surface ducks do not dive. They can and do, especially to escape predators. If they do dive, however, they usually don't go below four feet.

## **Ecology & Habitat**

Ringed Teal live in South America, from southern Bolivia, Paraguay and southwestern Brazil to northeastern Argentina and Uruguay in wooded habitats. Ringed Teals breed in north-west Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay. Their habitats include tropical, swampy forests and marshy clearings in well-wooded lowlands, as well as secluded pools and small streams.

At the zoo the Ringed Teal is fed....

### **Did You Know?**

1. Fast and agile flyers, Ringed Teal enjoy perching in trees well off the ground.
2. Their contact calls are a cat-like *mee-ooing*, a lingering *peewoo* in drakes.
3. While swimming, they hold their tail horizontally so it does not touch the surface of the water.

