

PhotoEssay

Australasian Grebe



David Hibbert



Australasian Grebe

The Australasian Grebe is a species of waterbird commonly found on freshwater bodies of water such as dams, lakes and slow moving rivers. They are excellent swimmers and often dive underwater to feed.

Some grebes can dive to a depth of 20 metres.



Feeding

The grebe feeds on aquatic water plants, such as the grasses and plants in the dam seen above. They will also eat small aquatic insects, fish, snails, slugs, crabs and small frogs.



Nests

The Australasian Grebe mates in late winter or early spring, then the female lays her eggs in a nest, which they build amongst reeds.

Nests are made from grasses, reeds and small sticks.



Partners

Here a male and female are seen together. Grebes are not good fliers and rarely walk on land. If they do fly, it is usually at night and only for short distances. The male and female are similar in colour. Colours are brighter during mating season.



Protection of Young

Grebes usually lay between two and six eggs. When they leave their nest to feed, grebes will often cover their eggs with reeds to hide them. Once chicks hatch, they can already swim and will dive underwater to avoid threats.



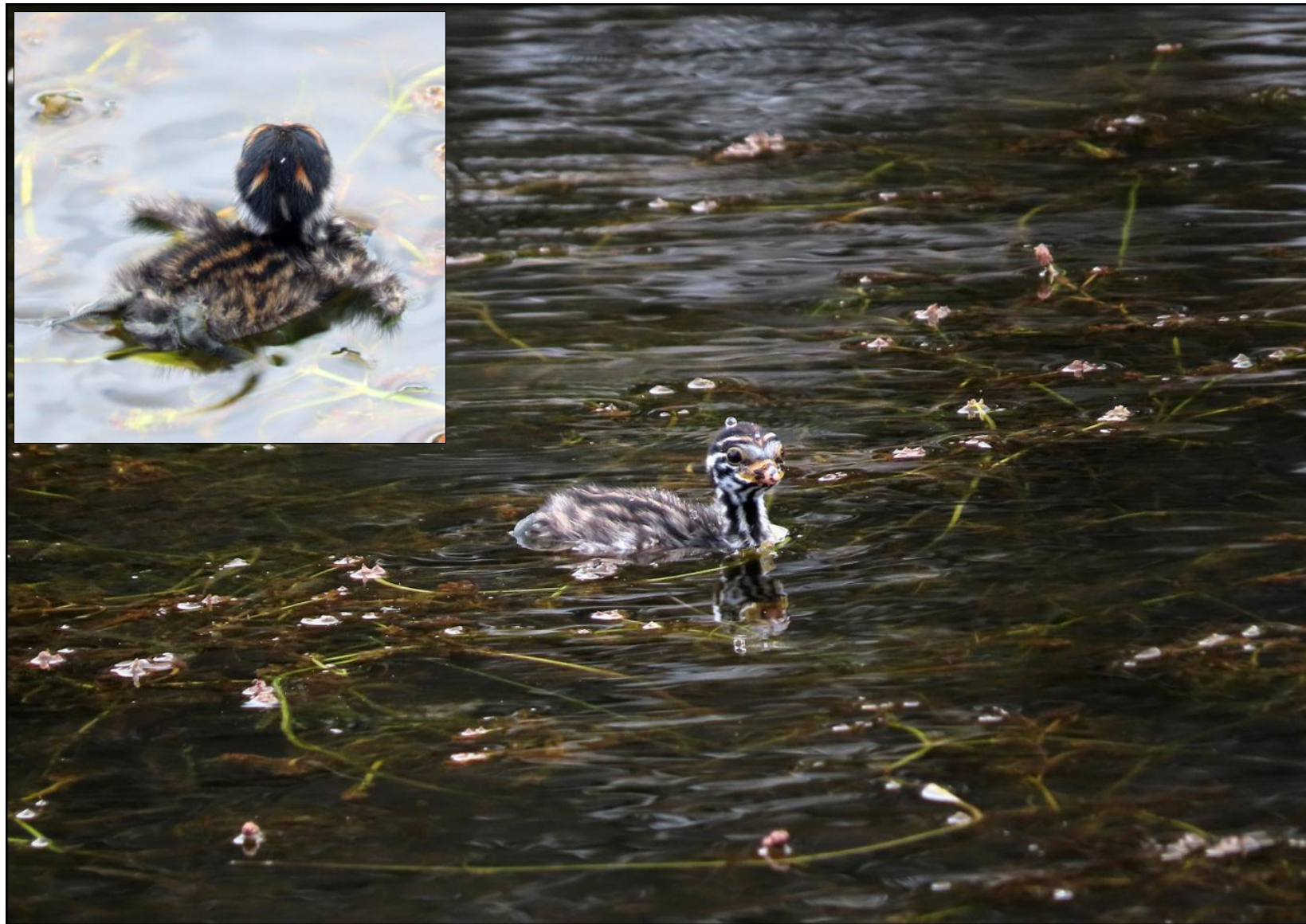
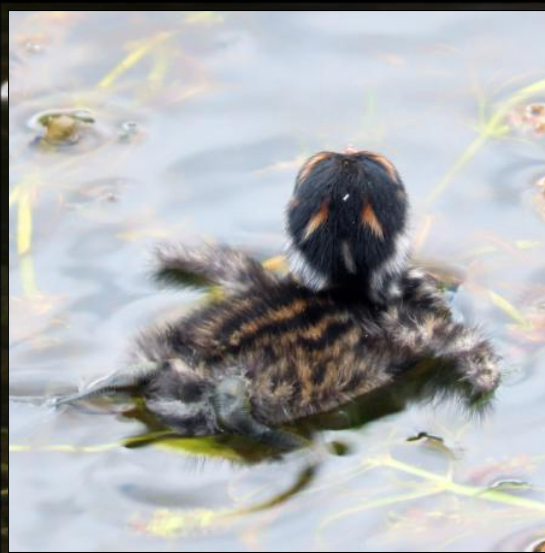
Feeding the Chicks

Chicks will hide under their parents wings if threatened. They may also crawl under their wings to rest or be fed. In this photo two chicks are poking their heads out between a parent's wings to receive food.



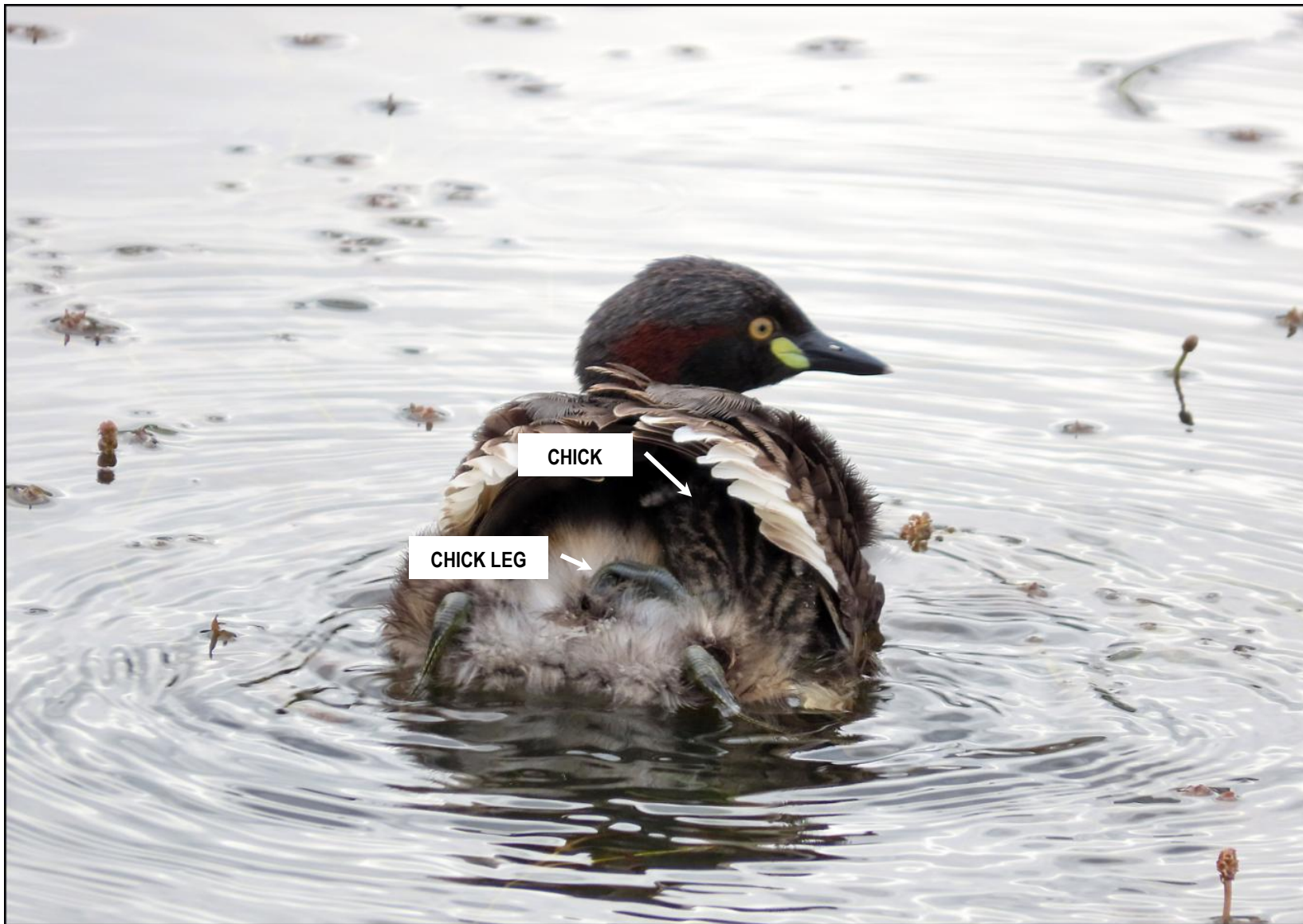
Chicks

Chicks in this species have a unique pattern across their body. Both parents raise their chicks when young, but the male leaves after a few months, leaving the female to help the chicks fully mature.



Self Sufficient

Chicks are able to feed themselves at around ten weeks old.
Until then, they are fed by their parents.



Free Ride

Grebes are very shy birds and here a striped chick can be seen hiding under its mother's right wing. One of the chick's legs is visible in this photo.



Growing Up

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Leaving Home

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'aPe'

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