**Waterfowl Identification**

**WFS 340**

**Order**  
*Anseriformes*

**Family**  
*Anatidae*

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**Subfamily Anserinae**

- **Tribe Dendrocygnini**  
  Whistling or Treeducks  
  (Not Covered)

- **Tribe Cygnini**  
  Swans  
  (Not Required)

- **Tribe Anserini**  
  True Geese

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**Mute Swan**  
*(Cygnus olor)*

- **Not native**
- Large, long-necked waterbird with entirely white plumage and black legs and feet
- Orange bill with black base; knob above bill
  - Neck held in distinctive "S" curve
  - Wings hum in flight

- 40 in. BL
- 90 in. WS

"The Most Aggressive Swan in NA"
Trumpeter Swan  
(Cygnus buccinator)

- Large, long-necked waterbird with entirely white plumage and black legs and feet
  - Long neck usually held straight up
  - Long, solid black bill that extends to eye but does not encircle it

Tundra Swan  
(Cygnus columbianus)

- Large, long-necked waterbird with entirely white plumage and black legs and feet
  - Neck usually held straight up (shorter than trumpeter)
  - Long, slightly concave black bill that extends to eye ending in a yellow “tear drop”
White-fronted Goose  
\textit{(Anser albifrons)}

- Medium-sized long-necked goose
- Mostly brown plumage
- White patch at base of pink or orange bill
- Irregular black flecking on belly
  - Orange legs and feet

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{20 in. BL} \\
\text{60 in. WS}
\end{align*} \]

\[ \text{60 in. WS} \]

White-fronted Goose  
\textit{(Anser albifrons)}

White Goose
- Entirely white plumage
- Black primaries
\[ \text{Chen caerulescens} \]

Blue Morph
- Pink bill w/ black patch along mandibles
- Throat white
- White-edged scapulars

White Morph
- Entirely white plumage
- Black primaries

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{58 in. WS} \\
\text{19 in. BL}
\end{align*} \]
**Snow Goose**  
(*Chen caerulescens*)

- Medium to large long-necked goose
- Black bill, head, and neck
- White throat patch extends up to cheek
- Brown back, upper wing, and flanks

**Canada Goose**  
(*Branta canadensis*)

- 7 subspecies
- 30-43 in. BL, 50-68 in. WS

- Medium to large long-necked goose
- Black bill, head, and neck
- White throat patch extends up to cheek
- Brown back, upper wing, and flanks

**Cackling Goose**  
(*Branta hutchinsii*) – Not Required

- 4 Subspecies
- 22 - 30 in. BL

- Small to medium long-necked goose
- Black bill, head, and neck
- White throat patch extends up to cheek
- Brown back, upper wing, and flanks
Canada Goose  
*Branta canadensis*

Cackling Goose  
*B. hutchinsii*

Subfamily *Anatinae*

**Tribe Cairinini**  
Perching Ducks

**Tribe Anatini**  
Dabbling Ducks

**Tribe Aythyini**  
Diving Ducks

**Tribe Mergini**  
Sea Ducks—Not Covered

**Tribe Oxyurini**  
Stiff-tailed Ducks

Wood Duck  
*Aix sponsa*

- Drake
  - Red bill and eye
  - Green head
  - White throat and cheek stripe
  - Chestnut breast
  - Golden flanks

- Hen
  - Gray bill
  - White teardrop around eye and edge of secondaries
  - White throat
  - Gray-brown head and body

13 in. BL  
28 in. WS
Wood Duck
(*Aix sponsa*)

- Green head
- Yellow or olive bill
- White ring around neck
- Chestnut breast
- Gray belly and flanks

Mallard
(*Anas platyrhynchos*)

- Orange bill with black central patch
- Dark cap and eye line
- Mottled brown/tan plumage

Drake

Hen

36 in. WS

16 in. BL
American Black Duck
*(Anas rubripes)*

**Drake**
- Dark brown head & body
- Dark blue speculum not bordered by white
- Greenish-yellow bill
- Orange legs

**Hen**
- Dark brown head & body
- Dark blue speculum not bordered by white
- Green bill with black saddle
- Orange legs

16 in. BL 36 in. WS

"A Forest Duck"

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American Green-winged Teal
*(Anas crecca carolinensis)*

**Drake**
- Rust colored head with green post-ocular patch
- Black bill

**Hen**
- Light brown head and body
- Dark gray bill

10.5 in. BL 24 in. WS

"The fastest duck in NA"
American Green-winged Teal
(*Anas crecca carolinensis*)
- Very small-bodied duck
- Green speculum but blue in lesser and middle coverts
- Blue-iridescent head
- White crescent patch
- Buff breast & flanks w/ spots
- Buff back & flanks w/ spots
- Light brown head
- Dark brown crown
- Mottled gray-brown body

Blue-winged Teal
(*Anas discors*)
- 11 in. BL
- Very small-bodied duck
- 24 in. WS
- Green speculum but blue in lesser and middle coverts
- Drake: Blue-iridescent head
- White crescent patch
- Buff breast & flanks w/ spots
- Hen: Light brown head
- Dark brown crown
- Mottled gray-brown body
**Gadwall**  
*Anas strepera*

- Average-sized duck with steep forehead
- White speculum (*only dabbler*) and black rump

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drake</th>
<th>Hen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black bill</td>
<td>Gray bill with orange edges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**American Wigeon**  
*Anas americana*

- Blue bill with black nail
- White secondary coverts (*gray in females*)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Drake</th>
<th>Hen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White crown</td>
<td>Mottled body w/rusty flanks contrasting w/ head &amp; neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green post-ocular stripe</td>
<td>Dusky eye patch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusty breast and flanks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Gadwall, American Wigeon
American Wigeon
(*Anas americana*)

- Dull blue bill with black culmen stripe
- Very long neck, small head and attenuated retrices
- Dark brown head
- White chest & neck extending into vertical stripe
- Bronze speculum

18.5 in. BL  
35 in. WS

Northern Pintail
(*Anas acuta*)

- Dull blue bill with black culmen stripe
- Very long neck, small head and attenuated retrices

Drake
- Dark brown head
- White chest & neck extending into vertical stripe

Hen
- Tan head lightly colored mottled body
- Bronze speculum
**Northern Shoveler**  
*Anas clypeata*

- **Drake**
  - Spatulate bill
  - Black bill
  - Green head and yellow eyes
  - White chest & chestnut sides
  - Orange bill with mottling
  - Tan head and brown eyes
  - Mottled brown body

- **Hen**
  - Green head and yellow eyes
  - White chest & chestnut sides

- **Size**
  - 14 in. BL (Body Length)
  - 31 in. WS (Wingspan)

- **Behavior**
  - A very territorial breeder

**Canvasback**  
*Aythya valisineria*

- **Drake**
  - Red eye, head, and neck
  - Black chest and breast
  - Pale gray back & flanks

- **Hen**
  - Brown eye, head, and neck
  - Brown chest and breast
  - Pale gray back and flanks

- **Size**
  - 15 in. BL (Body Length)
  - 34 in. WS (Wingspan)

- **Behavior**
  - One of the fastest ducks (>100 km/h)
Canvasback
(*Aythya valisineria*)

- Red head & neck; yellow eye!
- Blue bill w/ white ring before black tip
- Brown eye, head, and neck
- Blue-gray bill w/ faint white ring before black tip
- Smoothly rounded head
- Dark wing with grayish secondaries

Drake

Hen

14.5 in. BL
33 in. WS
13 in. BL 28 in. WS

Ring-necked Duck
(Aythya collaris)

- Bill with white semi-terminal ring
- White/cream-colored ring at base of bill

Drake
- Purple head & neck; yellow eye
- Gray flanks with vertical white finger near black chest

Hen
- Brown eye, head, and neck
- Faint white eye ring

12 in. BL 29 in. WS

Lesser Scaup
(Aythya affinis)

- Purplish head
- White on wing restricted to speculum
- Body size

Greater Scaup
(Aythya marila)

- Greenish head
- White on speculum extends to primaries
- Body size

Coastal Areas
Transcontinental
Lesser Scaup  
(*Aythya affinis*)

Greater Scaup  
(*Aythya marila*)

Common Goldeneye  
(*Bucephala clangula*)

**Drake**
- Green head & neck; yellow eye
- White circular cheek patch
- All white chest, breast, flanks
- Short, stubby bill
- Body rides low in water

**Hen**
- Reddish-brown head
- Terminus of bill light colored
- Gray body

**Transcontinental**

13 in. BL  
31 in. WS
Barrow’s Goldeneye
(Bucephala islandica)

13 in. BL
31 in. WS

• Steeply sloped forehead
• Purplish head and large crest
• White tear-drop shaped cheek patch
• White neck, breast and belly
  • Dark back

“The most territorial of NA ducks”

Barrow’s Goldeneye
(Bucephala islandica)

Bufflehead
(Bucephala albeola)

10 in. BL
24 in. WS

• “Smallest duck in North America”
• Very small dark gray bill

Drake
• Dark iridescent head
• Large white patch extending from back of head to eye
• White body

Hen
• Dull brown head
• White longitudinal stripe on cheek
• Brown body
Bufflehead
(*Bucephala albeola*)
- Black forehead, cheek, & crest
- White cheek/crest patch not extending to eye

Hooded Merganser
(*Lophodytes cucullatus*)
- Long, pointed serrated bill
- Fan-like crest, small body, yellow eye

Drake
- Black forehead, cheek, & crest
- White cheek/crest patch not extending to eye

Hen
- Brown head, neck, flanks, back, and wings w/paler breast
- Faint reddish tinge to crest
Common Merganser
(*Mergus merganser*)

**Drake**
- Long, pointed serrated bill that is thick at base
- Dark green head with no crest
- White body and black back
- Brown eye

**Hen**
- Copper-colored head with crisp chest separation
- Distinct white chin patch

Ranges from Alaska to Argentina

**Largest merganser**

Ruddy Duck
(*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

**Drake**
- Bright blue bill
- Rust colored body
- White cheek & under tail coverts

**Hen**
- Dull brown bill
- Dusky longitudinal cheek stripe
- Gray-brown body

Can move through water waveless

Ranges from Alaska to Argentina
Ruddy Duck
*(Oxyura jamaicensis)*

Practice Quiz
Bonus Question