

Waterfowl Identification

WFS 536

Order
Anseriformes




Anas acuta

Family
Anatidae

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Subfamily *Anserinae*

Tribe *Dendrocygnini*




**Whistling or
Treeducks**

Tribe *Cygnini*



Swans

Tribe *Anserini*



True Geese

Fulvous Whistling Duck

(*Dendrocygna bicolor*)





Prefers
Herbaceous
Vegetation

13 in. BL
36 in. WS

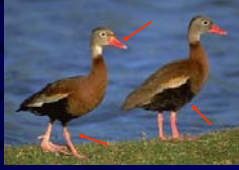
- Large, long-legged, long-necked duck
- **Dark bill and dark Legs**
- **Chestnut Belly**

"Mostly Tropical and Nocturnal"

Black-bellied Whistling Duck

(*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

Prefers
Nesting in
Trees



13 in. BL
37 in. WS

- Large, long-legged, long-necked duck
- **Bright Orange Bill and Pink Legs**
- **Black Belly**

"Mostly Tropical and Nocturnal"

Mute Swan

(*Cygnus olor*)



"The Most
Aggressive
Swan in NA"



40 in. BL
90 in. WS

- Large, long-necked waterbird with entirely white plumage and black legs and feet
- **Neck held in distinctive "S" curve**
- **Orange bill with black base; knob above bill**

Trumpeter Swan

(*Cygnus buccinator*)

45 in. BL
95 in. WS

Largest NA
Waterfowl





- 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*)

36 in. BL
85 in. WS



Waterfowl w/ the most feathers (ca. 25,000)

- Large, long-necked waterbird with entirely white plumage and black legs and feet
 - Long neck usually held straight up
- Long, slightly concave black bill that extends to eye ending in a yellow “tear drop”

White-fronted Goose
(*Anser albifrons*)


20 in. BL
60 in. WS

- 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

Snow Goose
(*Chen caerulescens*)

19 in. BL



58 in. WS

- Medium-sized Goose
- Pink bill w/ black patch along mandibles

<u>Blue Morph</u>	<u>White Morph</u>
• Throat white	• Entirely white plumage
• White-edged scapulars	• Black primaries

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

11 Races

B. c. maxima
B. c. minima



16-25 in. BL
50-68 in. WS
4-13 lbs

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

Subfamily Anatinae

Tribe Cairinini



Perching Ducks

Tribe Anatini



Dabbling Ducks

Tribe Aythyini



Diving Ducks

Tribe Mergini



Sea Ducks

Tribe Oxyurini



Stiff-tailed Ducks

Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)

13 in. BL

28 in. WS



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**

Mallard


(*Anas platyrhynchos*)

16 in. BL 36 in. WS



Drake

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




Hen

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

American Black Duck

(*Anas rubripes*)

16 in. BL 36 in. WS



Drake

- Dark brown head & body
- Dark blue speculum not bordered by white
- Greenish-yellow bill
- Bright red legs



Hen

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

"A Forest Duck"

American Green-winged Teal

(*Anas crecca carolinensis*)

10.5 in. BL 24 in. WS



Drake

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



Hen

- Light brown head and body
- Dark gray bill

"The fastest duck in NA"

Blue-winged Teal

(*Anas discors*)




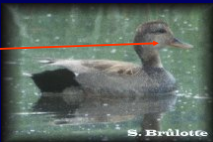

11 in. BL • Very small-bodied duck 24 in. WS

- Green speculum BUT blue in lesser and middle coverts

<u>Drake</u>	<u>Hen</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue-iridescent head • White crescent patch • Buff breast & flanks w/ spots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light brown head • Dark brown crown • Mottled gray-brown body

Gadwall

(*Anas strepera*)



14.5 in. BL 35 in. WS

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

<u>Drake</u>	<u>Hen</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gray bill with orange edges

American Wigeon

(*Anas americana*)

14 in. BL 34 in. WS



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

<u>Drake</u>	<u>Hen</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White crown • Green post-ocular stripe • Rusty breast and flanks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mottled body w/rusty flanks contrasting w/ head & neck • Dusky eye patch

Northern Pintail

(*Anas acuta*)

18.5 in. BL 35 in. WS

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

Drake

- Dark brown head
- White chest & neck extending into latitudinal stripe



Hen

- Tan head lightly colored mottled body
- Bronze speculum

Northern Shoveler

(*Anas clypeata*)

14 in. BL 31 in. WS

"A very territorially breeder"

- Spatulate bill

Drake

- Black bill
- Green head and yellow eyes
- White chest & chestnut sides

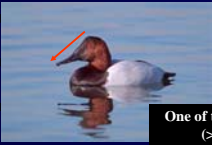

Hen

- Orange bill with mottling
- Tan head and brown eyes
- Mottled brown body

Canvasback

(*Aythya valisineria*)

15 in. BL 34 in. WS

One of the fastest ducks (>100 km/h)

- Long sloping forehead and peaked crown
- Black bill

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

Redhead

(*Aythya americana*)




14.5 in. BL
33 in. WS

- Smoothly rounded head
- Dark wing with grayish secondaries

Drake

- Red head & neck; yellow eye!
- Blue bill w/ white ring before black tip



Hen

- Brown eye, head, and neck
- Blue-gray bill w/ faint white ring before black tip

Ring-necked Duck

(*Aythya collaris*)

12 in. BL

28 in. WS

Jumps

- 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 and solid white ring before tip

Lesser Scaup

(*Aythya affinis*)

12 in. BL 29 in. WS



Transcontinental

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

Greater Scaup

(*Aythya marila*)

13 in. BL 31 in. WS





Coastal Areas

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

Common Goldeneye *(Bucephala clangula)*

13 in. BL 31 in. WS

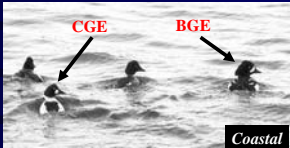
Transcontinental

- Short, stubby bill
- Body rides low in water

<p>Drake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green head & neck; yellow eye • White <u>circular</u> cheek patch • All white chest, breast, flanks 	<p>Hen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reddish-brown head • Terminus of bill light colored • Gray body
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Barrow's Goldeneye *(Bucephala islandica)*

13 in. BL 31 in. WS



“The most territorial of NA ducks”

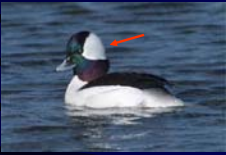

Coastal



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

Bufflehead *(Bucephala albeola)*

10 in. BL 24 in. WS






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

<p>Drake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark iridescent head • Large white patch extending from back of head to eye • White body 	<p>Hen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dull brown head • White longitudinal stripe on cheek • Brown body
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Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*)

13 in. BL 26 in. WS

- 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*)

18 in. BL 37 in. WS

- Long, pointed serrated bill that is thick at base
- Brown eye

Drake


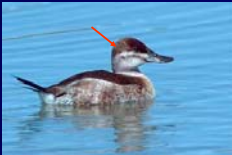
- Dark green head with no crest
- White body and black back

Hen

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

Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

11 in. BL 23 in. WS

- Small, chunky diving duck with flat, wide bill
- Long stiff retrices that are often held vertically

Drake

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

Hen

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

North American Waterfowl NOT Required for WFS 536

Emperor Goose

(*Chen canagicus*)

18 in. BL



43 in. WS

- Small Coastal Goose
- Mostly gray plumage with black and white feather edging
- White head and neck
- Black throat and foreneck
- Pink bill

Common Eider

(*Somateria mollissima*)

17 in. BL



"Largest Duck in NA"

41 in. WS



- Bill feathered along side almost to nostril
 - Long sloping forehead
- Black crown; light green back of head
- All white chest & breast; black belly & sides

Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*)

15 in. BL



36 in. WS

- Bill feathered along side almost to nostril
 - Long sloping forehead
- Pale green head w/ large white patch around eye
- Yellow bill; black under- & white upper-parts

King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*)

16 in. BL



37 in. WS

“The most northern of the eiders”



- Bill feathered partly along side
 - Steep forehead
- Pale blue crown & back of head; green cheek
- Yellow forehead outlined in black; orange bill

White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*)

16 in. BL



38 in. WS

“The largest of the scoters”



- Base of bill feathered; white speculum
 - Sloping forehead
- Entirely black plumage; small white eye patch
 - Black bill with a red tip

Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*)

14 in. BL 33 in. WS

“The most northern of the scoters”




- Round head
- Entirely black plumage
- Black bill with orange knob at base

Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)

12 in. BL 26 in. WS

“Only duck in NA to nest near fast, running water”

Threatened




- Small diving duck with short gray bill
- Two circular white patches on side of head
- Blue-gray head & body; white ocular crescent
- White stripes on neck and breast

Oldsquaw (*Clangula hyemalis*)

15 in. BL 30 in. WS

“The tenor of the Anatidae”

- Very long, black central retrices
- Black bill with pink/orange ring
- White crown and back of neck
- Black cheek patch; light brown around eye
