

TEXAS
WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE



THE CENTRAL FLYWAY COUNCIL

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WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE ***

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WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

**Published by
The Central Flyway Council**

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Colorado
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2

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FOREWORD

The North American continent, at the time of its discovery and early settlement, had a waterfowl population which was one of its many wonders. So far as the evidence shows, no equal area of the earth's surface ever supported such vast numbers of so many different ducks and geese, and this situation persisted to a time within the memory of living men. Long after the end of early settlement on this continent, hunting was free and harvest unlimited. But as the advancing tide of settlement reached into the north-central prairie states and provinces in the final years of the Nineteenth Century, radical changes began. From that time on North American waterfowl habitat began to deteriorate. Literally millions of acres of former nesting ground in the north have now been drained and put to the plow. South of the breeding range, not only agriculture, but industrialization and urbanization also have steadily reduced available resting and wintering grounds.

The progressive decline in waterfowl numbers which followed these changes in land use led eventually to the scientific management of waterfowl. Spring

shooting and market hunting were abolished in the second decade of this century. Ten years later the federal government undertook detailed regulation of migratory waterfowl so the annual harvest could be made proportional to the annual production. This was accomplished through collective effort by State, Provincial and Federal agencies of Canada, Mexico and the United States to obtain scientific information. In keeping with biological principles, most of the restrictions on bag limit and means of taking have been used with some flexibility.

Throughout the decline of all waterfowl populations some species have been underharvested. These species have declined in about the same proportion as those species on which the bulk of the harvest occurred. The Central Flyway Council feels that a refinement in waterfowl management is possible by directing hunting pressure on these previously underharvested species. This goal can only be accomplished through a knowledge of species identification by the waterfowl hunter. This booklet is a start in that direction.

In recent years most waterfowl populations have made encouraging recoveries from the low point of the early 1930's, when disastrous drouths, drainage and changing land use patterns took their toll. Still drainage continues, and industrialization is further reducing the habitat. Hunting continues as a major sport, however, 6 maximum utilization of all species must be accomplished if hunting is to be fostered at a reasonable level of freedom and enjoyment.

The very future of duck hunting depends upon a more effective partnership between regulatory agencies and the many thousands of gunners whom

they serve. The federal agency is charged by treaty and law with husbandry of the waterfowl resource. The State agencies assist in the responsibility. However, they need the help of all sportsmen, and particularly they need the understanding help of waterfowlers who know their birds and who keep abreast of current plans for management. To foster this essential cooperation between agencies and gunners is a primary purpose of this booklet.

Identification

Identification of birds in the field, and particularly on the wing, as ducks and geese are usually seen over decoys, is easier than appears at first try. The trick is to note, in addition to shape and approximate size, the general arrangement of light and dark areas in the plumage, for nearly every species has its own distinctive pattern. With practice, the eye can be trained to pick out this pattern at a glance, and within a short time recognition becomes automatic. The illustrations which follow, one for each important species of Central Flyway waterfowl, make use of this practice of "pattern recognition" in the two or more flying birds at the top of the page. Actually in many cases recognition by flight pattern and flight characteristics will soon become evident.

In each drawing of ducks the flying female leads, with the drake following, for this is the usual order in a mated pair during winter, and spring. On the lower part of each page are shown enlarged heads, adult male on the left, female on the right, with an immature head added when the difference is substantial, or with certain details which further aid

identification when the bird is in hand. All ducks, both flying pairs and heads, are drawn in direct proportion to each other, but geese, because of their larger size, are reduced one third from the duck proportion.

Drawings of geese show only a single enlarged head on each plate because male and female geese are alike in color pattern. Finally, some birds which are not "waterfowl" in the strict sense of the word, but are nevertheless often seen, are shown in the last few illustrations. Some of them (loon, grebe, and cormorant), although protected at all times, are included because they are ⁷ often mistakenly shot for waterfowl. Others (rails, coot, and snipes) are included because they occupy wet-land habitat along with ducks.

Individual Problems

Although "pattern recognition" simplifies the problem of identification for the waterfowler, there are still several complications to be considered. Of these, the most troublesome by far is the matter of moults. The adult drakes of most species of ducks, very soon after the hens begin to incubate eggs, moult the bright body-feathers of their breeding dress and assume an "eclipse" plumage which resembles the year-round coloration of the female. This dull plumage, serving as a protective factor during the wing-moult which follows, is retained until the new flight feathers are fully developed. By September a second body-moult is under way by which these old drakes assume the bright courting plumage of late fall and winter. During the same

period, the young males of the year, whose juvenile plumage likewise resembles the female dress, are also assuming the adult plumage. Following December 1 most difficulties of identification by reason of the moult are resolved, but in early fall the hunter may be puzzled by some of the transition plumages noted on birds in his bag. Identification during this period may appear extremely difficult, but it is well to remember that wing patterns remain virtually unchanged regardless of stage of the moult.

The remaining problems of identification require only brief mention for they appear but rarely. In the first place, this booklet includes all species of ducks and geese which occur in numbers in any part of the Central Flyway, but omits others which may be occasional visitors. Second, hybrids are rather frequent among waterfowl, and some are extremely puzzling. In such special cases as these your local wildlife manager or biologist may be able to help.

The following publications contain further information for the hunter interested in additional facts of natural history, distribution and description:

Kortright, "Ducks, Geese and Swans of North America"

Peterson, "A Field Guide to the Birds"

Pough, "Audubon Water Bird Guide"

Nonhunting Enjoyments

For the nonhunter—and many avid outdoorsmen prefer to watch rather than shoot—this guide to

waterfowl can provide enjoyment beyond the simple pleasure of seeing ducks and geese. Most of us remember seeing some “oldtimer” identify flights or singles or rafts of birds at what seemed impossible distances. The ability to do this does not really stem from some mystic communion with the birds. Rather, through such a booklet as this the waterfowling layman can develop the same powers in himself. For the cost of a little concentrated effort he can gain great personal satisfaction and the increased understanding that comes from resolving “ducks” into the wide variety of individual species they really are.

Further, some knowledge of waterfowl distribution, annual abundance and the approximate source and destination of the ducks and geese he hunts, will often help the waterfowler understand the overall picture of waterfowl management. For both administrative and biological purposes of waterfowl management, the United States is divided into four flyways—the Atlantic, the Mississippi, the Pacific, and the one for which this booklet is written, the Central. Each flyway has its own segment of the waterfowl population, subject to different conditions and pressures than the populations of other flyways, and therefore is administered as a separate unit. In general this is a sound premise, but it must not be considered too rigid. Since the flyway principle is in part an administrative device, it is important principally in fall and winter when most North American waterfowl are within the United States. As the wintering populations begin to move northward in the spring, many species disperse throughout the nesting grounds of the northern states and Canada. Much overlapping of the populations from various

flyways in which the birds wintered occurs.

Research and Management

Methods developed over the years and applied systematically supply information which is necessary to intelligent management. Breeding pair and brood surveys indicate the distribution of nesting populations, and their success from year to year in hatching and raising their broods of young. The banding of waterfowl, carefully aged, sexed, and released, gives specific information on the travels of individual birds, on mortality, and on some phases of hunting pressure. Periodic air-counts in late summer and fall serve to measure, in a rough way, the distribution of different species during southward migration, and the rate of movement. Hunter-bag checks, carried out in the field during the shooting season, complement fall counts with regard to distribution at given points. A post-season sampling of hunter success, by mail, supplies data on additional aspects of hunting pressure, and gives an index of total kill. Finally, the annual winter count indicates the distribution and relative size of populations remaining after the shooting season ends. In combination, these methods are steadily increasing our knowledge of North American waterfowl, and in particular are providing the sort of "running inventory" which is the first requirement for intelligent management of this resource.

The Central Flyway Council is the clearing house for coordinated planning in this Flyway. It is a delegate organization, including in its membership administrative and technical representatives from the

fish and game departments of all states and provinces in the flyway. A Flyway Representative has been assigned from the Fish and Wildlife Service. This group is concerned with all phases of waterfowl research and management in the flyway. The Central Flyway Council provides for an effective interchange of information between member agencies and assists in the coordination and integration of flyway management programs. These purposes have been furthered by regular meetings for the open discussion of flyway problems.

Flyway Council Approach

In early 1953, the Council and the Fish and Wildlife Service, acting jointly, adopted a flyway program which has been expanded and improved as factual information and experience dictate. This program outlines objectives and suggests methods and priorities for accomplishment. State game departments now pattern their activities around the flyway program.

Extending the cooperative idea, the Council has joined with corresponding organizations from the other flyways to form the National Waterfowl Council, which annually participates in the official discussion of continental and flyway management problems and regulations. From their inception, the flyway councils ¹⁰ have been successful in promoting understanding and teamwork so necessary for the perpetuation of the waterfowl resource.

Your Responsibility

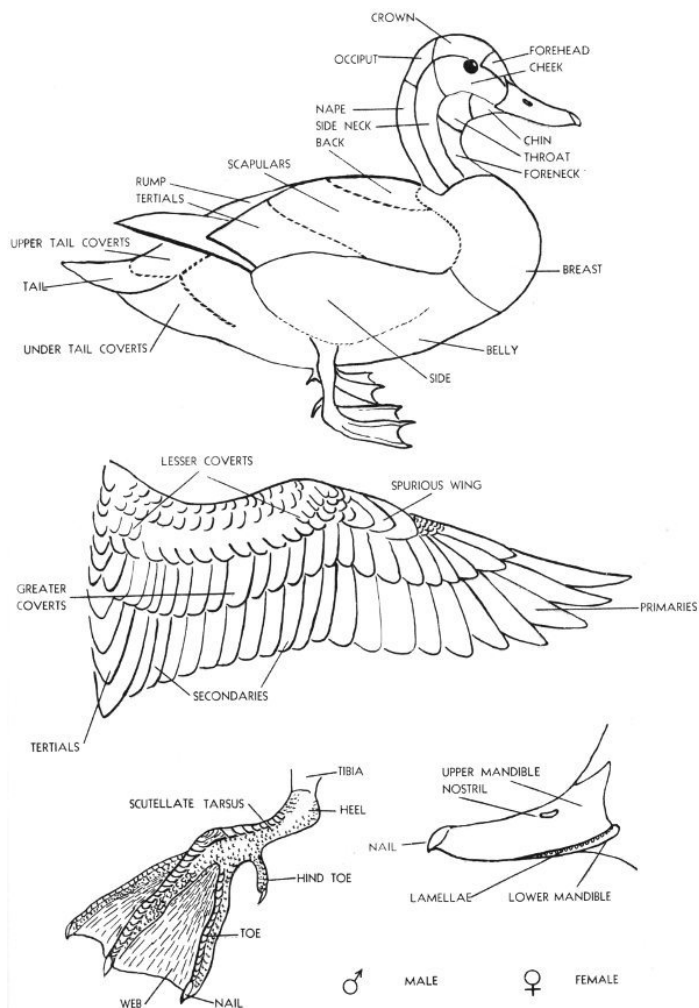
As an individual reader of this booklet, you have a part to play in the essential partnership between agencies and waterfowlers. Your part may be small and may take various forms, depending on the circumstances, but certainly it is there. Perhaps, having sent in one or two waterfowl bands in the past and having experienced the initial novelty of hearing where your birds came from, you now forget to report them. The next time you have this choice between reporting or forgetting a band, remember that its prompt recovery, with full data, might be the clue to some missing fact to improve your future gunning.

Hunter bag checks indicate crippling losses in the Central Flyway run to an average of about one quarter of the total kill. In certain marshes, early in the season, crippling can greatly exceed the one quarter loss. Shooting at birds on the fringe of effective killing range is a crippling practice and, moreover, as you probably know from observation is contagious. The usual effect of one "sky shooter" in a marsh is to force other gunners nearby to attempt impossible shots which increase crippling losses and soon ruin shooting for everybody. Controlling such practices lies solely in the hands of individual gunners. With large-gauge guns of modified bore, the shot-pattern that will produce kills should be consistent up to forty yards, a distance well within capabilities of the average gunner to hold and compute necessary lead. Successful duck shooting is a matter of good judgment. To avoid errors in judgment drive stakes in front of your blind at distances of thirty and forty yards to indicate safe

killing range. Hold your fire until the feet of an incoming duck can be seen distinctly, for only then will the bird be in range. Good sportsmanship in duck blinds and marshes is equally as important as remaining friendly with your home neighbors. Train a good retrieving dog, and add to your day's pleasure by watching him at work on downed birds.

Above all, remember that the future of waterfowling is partly in your hands—that your good sportsmanship and cooperation are as necessary to the work of the Central Flyway Council and its member agencies as their activities are to you.

PARTS OF A DUCK



CROWN
 FOREHEAD
 OCCIPUT
 CHEEK
 NAPE
 SIDE NECK
 BACK

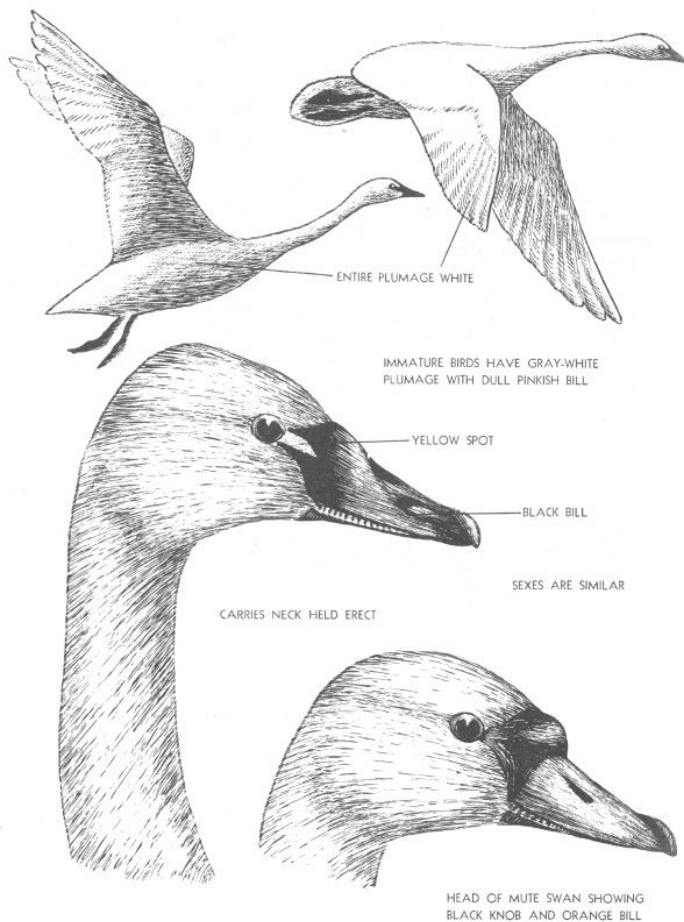
SCAPULARS
RUMP
CHIN
THROAT
FORENECK
TERTIALS
UPPER TAIL COVERTS
BREAST
TAIL
UNDER TAIL COVERTS
BELLY
SIDE

LESSER COVERTS
SPURIOUS WING
GREATER COVERTS
PRIMARIES
SECONDARIES
TERTIALS

TIBIA
SCUTELLATE TARSUS
HEEL
HIND TOE
TOE
WEB

NAIL
LAMELLAE
LOWER MANDIBLE
UPPER MANDIBLE
NOSTRIL
NAIL
MALE
FEMALE

WHISTLING SWAN

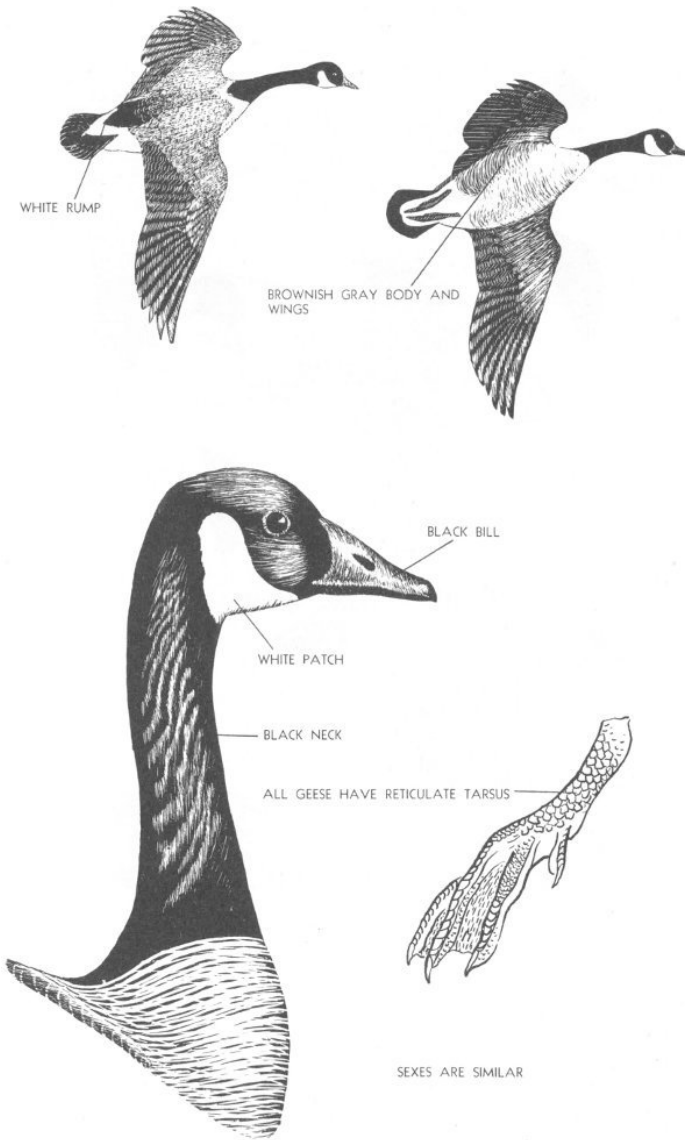
(*Cygnus columbianus*)

ENTIRE PLUMAGE WHITE
 IMMATURE BIRDS HAVE GRAY-WHITE PLUMAGE WITH
 DULL PINKISH BILL
 YELLOW SPOT
 BLACK BILL
 SEXES ARE SIMILAR

CARRIES NECK HELD ERECT
HEAD OF MUTE SWAN SHOWING BLACK KNOB AND
ORANGE BILL

13

CANADA GOOSE
(*Branta canadensis*)

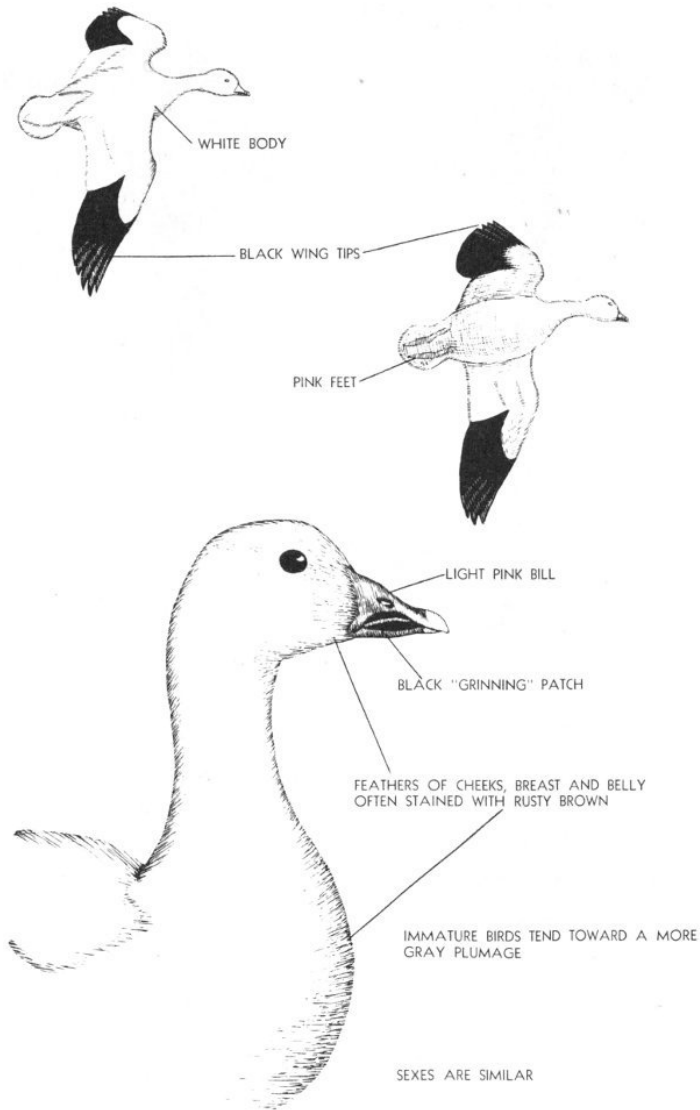


WHITE RUMP
BROWNISH GRAY BODY AND WINGS

BLACK BILL
WHITE PATCH
BLACK NECK
ALL GEESE HAVE RETICULATE TARSUS
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

14

SNOW GOOSE
(Chen hyperborea)

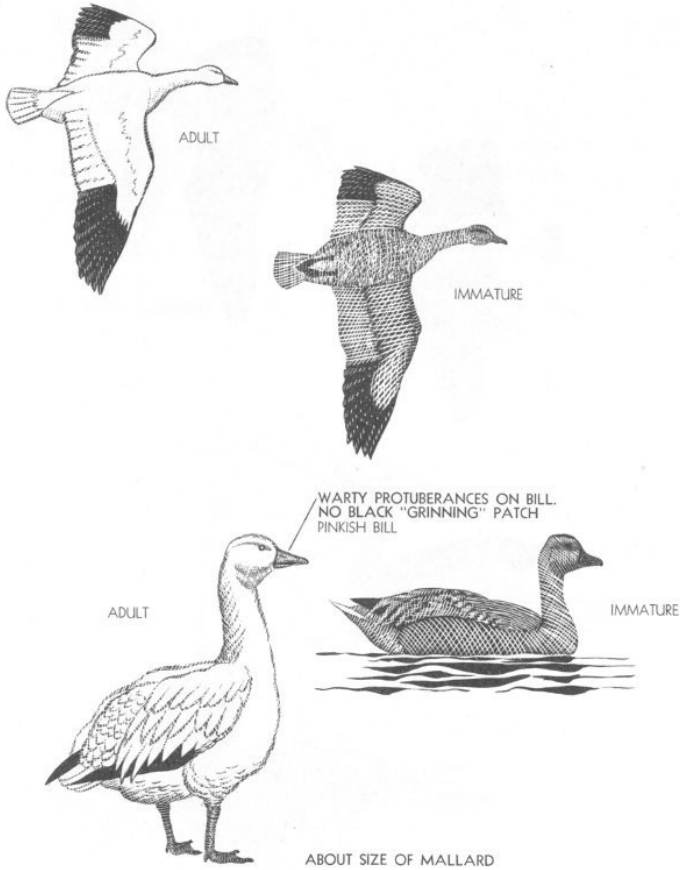


WHITE BODY
BLACK WING TIPS
PINK FEET

LIGHT PINK BILL
BLACK "GRINNING" PATCH
FEATHERS OF CHEEKS, BREAST AND BELLY OFTEN
STAINED WITH RUSTY BROWN
IMMATURE BIRDS TEND TOWARD A MORE GRAY
PLUMAGE
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

15

ROSS GOOSE
(*Chen rossi*)



ABOUT SIZE OF MALLARD

ADULT

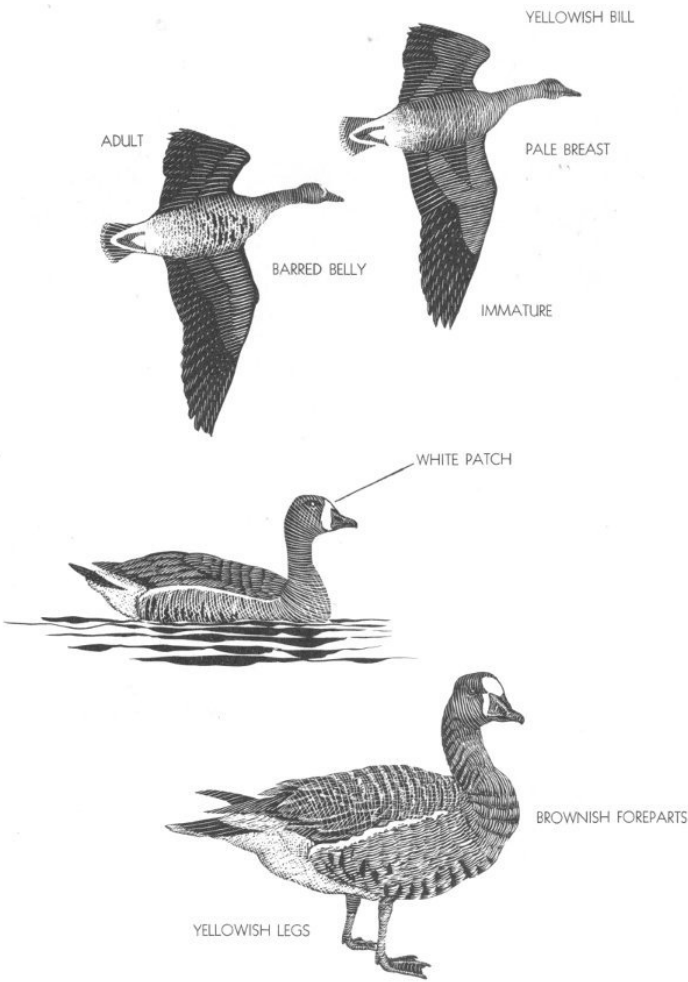
WARTY PROTUBERANCES ON BILL.

NO BLACK "GRINNING" PATCH

PINKISH BILL

IMMATURE

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE
(*Anser albifrons*)



ADULT

BARRED BELLY

IMMATURE

YELLOWISH BILL

PALE BREAST

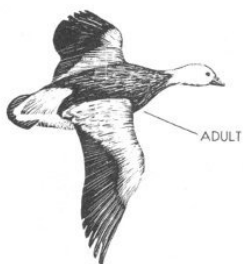
WHITE PATCH

BROWNISH FOREPARTS

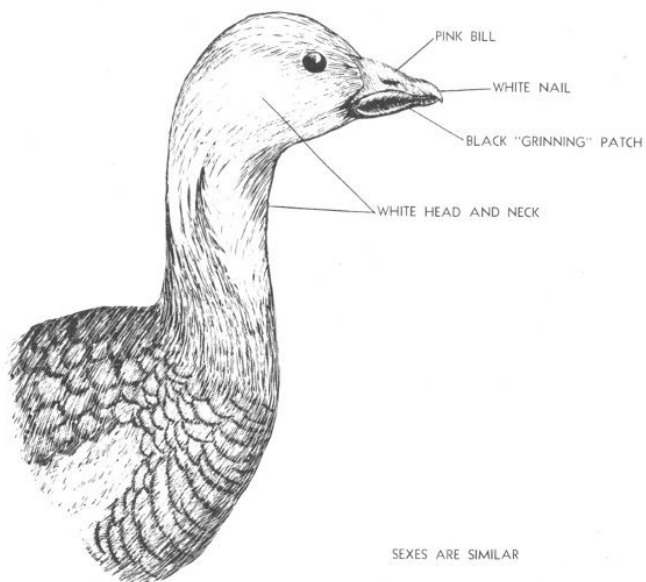
YELLOWISH LEGS

17

BLUE GOOSE
(*Chen caerulescens*)



ADULT HAS PINK FEET, IMMATURE DUSKY FEET



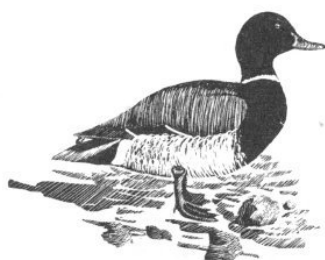
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

ADULT
PINK FEET, IMMATURE DUSKY FEET
IMMATURE
PINK BILL
WHITE NAIL
BLACK "GRINNING" PATCH

WHITE HEAD AND NECK
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

18

PUDDLE OR DABBLING DUCK
CHARACTERISTICS
(Anatinae)



LEGS PLACED NEAR CENTER OF BODY

TIP UP TO FEED, RARELY DIVE



GENERALLY HAVE METALLIC SPECULUM



USUALLY SWIM WITH TAIL HELD CLEAR OF WATER



HIND TOE NOT LOBED



FOOT SMALLER THAN IN DIVING DUCKS



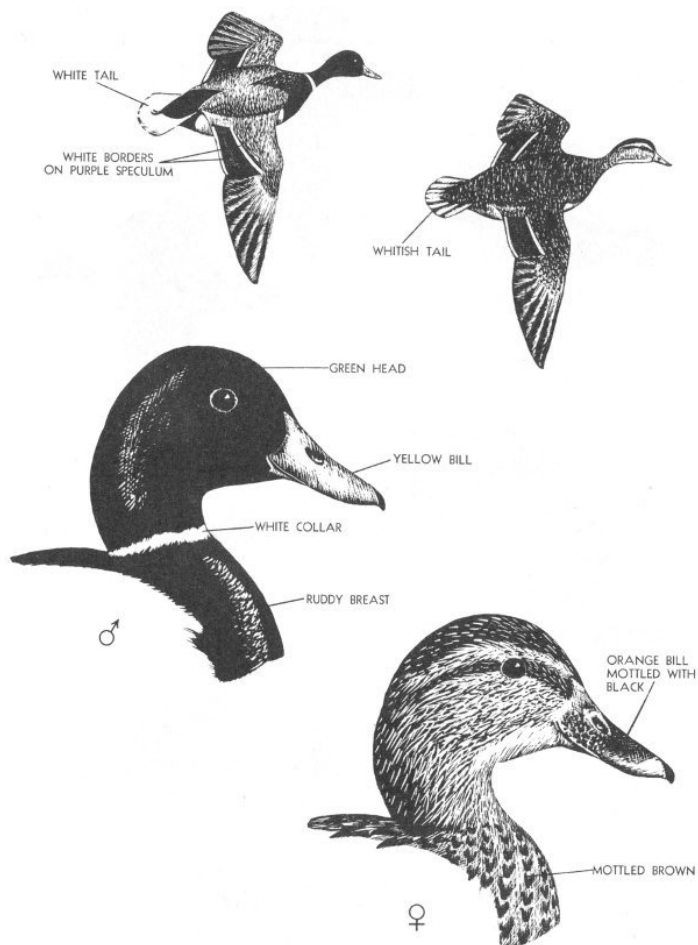
SPRING INTO AIR ON TAKE OFF

TIP UP TO FEED, RARELY DIVE
LEGS PLACED NEAR CENTER OF BODY
GENERALLY HAVE METALLIC SPECULUM
USUALLY SWIM WITH TAIL HELD CLEAR OF WATER

FOOT SMALLER THAN IN DIVING DUCKS
HIND TOE NOT LOBED
SPRING INTO AIR ON TAKE OFF

19

MALLARD
(*Anas platyrhynchos*)



WHITE TAIL
WHITE BORDERS ON PURPLE SPECULUM
WHITISH TAIL

♂

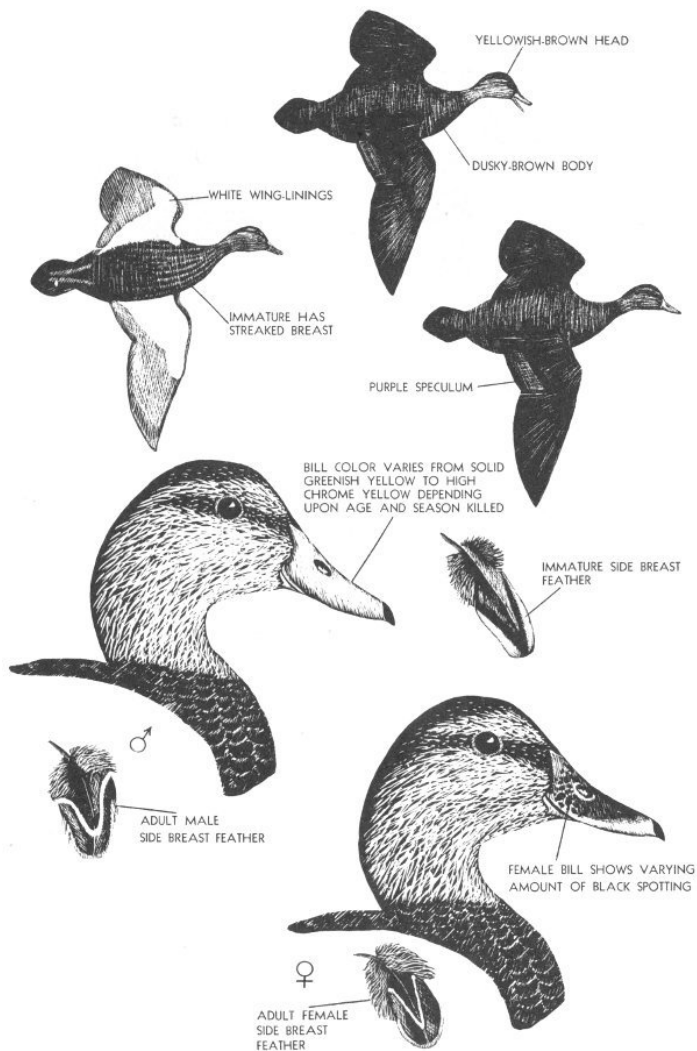
GREEN HEAD
YELLOW BILL
WHITE COLLAR
RUDDY BREAST

♀

ORANGE BILL MOTTLED WITH BLACK
MOTTLED BROWN

20

BLACK DUCK
(*Anas rubripes*)



YELLOWISH-BROWN HEAD
DUSKY-BROWN BODY
WHITE WING-LININGS
IMMATURE HAS STREAKED BREAST
PURPLE SPECULUM

IMMATURE SIDE BREAST FEATHER
ADULT MALE SIDE BREAST FEATHER
ADULT FEMALE SIDE BREAST FEATHER

♂

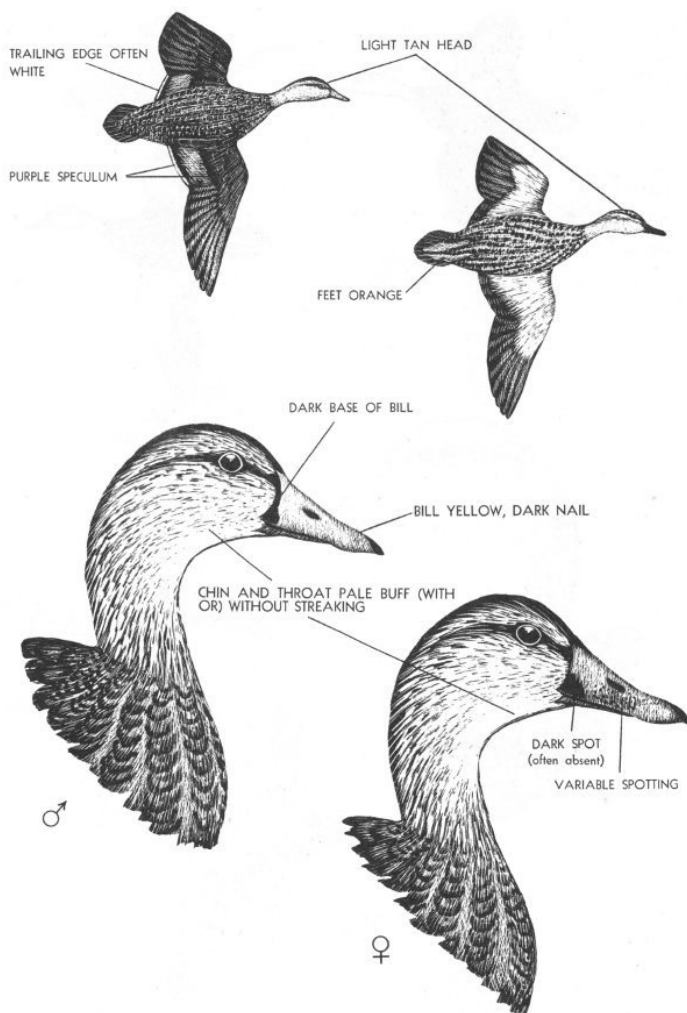
BILL COLOR VARIES FROM SOLID GREENISH
YELLOW TO HIGH CHROME YELLOW
DEPENDING UPON AGE AND SEASON KILLED

♀

FEMALE BILL SHOWS VARYING AMOUNT OF BLACK
SPOTTING

21

MOTTLED DUCK **(*Anas fulvigula*)**



TRAILING EDGE OFTEN WHITE
LIGHT TAN HEAD
PURPLE SPECULUM
FEET ORANGE
CHIN AND THROAT PALE BUFF (WITH OR) WITHOUT
STREAKING

♂

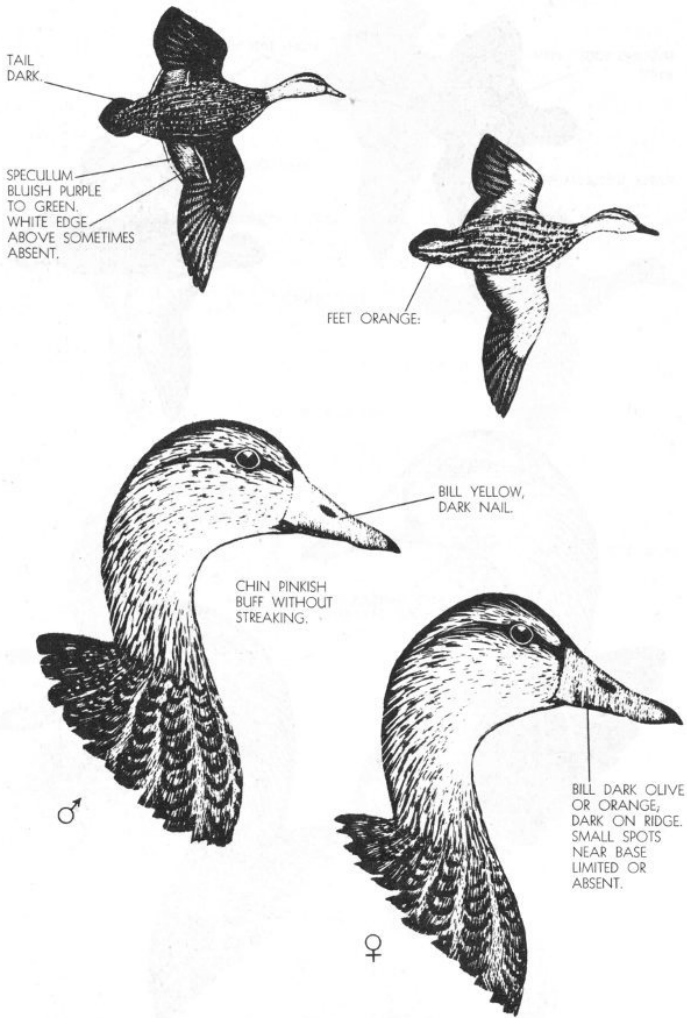
DARK BASE OF BILL
BILL YELLOW, DARK NAIL

♀

DARK SPOT (often absent)
VARIABLE SPOTTING

22

NEW MEXICAN DUCK **(*Anas diazi novimexicana*)**



TAIL DARK.

SPECULUM BLUISH PURPLE TO GREEN. WHITE EDGE ABOVE SOMETIMES ABSENT.

FEET ORANGE.

♂

BILL YELLOW, DARK NAIL.

CHIN PINKISH BUFF WITHOUT STREAKING.

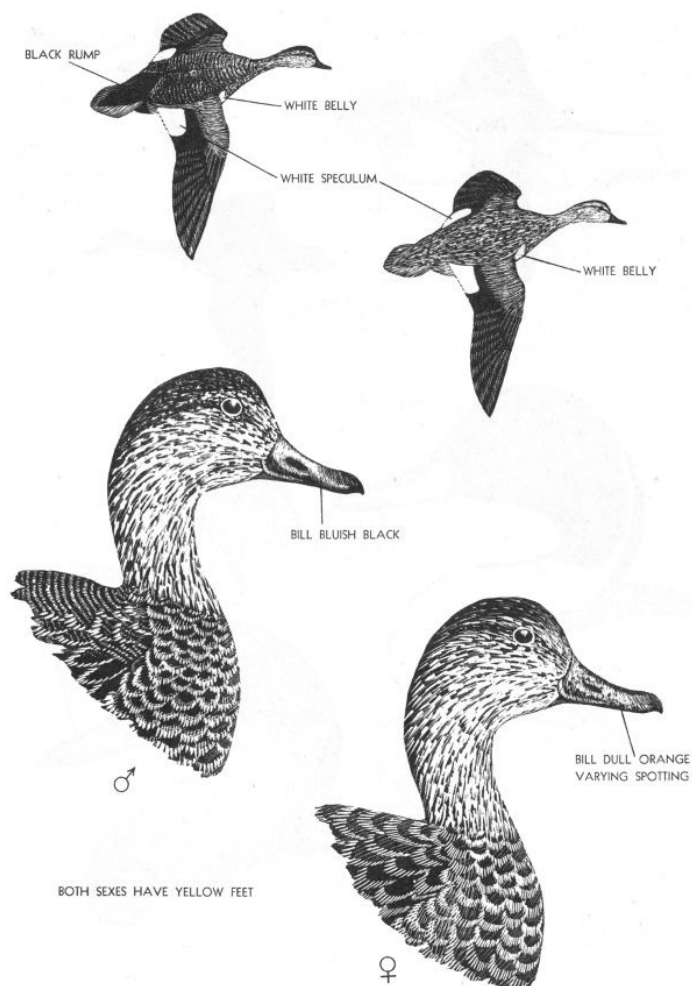
♀

BILL DARK OLIVE OR ORANGE, DARK ON RIDGE.

SMALL SPOTS NEAR BASE LIMITED OR ABSENT.

23

GADWALL
(*Anas strepera*)



BLACK RUMP
WHITE BELLY
WHITE SPECULUM
WHITE BELLY
BOTH SEXES HAVE YELLOW FEET
♂

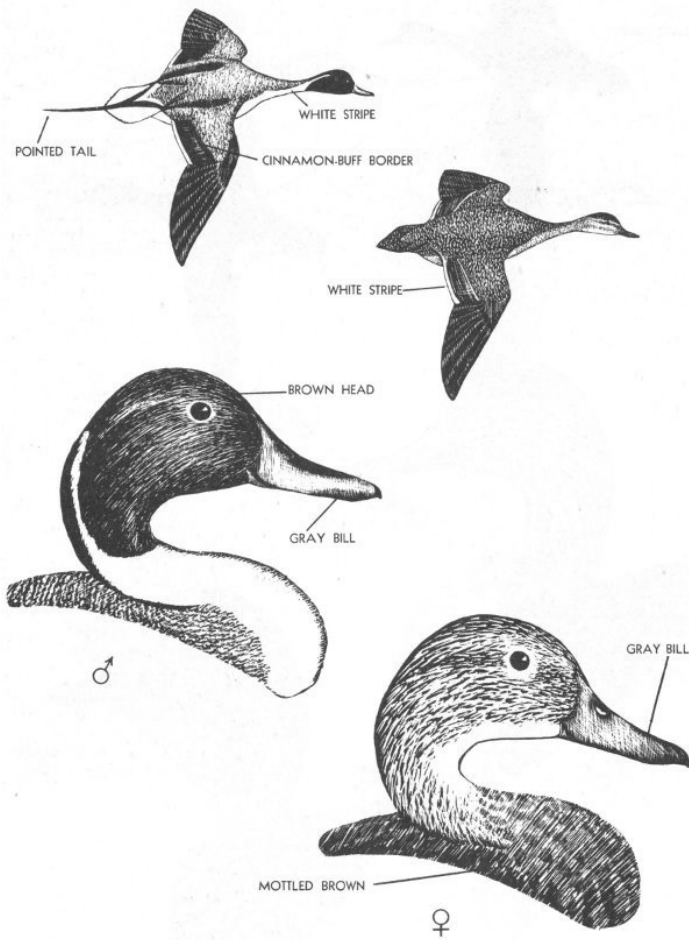
BILL BLUISH BLACK

♀

BILL DULL ORANGE VARYING SPOTTING

24

PINTAIL
(*Anas acuta*)



WHITE STRIPE
CINNAMON-BUFF BORDER
POINTED TAIL
WHITE STRIPE

♂

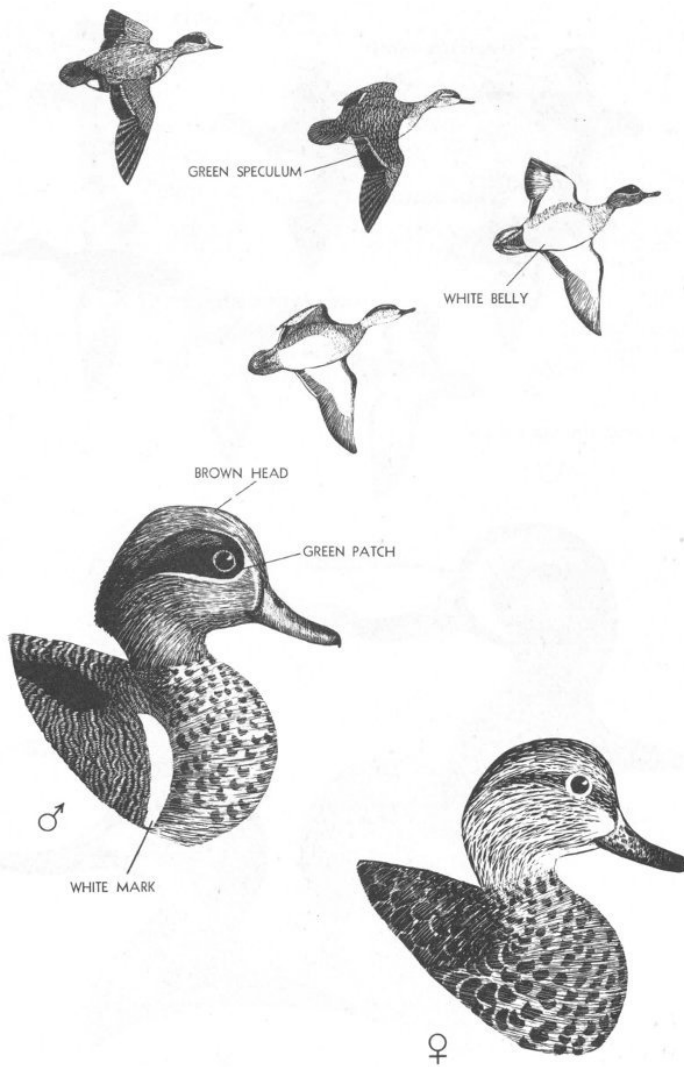
BROWN HEAD
GRAY BILL

♀

GRAY BILL
MOTTLED BROWN

25

GREEN-WINGED TEAL
(*Anas carolinensis*)



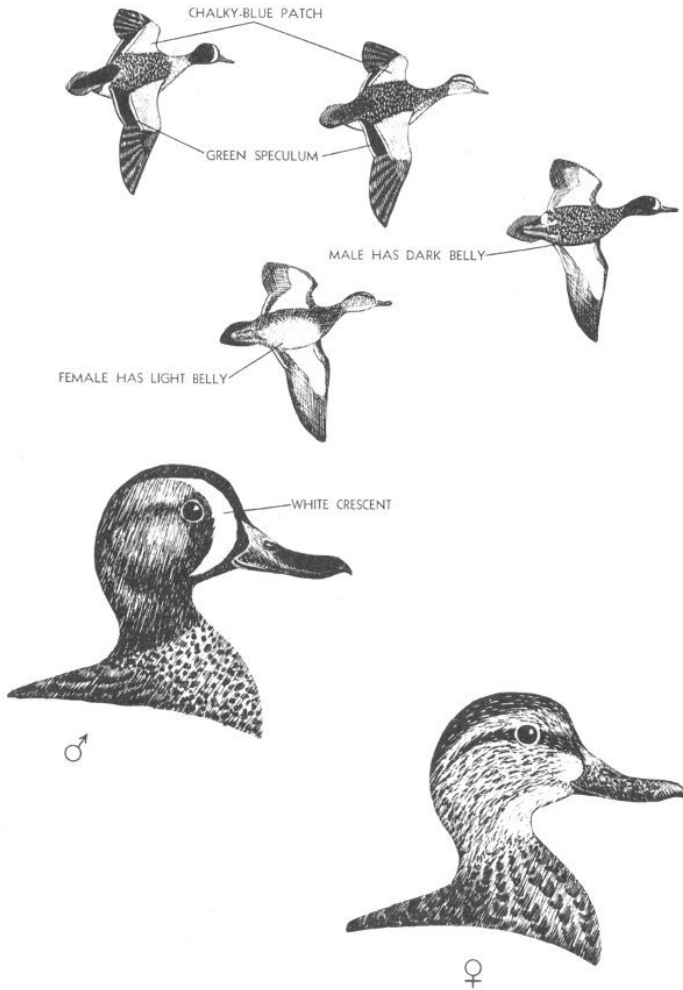
GREEN SPECULUM
WHITE BELLY
♂
BROWN HEAD
GREEN PATCH

WHITE MARK

♀

26

BLUE-WINGED TEAL
(*Anas discors*)



CHALKY-BLUE PATCH
GREEN SPECULUM

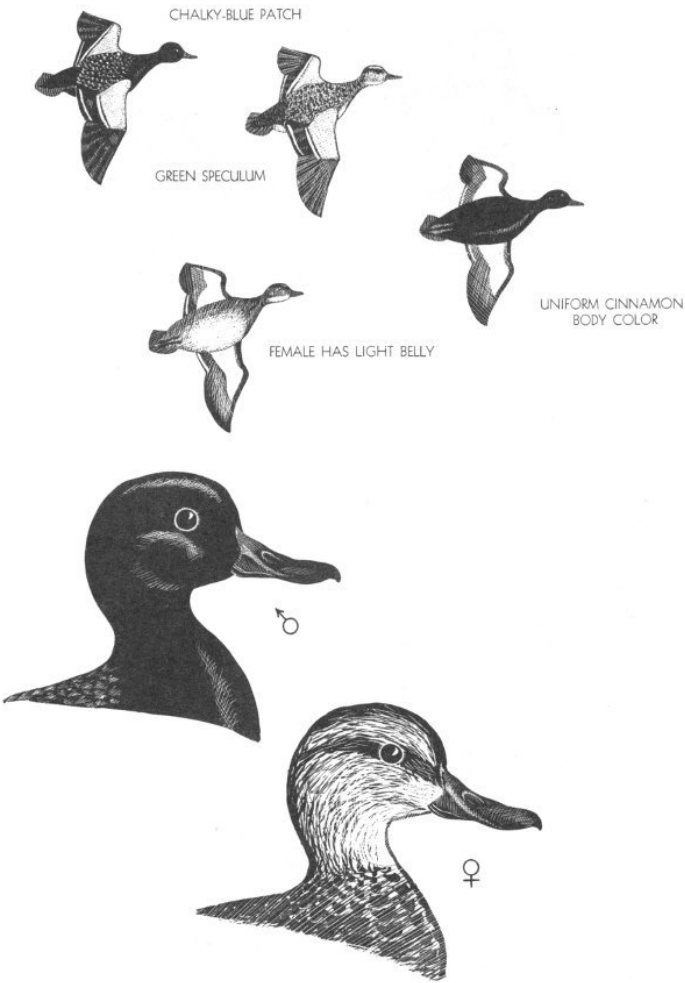
♂

MALE HAS DARK BELLY
WHITE CRESCENT

♀

FEMALE HAS LIGHT BELLY

CINNAMON TEAL
(*Anas cyanoptera*)



CHALKY-BLUE PATCH

GREEN SPECULUM

♂

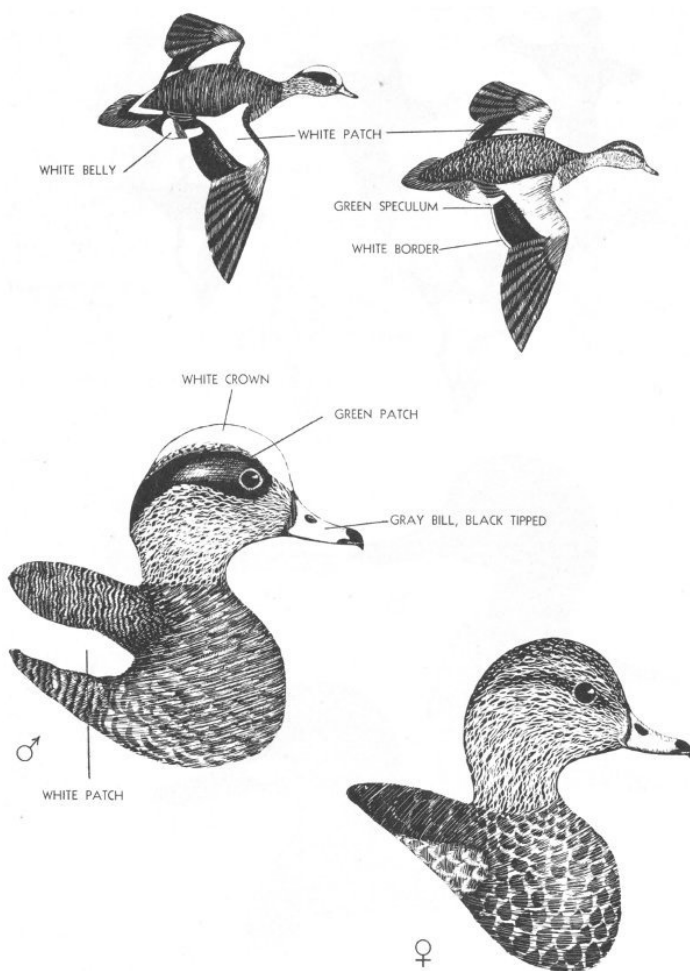
UNIFORM CINNAMON BODY COLOR

♀

FEMALE HAS LIGHT BELLY

28

AMERICAN WIDGEON (Baldpate)
(*Mareca americana*)



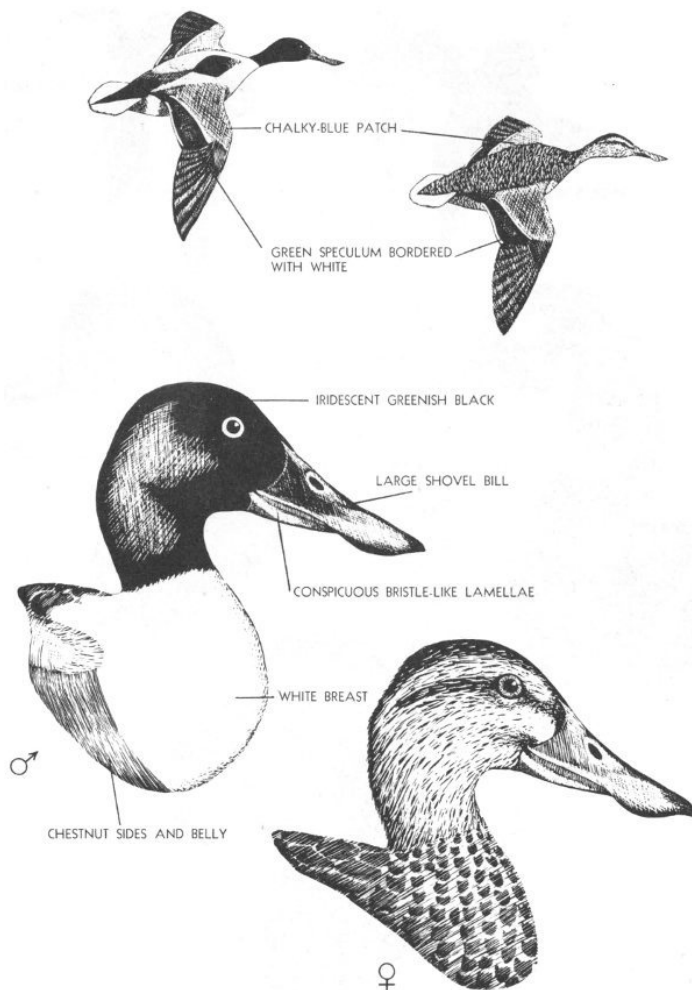
WHITE PATCH
 WHITE BELLY
 GREEN SPECULUM
 WHITE BORDER
 ♂
 WHITE CROWN
 GREEN PATCH
 GRAY BILL, BLACK TIPPED

WHITE PATCH

♀

29

SHOVELER
(*Spatula clypeata*)



CHALKY-BLUE PATCH

GREEN SPECULUM BORDERED WITH WHITE

♂

IRIDESCENT GREENISH BLACK

LARGE SHOVEL BILL

CONSPICUOUS BRISTLE-LIKE LAMELLAE

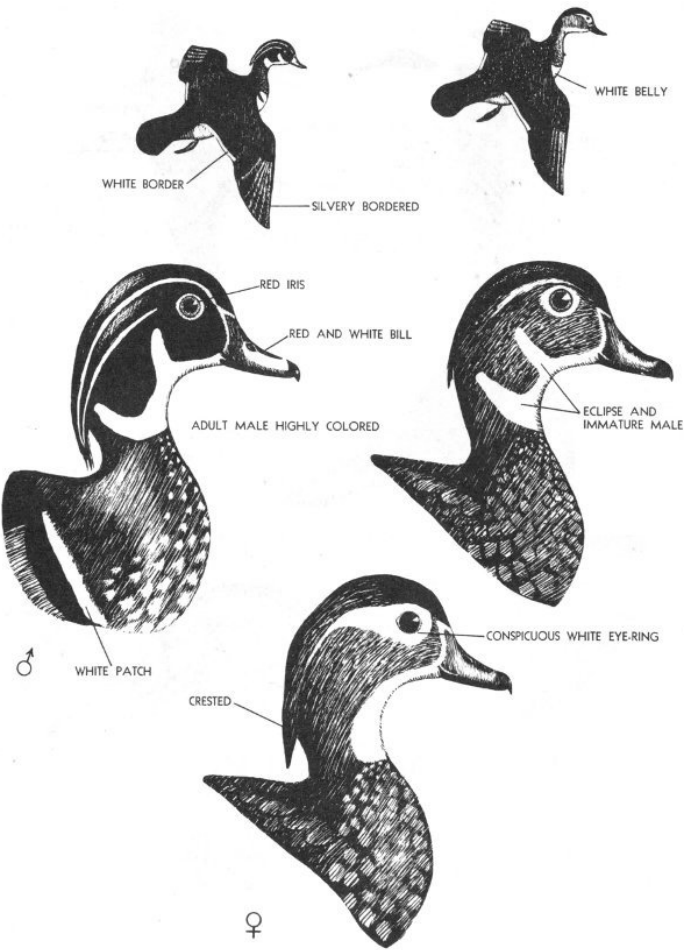
WHITE BREAST

CHESTNUT SIDES AND BELLY

♀

30

WOOD DUCK
(*Aix sponsa*)



WHITE BORDER
WHITE BELLY
SILVERY BORDERED

♂

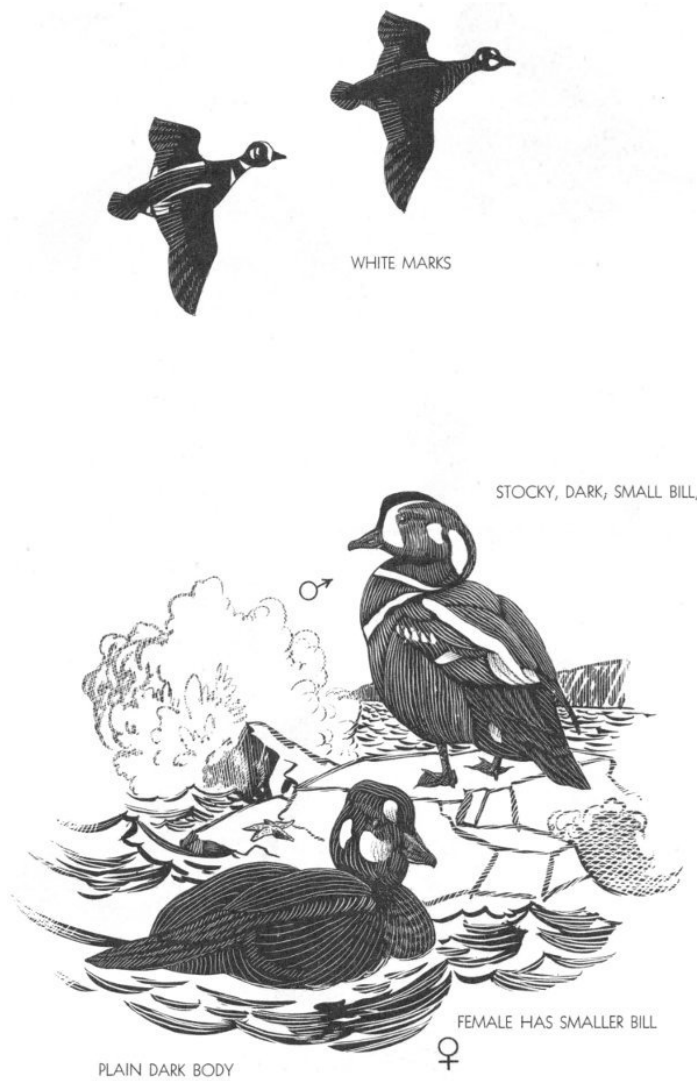
RED IRIS
RED AND WHITE BILL
ADULT MALE HIGHLY COLORED
ECLIPSE AND IMMATURE MALE
WHITE PATCH

♀

CONSPICUOUS WHITE EYE-RING
CRESTED

31

HARLEQUIN DUCK
(*Histrionicus histrionicus*)



WHITE MARKS

♂

STOCKY, DARK, SMALL BILL

♀

FEMALE HAS SMALLER BILL
PLAIN DARK BODY

32

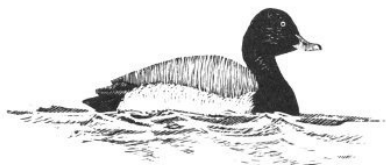
DIVING DUCK CHARACTERISTICS **(Aythyinae)**



LEGS SET NEAR REAR OF BODY



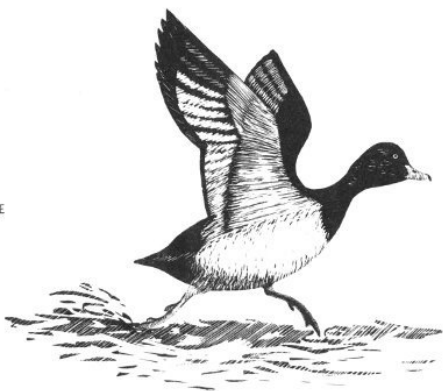
DIVE COMPLETELY UNDER WATER TO SECURE FEED



USUALLY SWIM WITH TAIL HELD CLOSE TO WATER



HIND TOE LOBED, FOOT LARGE



ON TAKE OFF PATER ALONG SURFACE FOR SOME DISTANCE

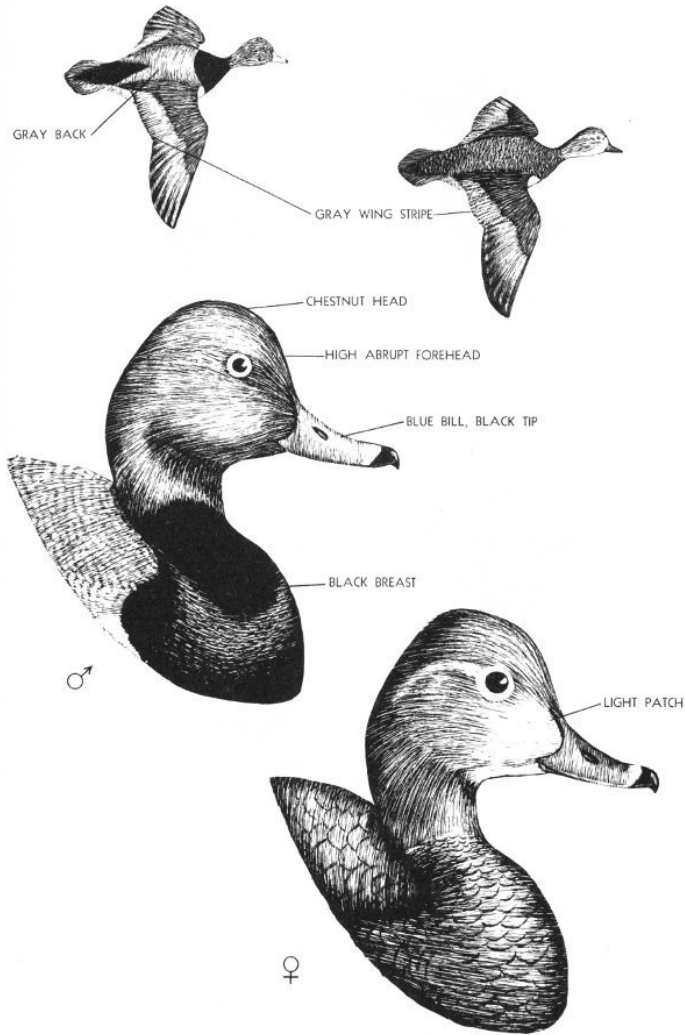
SPECULUM GENERALLY DULL, LACKS IRIDESCENCE

LEGS SET NEAR REAR OF BODY
 DIVE COMPLETELY UNDER WATER TO SECURE FEED
 SPECULUM GENERALLY DULL, LACKS IRIDESCENCE
 USUALLY SWIM WITH TAIL HELD CLOSE TO WATER

HIND TOE LOBED, FOOT LARGE
ON TAKE OFF PATTERN ALONG SURFACE FOR SOME
DISTANCE

33

REDHEAD
(*Aythya americana*)



GRAY BACK
GRAY WING STRIPE
♂

CHESTNUT HEAD
HIGH ABRUPT FOREHEAD

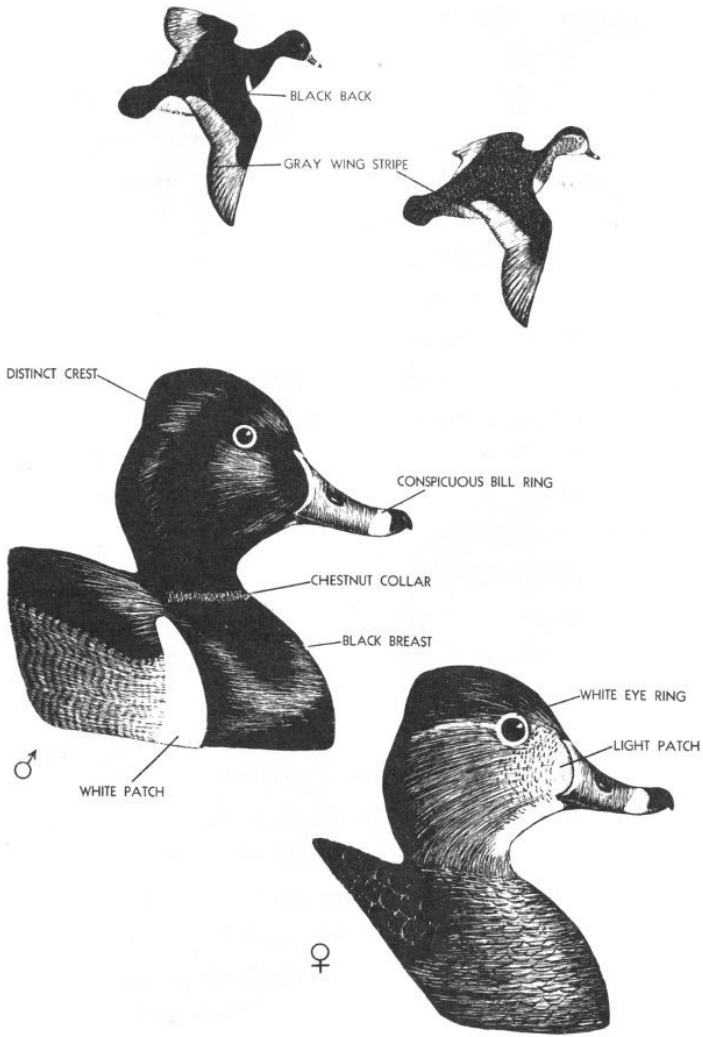
BLUE BILL, BLACK TIP
BLACK BREAST

♀

LIGHT PATCH

34

RING-NECKED DUCK
(*Aythya collaris*)



BLACK BACK
GRAY WING STRIPE
♂
DISTINCT CREST
CONSPICUOUS BILL RING
CHESTNUT COLLAR

BLACK BREAST

WHITE PATCH

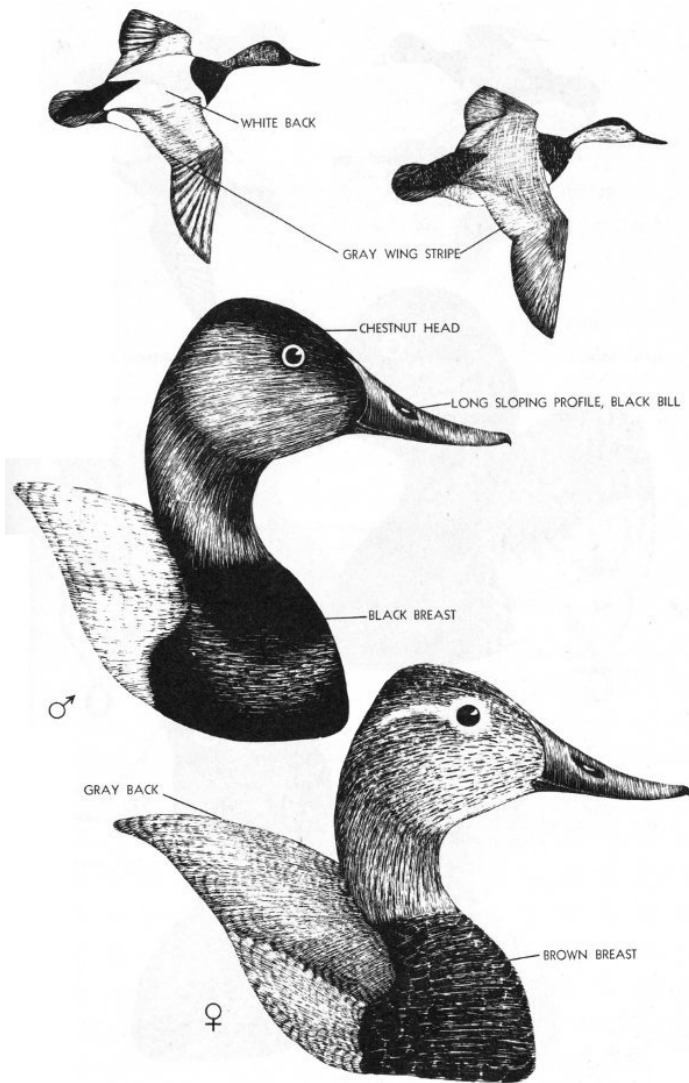
♀

WHITE EYE RING

LIGHT PATCH

35

CANVASBACK
(*Aythya valisineria*)



WHITE BACK
GRAY WING STRIPE
♂
CHESTNUT HEAD

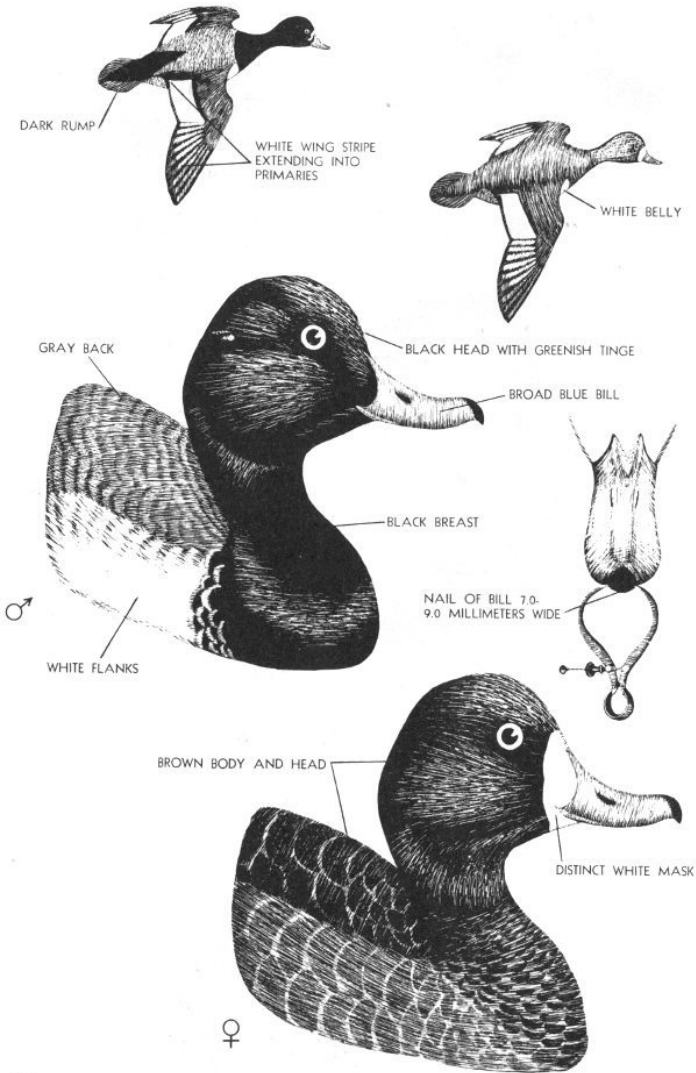
LONG SLOPING PROFILE, BLACK BILL
BLACK BREAST

♀

GRAY BACK
BROWN BREAST

36

GREATER SCAUP
(*Aythya marila*)



DARK RUMP
 WHITE WING STRIPE EXTENDING INTO PRIMARIES
 WHITE BELLY
 NAIL OF BILL 7.0-9.0 MILLIMETERS WIDE
 ♂

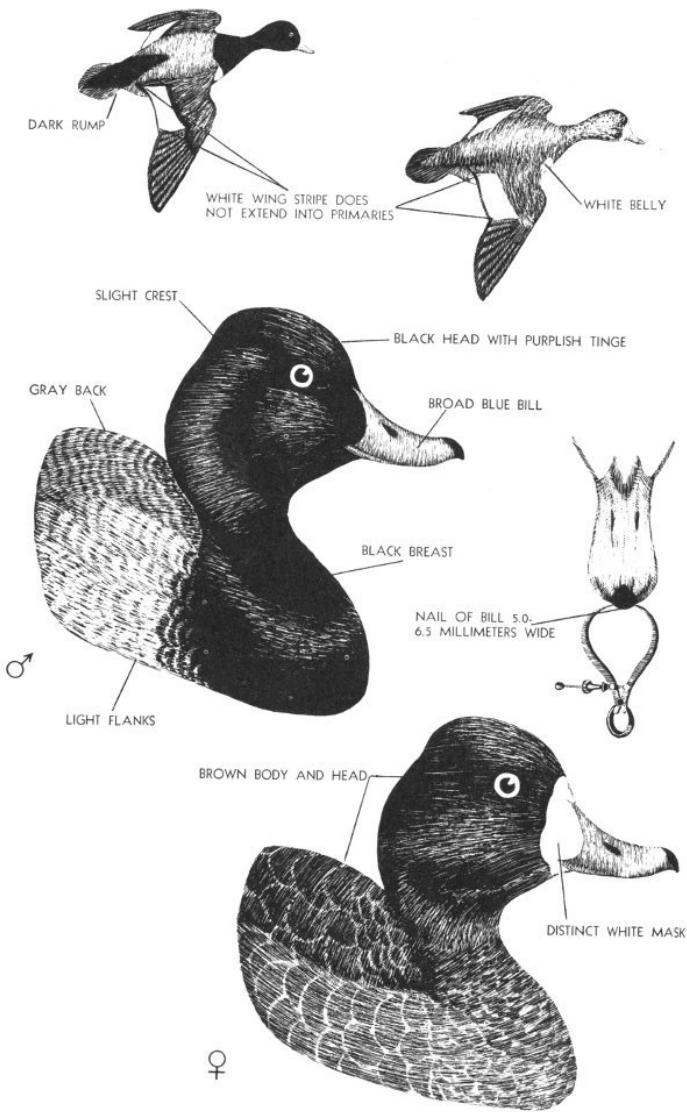
GRAY BACK
BLACK HEAD WITH GREENISH TINGE
BROAD BLUE BILL
BLACK BREAST
WHITE FLANKS

♀

BROWN BODY AND HEAD
DISTINCT WHITE MASK

37

LESSER SCAUP
(*Aythya affinis*)



DARK RUMP
WHITE WING STRIPE DOES NOT EXTEND INTO
PRIMARIES

WHITE BELLY

NAIL OF BILL 5.0-6.5 MILLIMETERS WIDE

♂

SLIGHT CREST

GRAY BACK

BLACK HEAD WITH PURPLISH TINGE

BROAD BLUE BILL

BLACK BREAST

LIGHT FLANKS

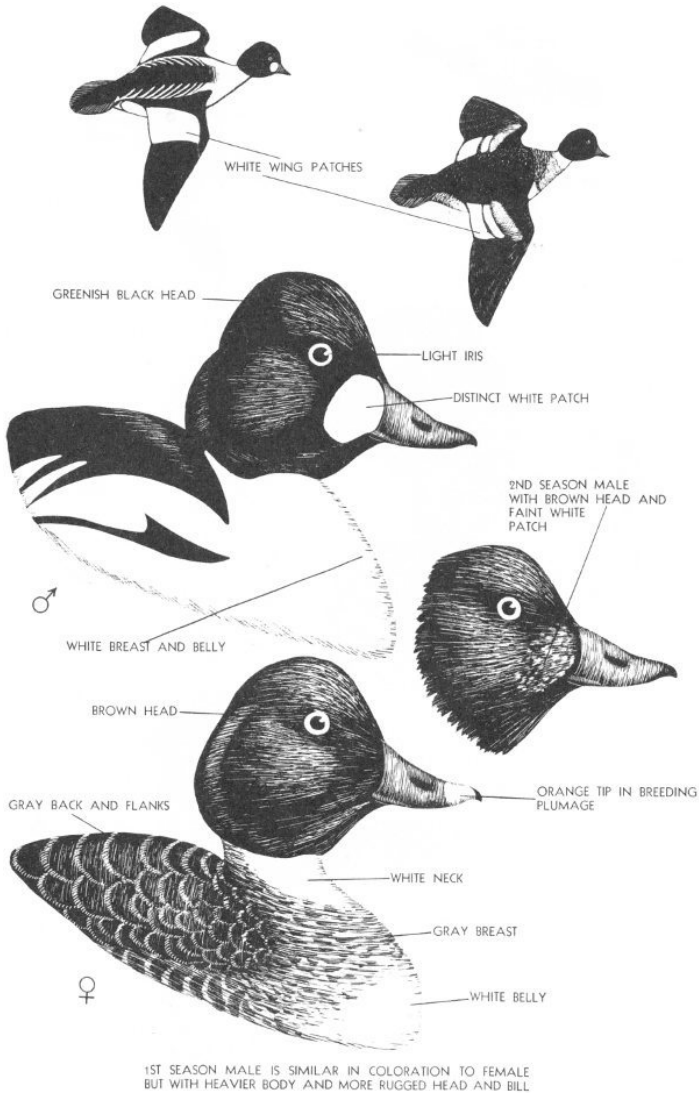
♀

BROWN BODY AND HEAD

DISTINCT WHITE MASK

38

COMMON GOLDENEYE
(*Bucephala clangula*)



WHITE WING PATCHES

♂

GREENISH BLACK HEAD

LIGHT IRIS

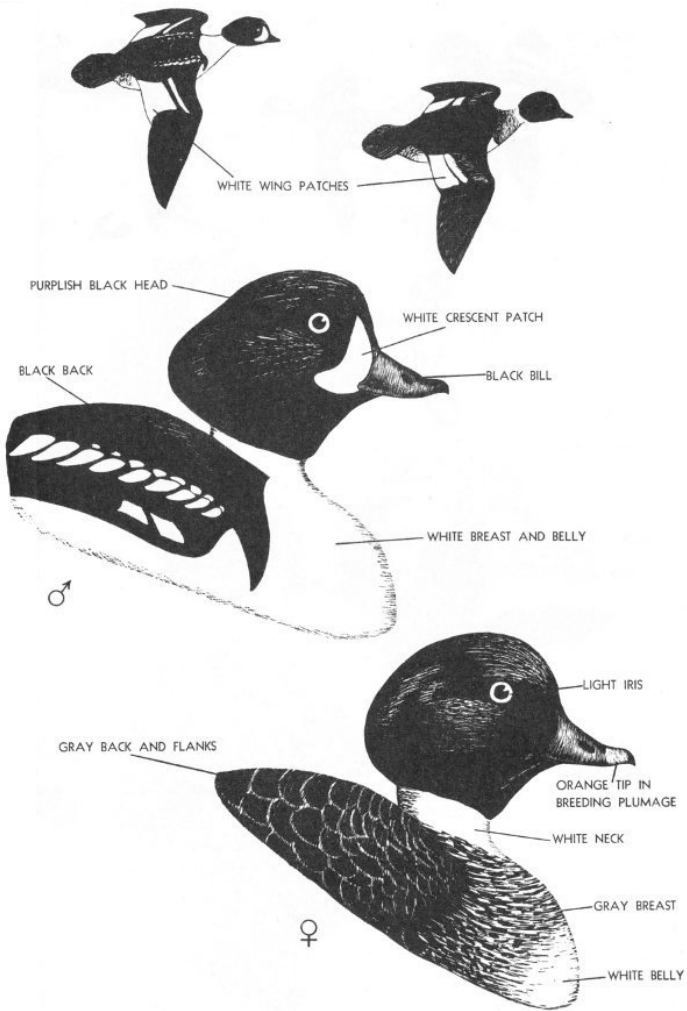
DISTINCT WHITE PATCH
WHITE BREAST AND BELLY
2ND SEASON MALE WITH BROWN HEAD AND FAINT
WHITE PATCH

♀

BROWN HEAD
ORANGE TIP IN BREEDING PLUMAGE
GRAY BACK AND FLANKS
WHITE NECK
GRAY BREAST
WHITE BELLY
1ST SEASON MALE IS SIMILAR IN COLORATION TO
FEMALE BUT WITH HEAVIER BODY AND MORE
RUGGED HEAD AND BILL

39

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE **(*Bucephala islandica*)**



WHITE WING PATCHES

♂

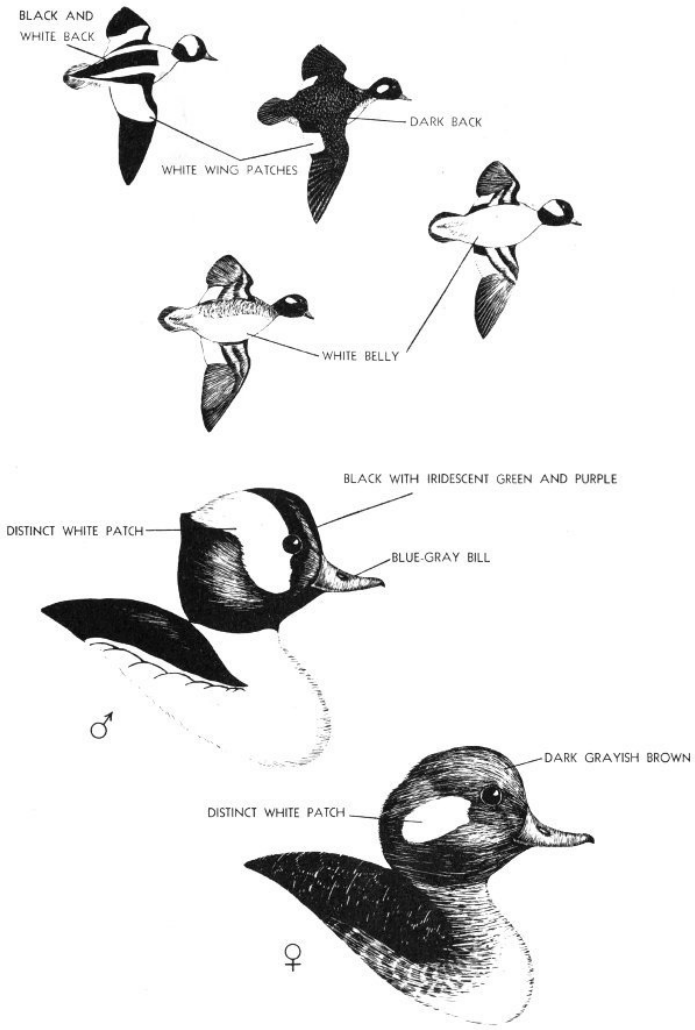
PURPLISH BLACK HEAD
 WHITE CRESCENT PATCH
 BLACK BACK
 BLACK BILL
 WHITE BREAST AND BELLY

♀

LIGHT IRIS
GRAY BACK AND FLANKS
ORANGE TIP IN BREEDING PLUMAGE
WHITE NECK
GRAY BREAST
WHITE BELLY

40

BUFFLEHEAD
(*Bucephala albeola*)



BLACK AND WHITE BACK
DARK BACK
WHITE WING PATCHES
WHITE BELLY
♂
BLACK WITH IRIDESCENT GREEN AND PURPLE

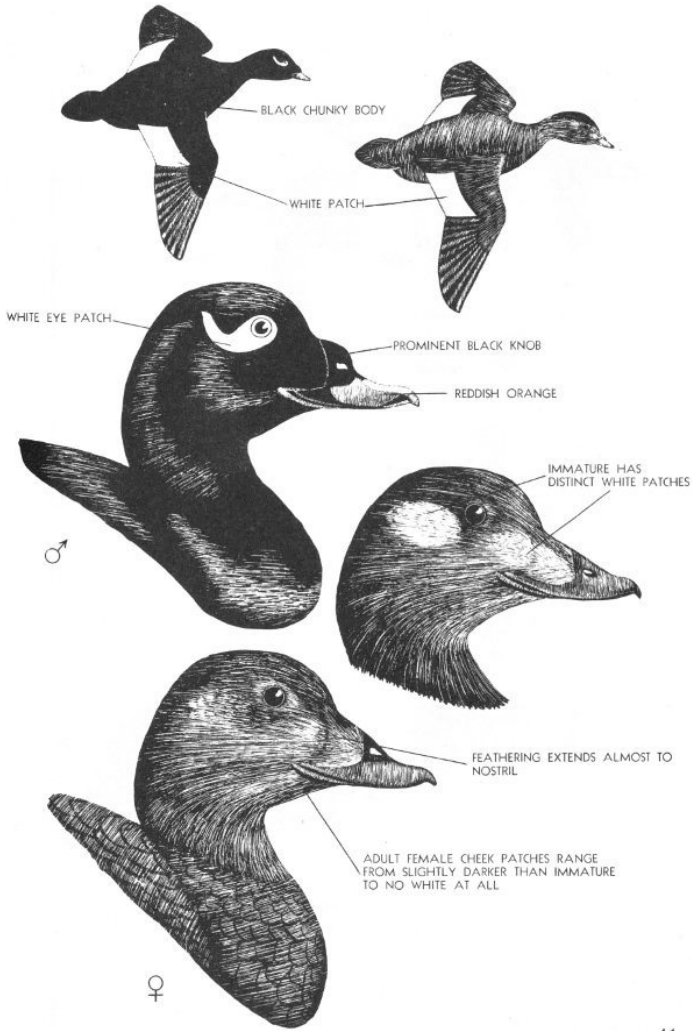
DISTINCT WHITE PATCH
BLUE-GRAY BILL

♀

DARK GRAYISH BROWN
DISTINCT WHITE PATCH

41

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER
(*Melanitta deglandi*)



BLACK CHUNKY BODY

WHITE PATCH

♂

WHITE EYE PATCH

PROMINENT BLACK KNOB

REDDISH ORANGE

IMMATURE HAS DISTINCT WHITE PATCHES

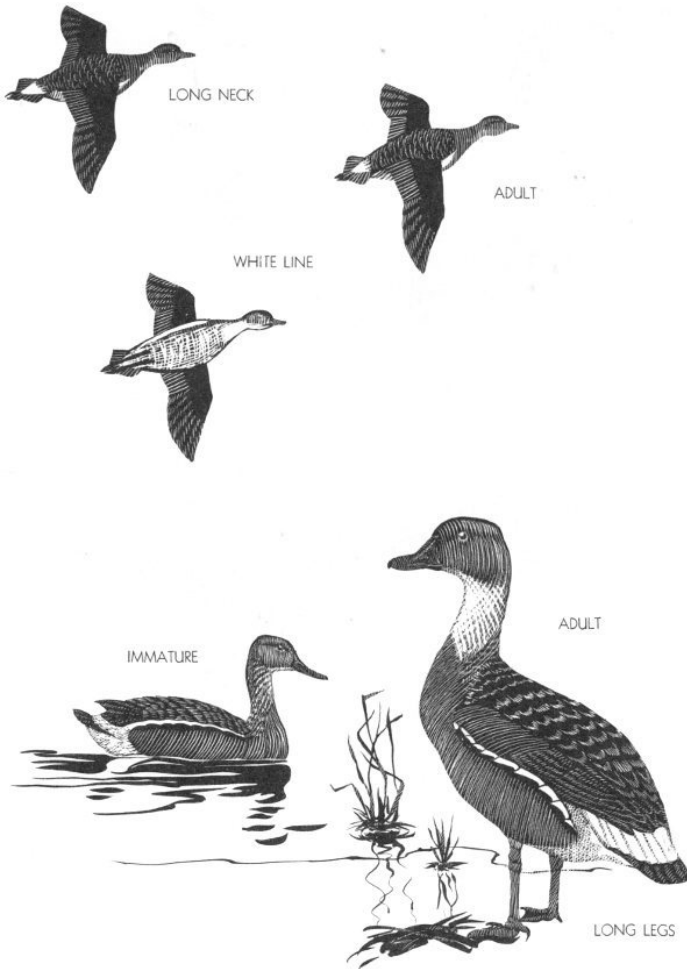
♀

FEATHERING EXTENDS ALMOST TO NOSTRIL

ADULT FEMALE CHEEK PATCHES RANGE FROM
SLIGHTLY DARKER THAN IMMATURE TO NO
WHITE AT ALL

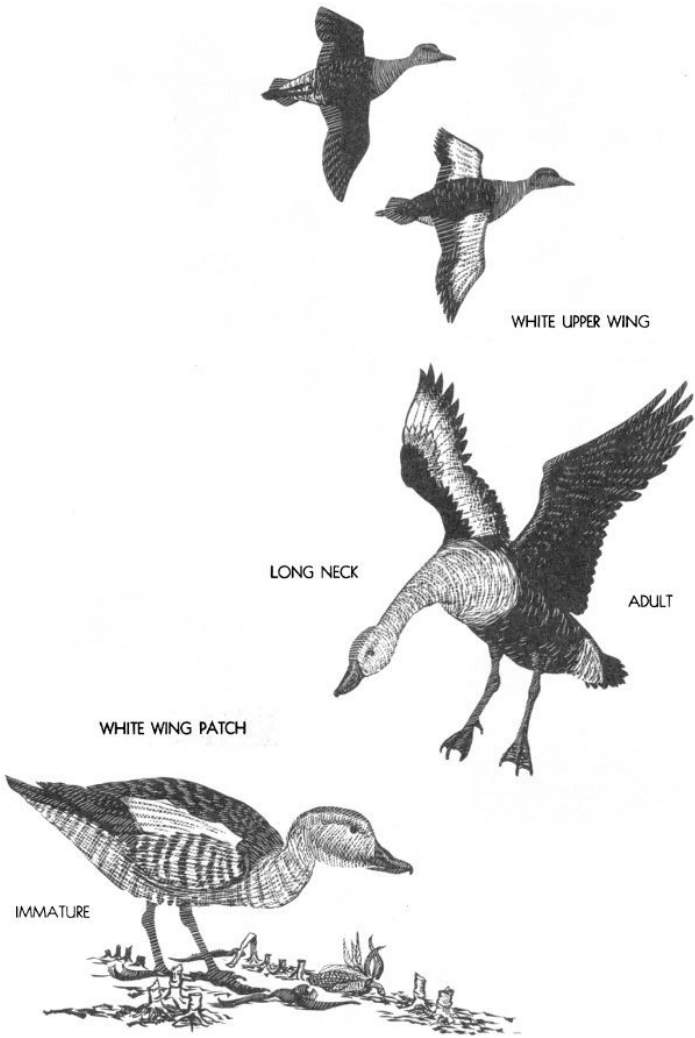
42

FULVOUS TREE DUCK
(*Dendrocygna bicolor helva*)



LONG NECK
ADULT
WHITE LINE
IMMATURE
ADULT
LONG LEGS

BLACK-BELLIED TREE DUCK
(*Dendrocygna autumnalis autumnalis*)

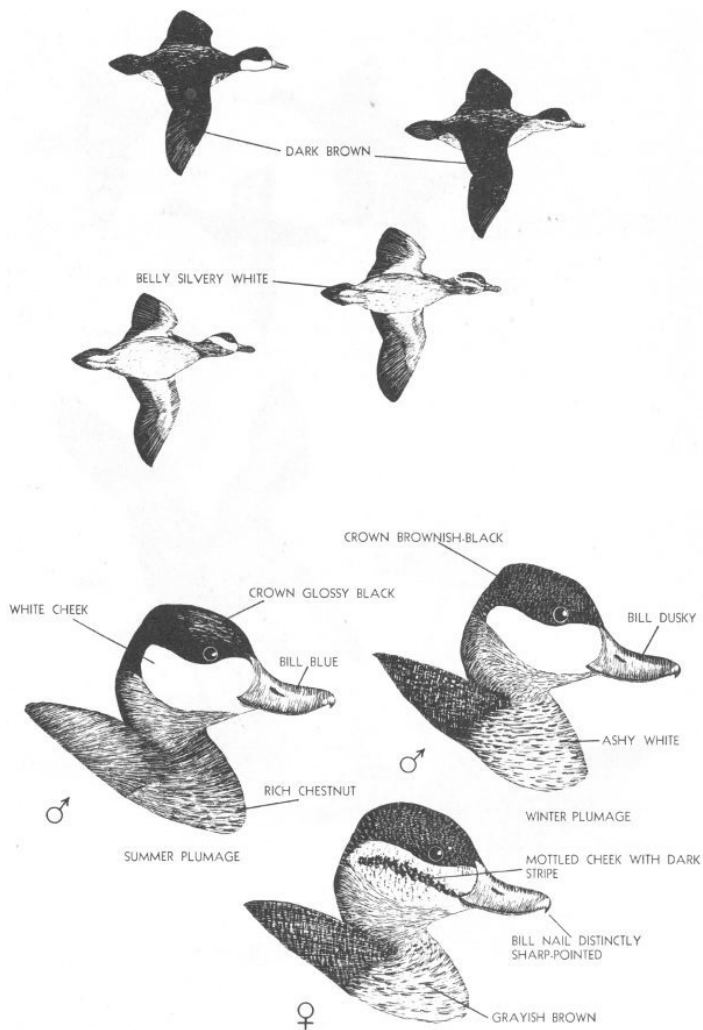


WHITE UPPER WING
ADULT

LONG NECK
IMMATURE
WHITE WING PATCH

44

RUDDY DUCK
(*Oxyura jamaicensis*)



DARK BROWN
 BELLY SILVERY WHITE
 ♂ SUMMER PLUMAGE
 WHITE CHEEK
 CROWN GLOSSY BLACK
 BILL BLUE

RICH CHESTNUT

♂ WINTER PLUMAGE

CROWN BROWNISH-BLACK

BILL DUSKY

ASHY WHITE

♀

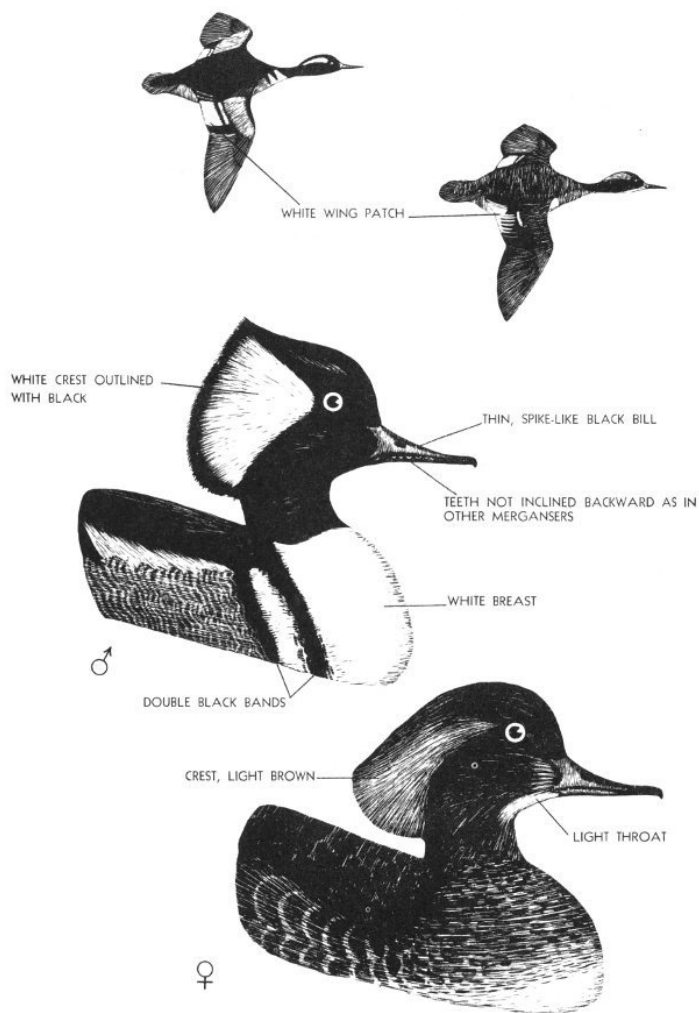
MOTTLED CHEEK WITH DARK STRIPE

BILL NAIL DISTINCTLY SHARP-POINTED

GRAYISH BROWN

45

HOODED MERGANSER **(*Lophodytes cucullatus*)**



IN FLIGHT ALL MERGANSERS CARRY BILL, NECK AND BODY IN HORIZONTAL PLANE, GIVING THEM A CHARACTERISTIC LONG-DRAWN APPEARANCE.

WHITE WING PATCH

♂

WHITE CREST OUTLINED WITH BLACK
THIN, SPIKE-LIKE BLACK BILL

TEETH NOT INCLINED BACKWARD AS IN OTHER
MERGANSERS

WHITE BREAST

DOUBLE BLACK BANDS

♀

CREST, LIGHT BROWN

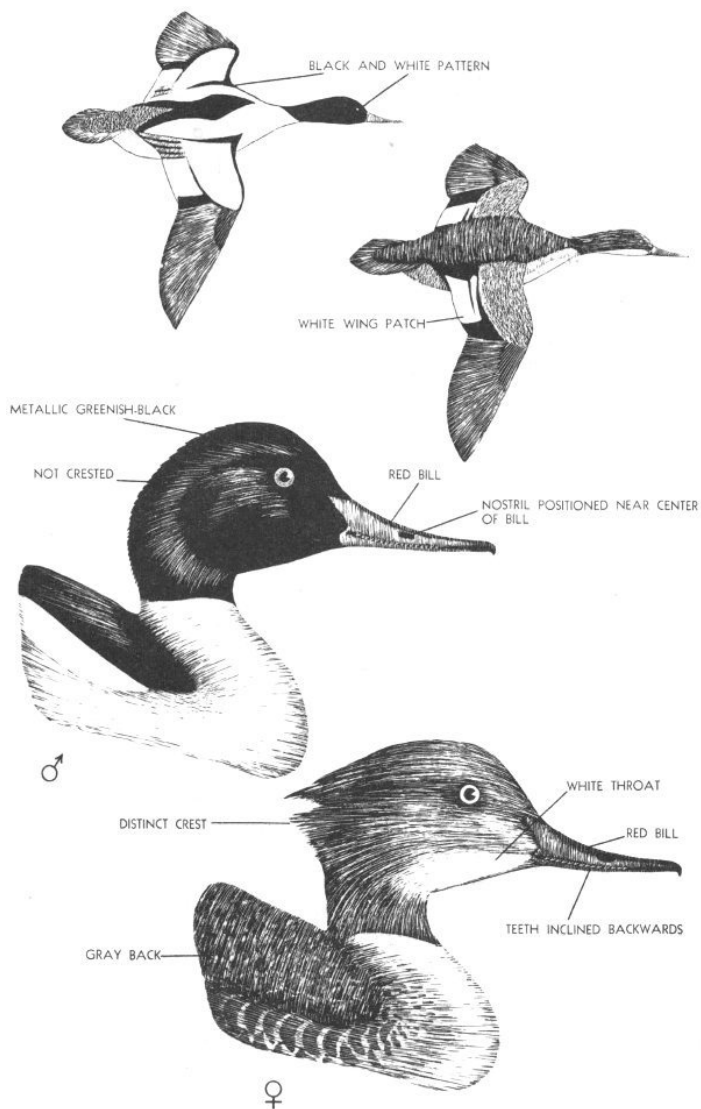
LIGHT THROAT

IN FLIGHT ALL MERGANSERS CARRY BILL, NECK AND
BODY IN HORIZONTAL PLANE, GIVING THEM A
CHARACTERISTIC LONG-DRAWN APPEARANCE.

46

COMMON MERGANSER

(*Mergus merganser*)



BLACK AND WHITE PATTERN

WHITE WING PATCH

♂

METALLIC GREENISH-BLACK

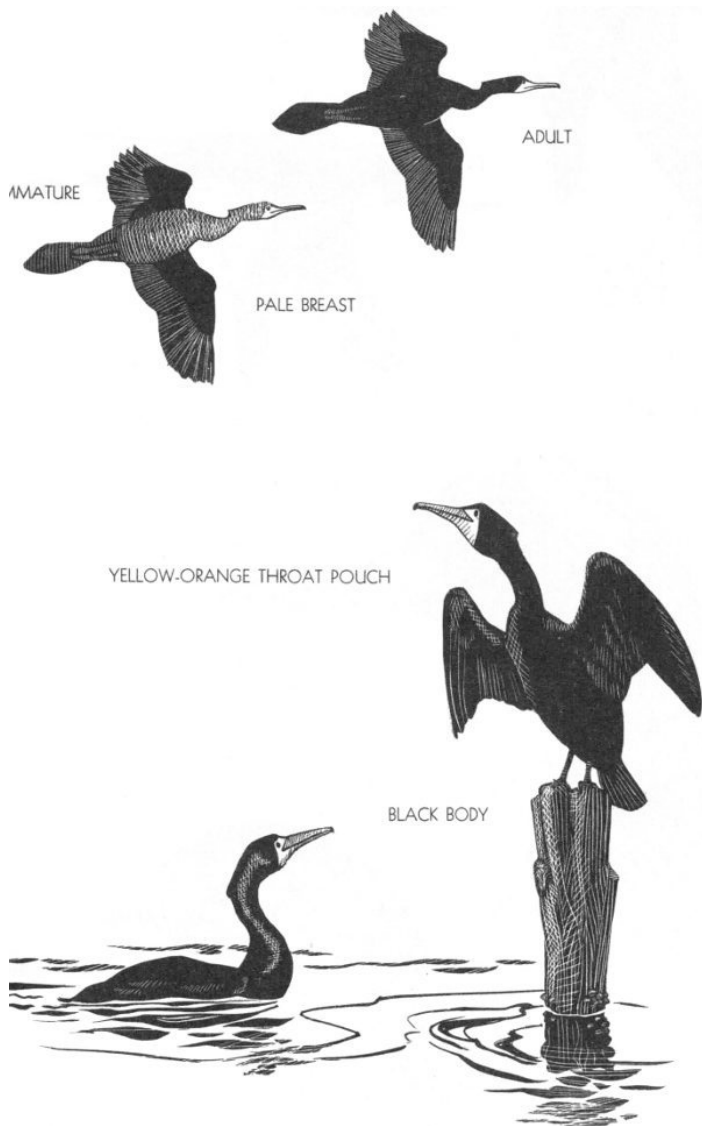
NOT CRESTED
RED BILL
NOSTRIL POSITIONED NEAR CENTER OF BILL

♀

DISTINCT CREST
WHITE THROAT
RED BILL
TEETH INCLINED BACKWARDS
GRAY BACK

47

DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT
(*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

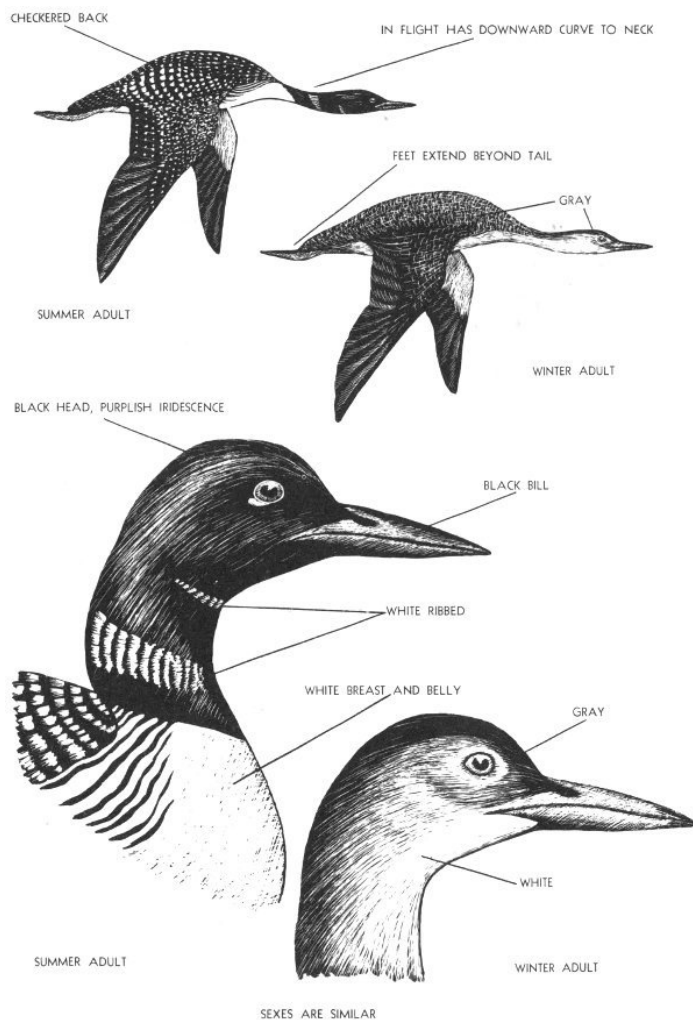


ADULT
IMMATURE
PALE BREAST

YELLOW-ORANGE THROAT POUCH
BLACK BODY

48

COMMON LOON
(*Gavia immer*)



SUMMER ADULT
 CHECKERED BACK
 IN FLIGHT HAS DOWNWARD CURVE TO NECK
 WINTER ADULT
 FEET EXTEND BEYOND TAIL
 GRAY

SUMMER ADULT

BLACK HEAD, PURPLISH IRIDESCENCE

BLACK BILL

WHITE RIBBED

WHITE BREAST AND BELLY

WINTER ADULT

GRAY

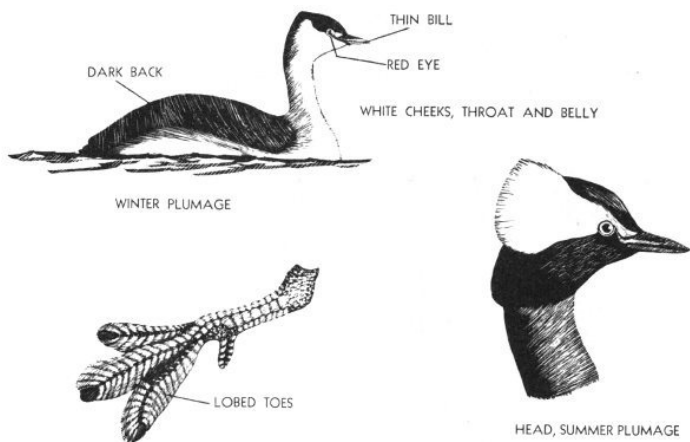
WHITE

SEXES ARE SIMILAR

49

HORNED GREBE

(*Colymbus auritus*)



WINTER PLUMAGE

DARK BACK

THIN BILL

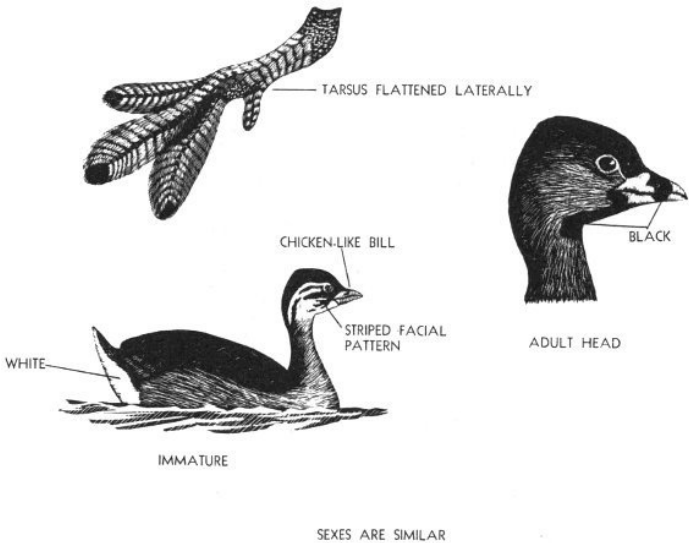
RED EYE

WHITE CHEEKS, THROAT AND BELLY

HEAD, SUMMER PLUMAGE

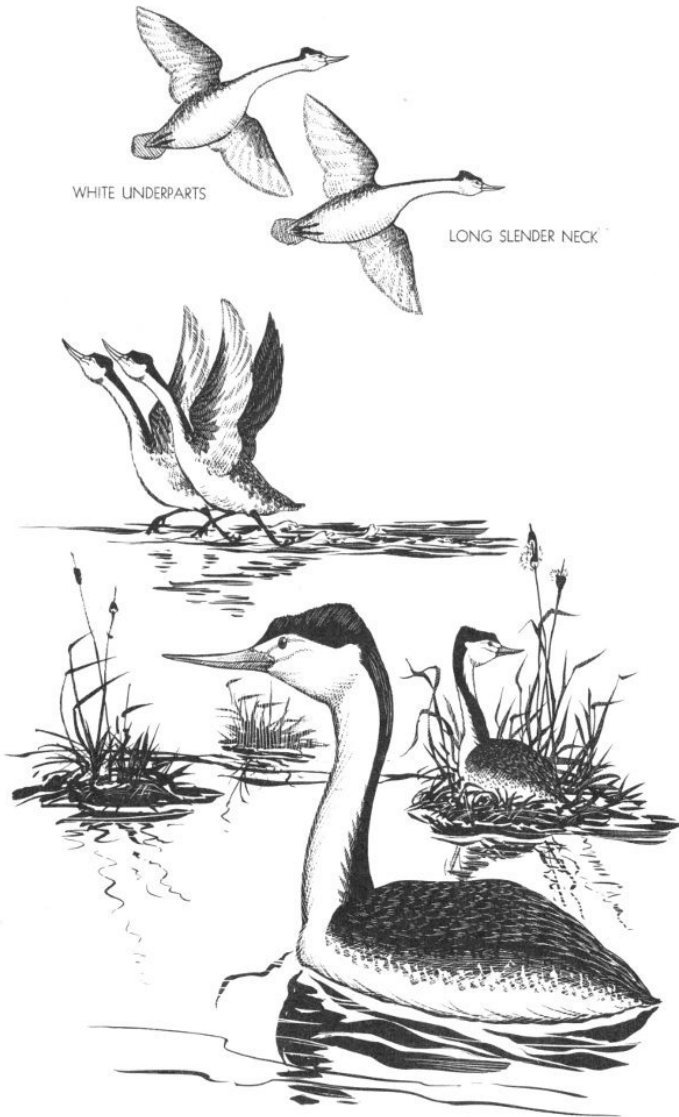
LOBED TOES

PIED-BILLED GREBE
(*Podilymbus podiceps*)



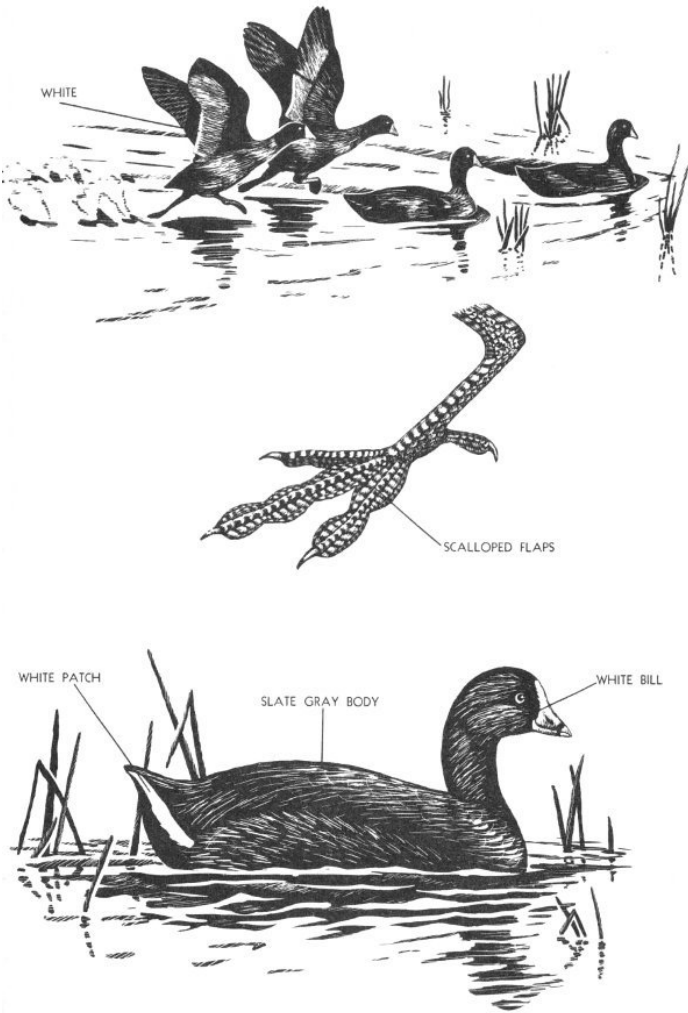
TARSUS FLATTENED LATERALLY
ADULT HEAD
BLACK
IMMATURE
CHICKEN-LIKE BILL
WHITE
STRIPED FACIAL PATTERN
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

WESTERN GREBE
(*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)



WHITE UNDERPARTS
LONG SLENDER NECK

AMERICAN COOT
(*Fulica americana*)

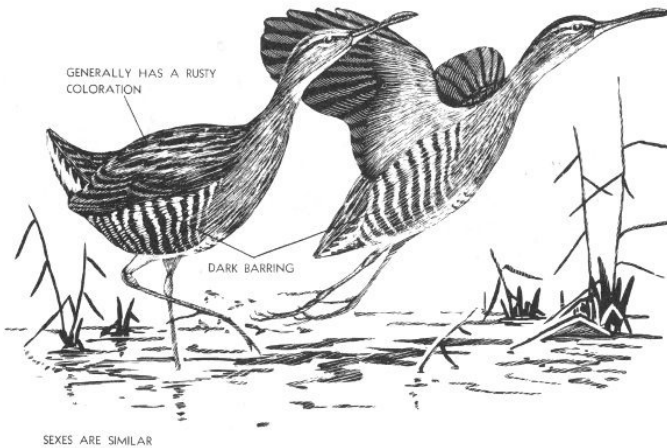


WHITE
SCALLOPED FLAPS
WHITE PATCH
SLATE GRAY BODY
WHITE BILL

52

KING RAIL (*Rallus elegans*)

COMMONLY INHABITS FRESH WATER MARSHES



SEXES ARE SIMILAR

COMMONLY INHABITS FRESH WATER MARSHES
GENERALLY HAS A RUSTY COLORATION
DARK BARRING
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

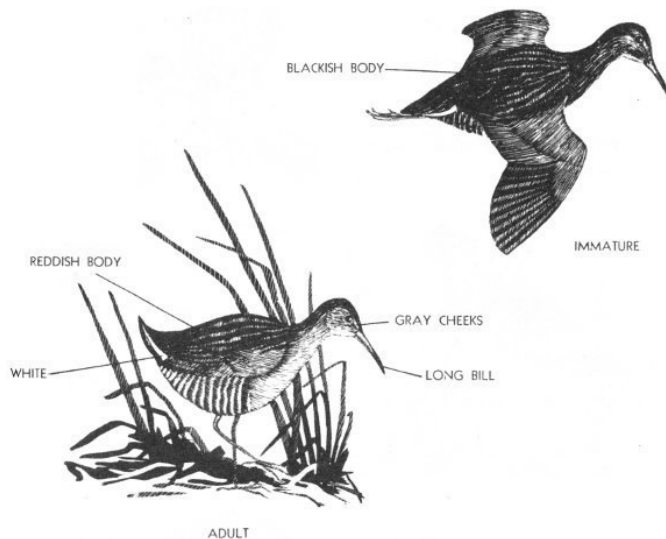
CLAPPER RAIL (*Rallus longirostris*)



GENERALLY HAS A GRAYER COLORATION
COMMONLY INHABITS TIDAL MARSHES
LIGHT BARRING
IMMATURE BIRDS SIMILAR TO ADULTS: SPECIES
DIFFERENTIATION OFTEN DIFFICULT

53

VIRGINIA RAIL **(*Rallus limicola*)**



IMMATURE

BLACKISH BODY

ADULT

REDDISH BODY

GRAY CHEEKS

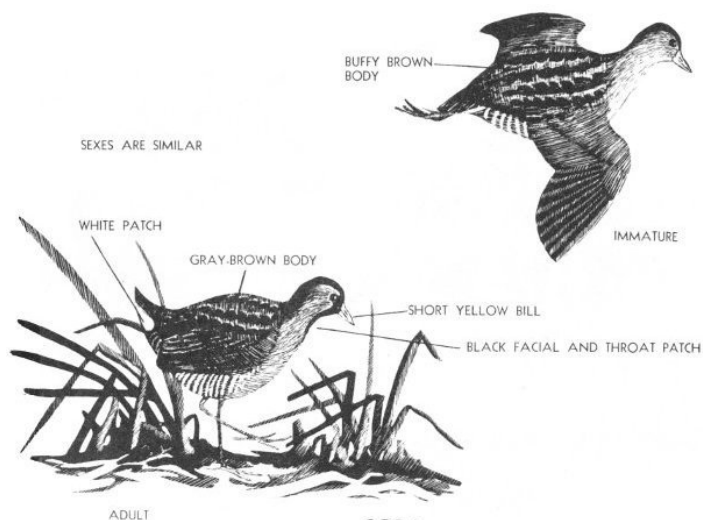
LONG BILL

WHITE

SEXES ARE SIMILAR

SORA

(Porzana Carolina)



IMMATURE

BUFFY BROWN BODY

ADULT

WHITE PATCH

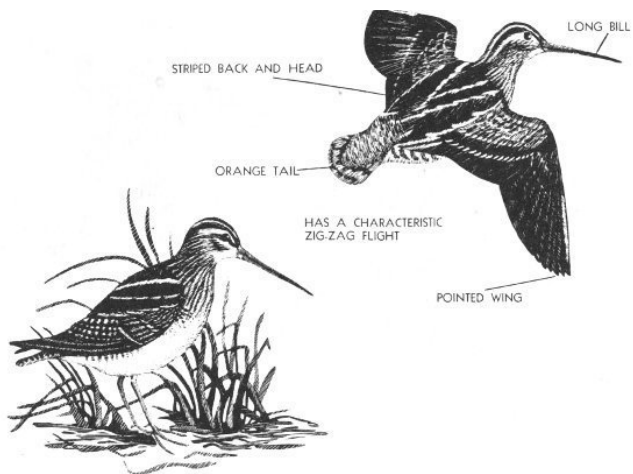
GRAY-BROWN BODY

SHORT YELLOW BILL

BLACK FACIAL AND THROAT PATCH

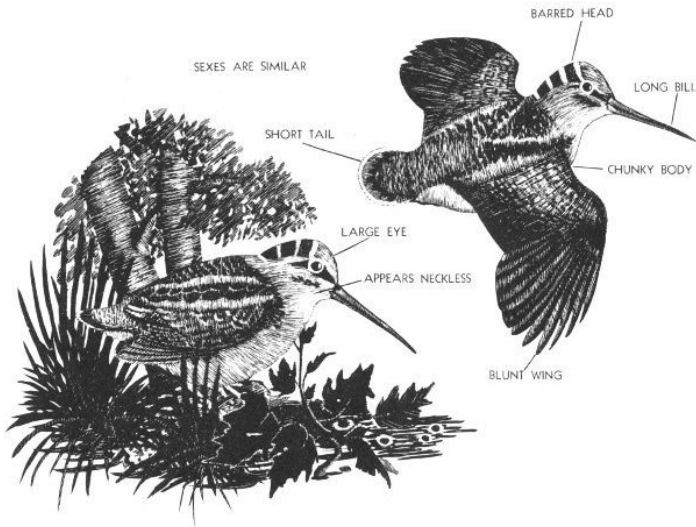
54

COMMON SNIPE (JACKSNIPE) (*Capella gallinago*)



LONG BILL
STRIPED BACK AND HEAD
ORANGE TAIL
HAS A CHARACTERISTIC ZIG-ZAG FLIGHT
POINTED WING
SEXES ARE SIMILAR

AMERICAN WOODCOCK
(*Philohela minor*)



BARRED HEAD
LONG BILL
SHORT TAIL
CHUNKY BODY
LARGE EYE
APPEARS NECKLESS
BLUNT WING

55

WATERFOWLER'S CODE

Buy a State License, and if You Are 16 Years of Age or Older Obtain Federal Duck Stamp. It is illegal to hunt waterfowl without these licenses, and the dollars you spend for them help to maintain your sport.

Know Your State, Provincial and Federal Migratory Bird Laws. When in doubt consult your local game protector or U.S. Game Management Agent.

Treat the Landowner with Respect and Courtesy. Ownership of game is vested in the State and Province, but landowners have the right to prevent trespass on their land.

Learn to Identify Before You Shoot. A mistake may prove both embarrassing and costly, a correct identification adds to your day's enjoyment.

Cooperate with Your Federal, State and Provincial Agencies. Solving the many problems of waterfowl production, harvest and research is possible only through continued cooperation of the duck hunter and conservationist.

Use a Retriever if Possible, or at Least Pick Up Every Bird You Shoot. A good dog will pick up cripples you would otherwise have to leave. A good sportsman will never kill game needlessly. The use of retrieving dogs is a sound conservation practice in reducing crippling losses in addition to providing the pleasure of watching a good dog in action.

Good Sportsmanship in the Duck Blind and on the Marshes Is Equally Important as Remaining Friendly with Your Neighbors.

TEXAS GAME and FISH COMMISSION

Transcriber's Notes

- Retained publication information from the printed edition: this eBook is public-domain in the country of publication.
- Added several birds to the Table of Contents to match the text.
- Silently corrected a few typos.
- In the text versions only, text in italics is delimited by _underscores_.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK
WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE ***

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