

## Duck!

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What is your first memory of seeing a duck? Was it at a local park, a farm, or at the ocean? Perhaps a storybook provided your first introduction. Or, maybe Daffy Duck of cartoon fame? Or was it a rubber ducky in the bathtub? Many of us began learning about ducks at a very young age through cartoons and storybooks, then later saw them in the wild. The Mallard is recognized most often – probably because it is the most common duck in North America. Check out this guide to waterfowl on the wing, [Ducks at a Distance by Bob Hines of the US Fish and Wildlife Service](#), to learn about the great diversity of waterfowl in North America and how to identify them.

Of Maine's 292 kinds (species) of birds, there are 30 kinds of ducks: 11 dabbling ducks, 13 diving ducks, and 6 sea ducks. They, along with geese and swans, are called waterfowl – the common name for the scientific family of water birds, Anatidae. Learn more about Maine's ducks at the [Waterfowl webpage](#) by Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.



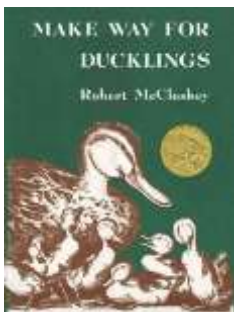
Harlequin Ducks. Photo courtesy of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

### Interesting Facts

- The largest duck in North America is the [Common Eider](#).
- Some ducks, like [Hooded Mergansers](#), nest in tree cavities while others, such as [Mallards](#), nest on the ground. Some cavity nesters may also use nest boxes built and put out for this purpose.
- [Wood Ducks](#) regularly produce two broods a year.
- Nictitating membranes are clear eyelids that act like goggles to protect the eyes of diving ducks.

### Activities for Children & the Young at Heart

1. Participate in the [Junior Duck Stamp Challenge 2021](#) – open to k-12 grade students. Educators, mentors or parents may register to attend the free information and training sessions on 1/14 and 1/28 or download the curriculum and do it on their own with students. Deadline to submit artwork is March 1, 2021.



2. Read *Make Way for Ducklings* by Robert McCloskey

3. Play *Duck, Duck, Goose!* But adapt it by calling out a new species of duck each time you play. Example – *Mallard, Mallard, Goose!* Be sure to learn about each duck species that will be called out ahead of time. To make the game more fun, have each player make a duck ID card ahead of time. All cards are placed in the center of the game circle and then one is selected for each round of the game.

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