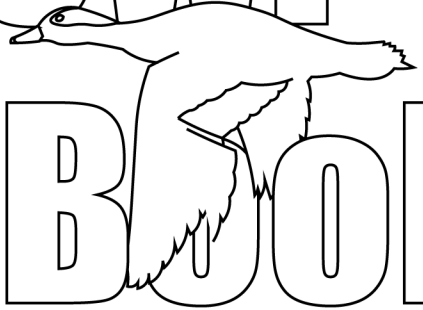
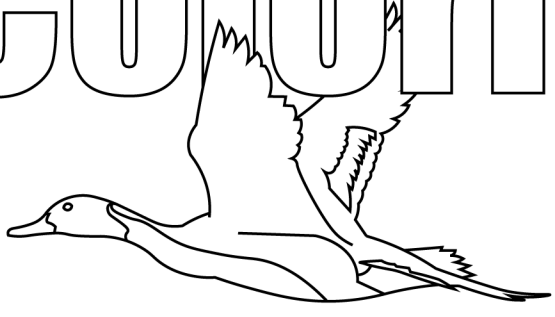


Waterfowl Coloring Book





Color and journal about common ducks, geese, swans, and cranes seen in many parts of Alaska

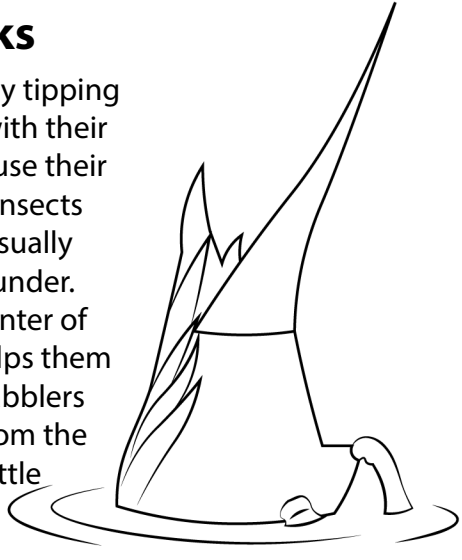
Types of ducks

Duck plumage

The ducks in this coloring book are males in bright breeding colors, called plumage. Female ducks aren't usually colorful. In the fall, male ducks in Alaska are molting—growing new feathers for migration. During molt, they can't fly and turn mostly brown to hide from predators. You can still identify them by their bill color and shape, feet color, and the colorful patch on their wing called the speculum. This brown phase usually lasts from late July to late September.

Dabbling ducks

Dabbling ducks feed by tipping forward in the water with their tails sticking up. They use their feet to stir up aquatic insects and plants, and they usually don't dive all the way under. Their legs are in the center of their bodies, which helps them walk easily on land. Dabblers can take off straight from the water—almost like a little helicopter!



Diving ducks

Diving ducks swim underwater to find food like fish, snails, insects, and plants. Their legs sit farther back on their bodies, making them powerful swimmers but clumsy on land. Because their bodies are heavier, they run across the water like a runway to gain speed for takeoff. Their lobed extra toe helps them paddle underwater.



Vocabulary words

Waterfowl Birds that live on or near water, including ducks, geese, and swans.

Migration/migrate When animals move from one place to another at certain times of the year to find food, water, or better weather.

Population The number of animals of a certain kind living in a specific area at the same time.

Subspecies A closely related group of birds that are similar but show consistent differences in appearance or live in different areas.

Speculum The bright, colorful patch of feathers on a duck's wing, best seen in flight. The colors help people tell different kinds of ducks apart.

Lamellae Tiny, comb-like ridges inside waterfowl bills and tongue that help strain food from water.

Tomia Saw-like edges on their bills and tongue that help geese cut grasses, sedges, and other plants.

Virmicula Squiggly lines on duck feathers that look like little worms and help them camouflage.

Lobed toe The extra fleshy hind toe that helps diving ducks swim and steer underwater and balance on slippery shorelines.

Cavity nest A nest built inside a hole, such as a tree cavity. Nest boxes made by humans imitate holes in trees to provide more nesting habitat.

Habitat Where a bird finds food, water, and shelter.

Vortex feeding When ducks swim in a circle to create a small whirlpool that pulls food up from the bottom making it easier to feed.

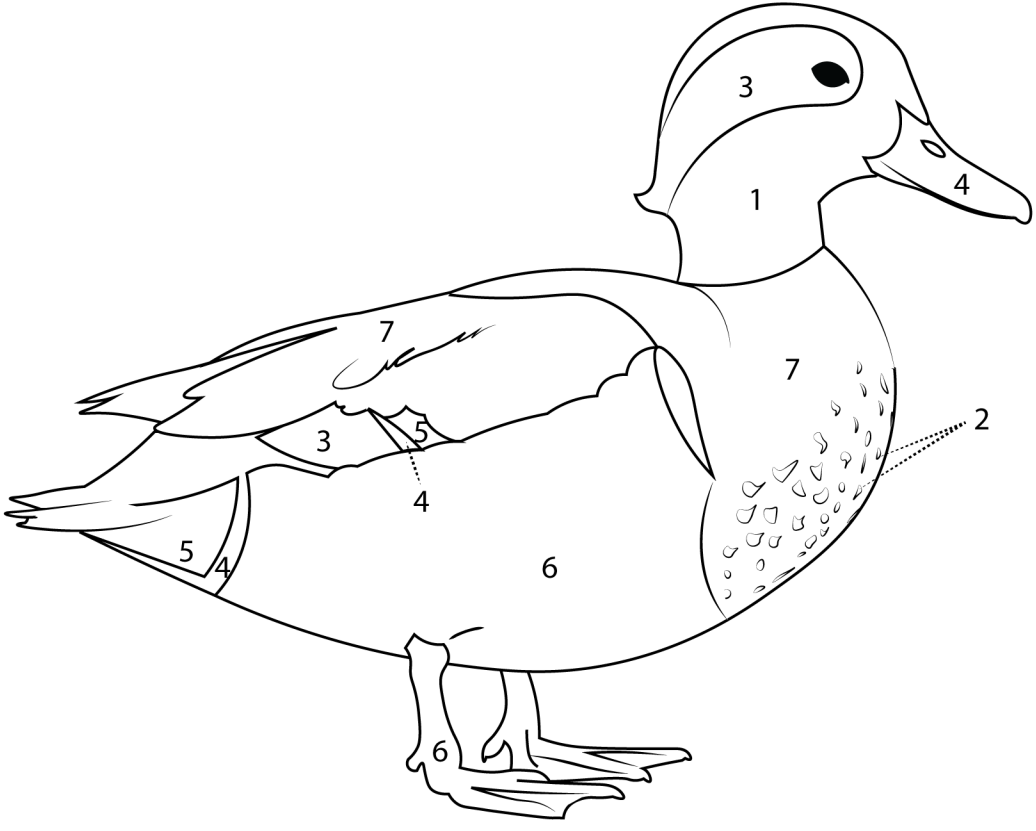
Band Small metal or plastic rings with numbers that biologists place on bird legs to identify individual birds.

Satellite collar A device placed on a bird's neck to track, record, and send information about the movements of the collared bird to scientists.

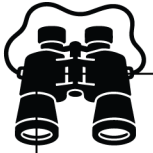
Green-winged Teal

Color key

1. Red brown
2. Dark brown
3. Green
4. Black
5. White
6. Grey
7. Tan



Dabble with teal



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of teal:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Green-winged teal are the smallest **dabbling ducks** in North America. Dabbling ducks feed at the surface by "tipping up" with their heads down and tails up. Teal are lightweight and can lift almost straight up from the water when they take off.

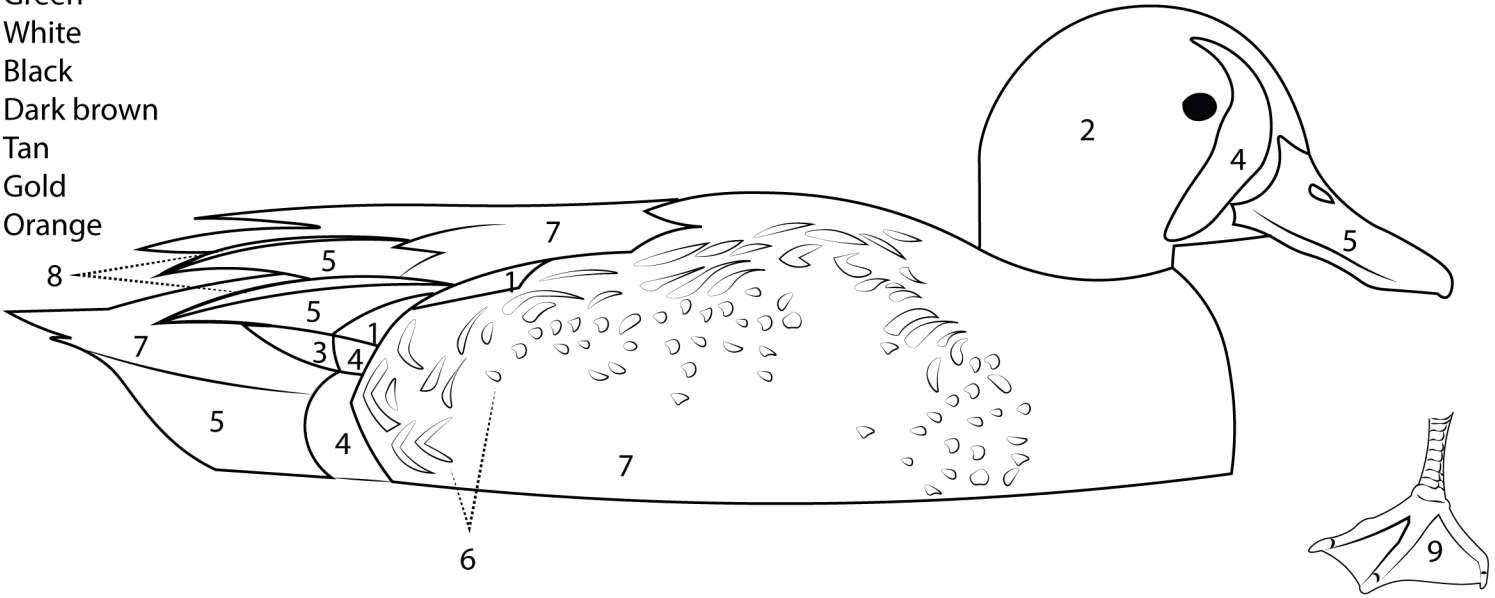
Size comparison



Blue-winged Teal

Color key

1. Bright blue
2. Blue grey
3. Green
4. White
5. Black
6. Dark brown
7. Tan
8. Gold
9. Orange



Dabble with blue wings

Dabbler

Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of blue-winged teal:

.....

Location:

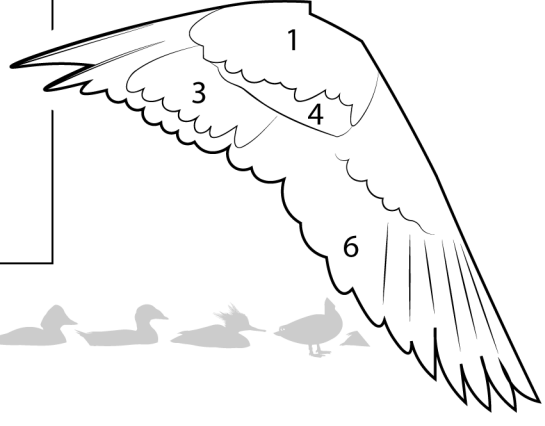
.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:

Duck details

Like their name suggests, blue-winged teal have a large blue and green patch on their wings, best visible in flight. This colored patch on a duck's wings is called the **speculum**, and it is helpful in identifying ducks.



Size comparison

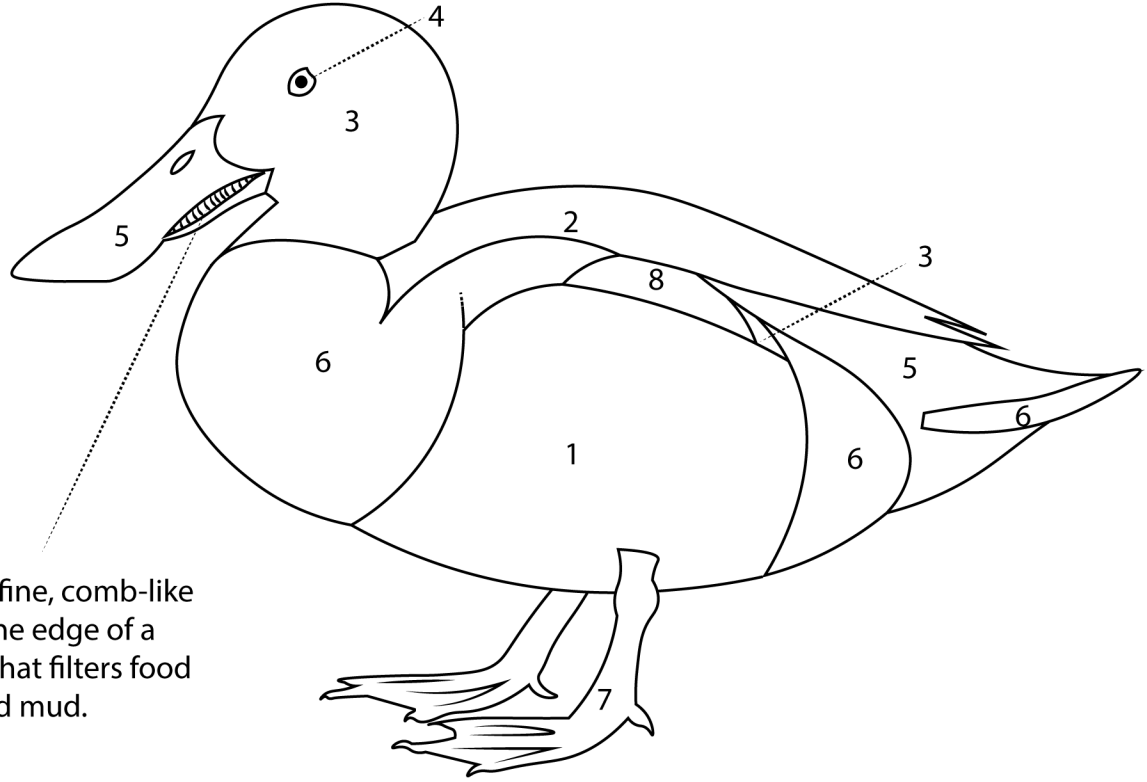


smallest

Northern Shoveler

Color key

1. Red brown
2. Dark brown
3. Green
4. Yellow
5. Black
6. White
7. Orange
8. Blue



Lamellae, the fine, comb-like ridges along the edge of a shovelers bill that filters food from water and mud.

Dabble with shovelers



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of shovelers:

.....

Location:

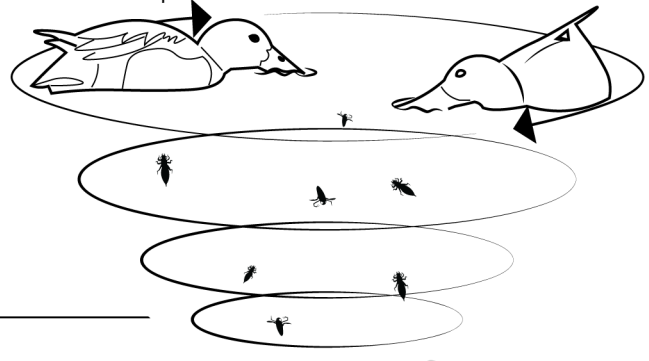
.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:

Duck details

Shoveler pairs work together in a special way called **vortex feeding.** They swim in a tight circle, making the water swirl. This pulls insects, seeds, and plants up from the bottom, so they are easier to eat.



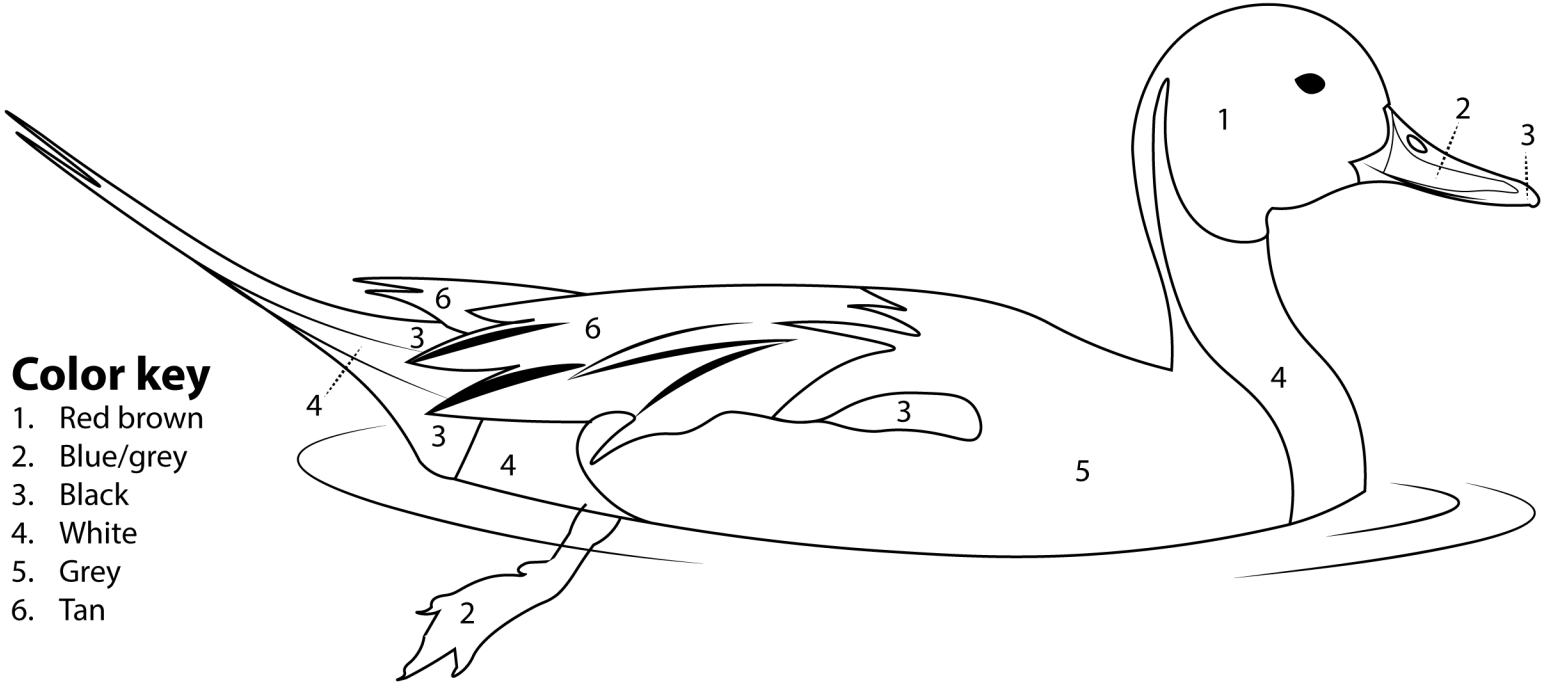
Size comparison



smallest

largest

Northern Pintail



Color key

1. Red brown
2. Blue/grey
3. Black
4. White
5. Grey
6. Tan

Dabble with pintail

Dabbler

Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of pintail:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:

Duck details

Northern Pintails have two extra long, pointy tail feathers, and males' tails can be 4 inches long. These feathers work like a rudder, helping the duck steer and stay balanced while flying and swimming. Pintails are very fast and can fly 60-65 mph — as fast as a car.

Groups of male pintails perform flashy courtship flights, showing off their **plumage** and agility to impress one female.

Size comparison



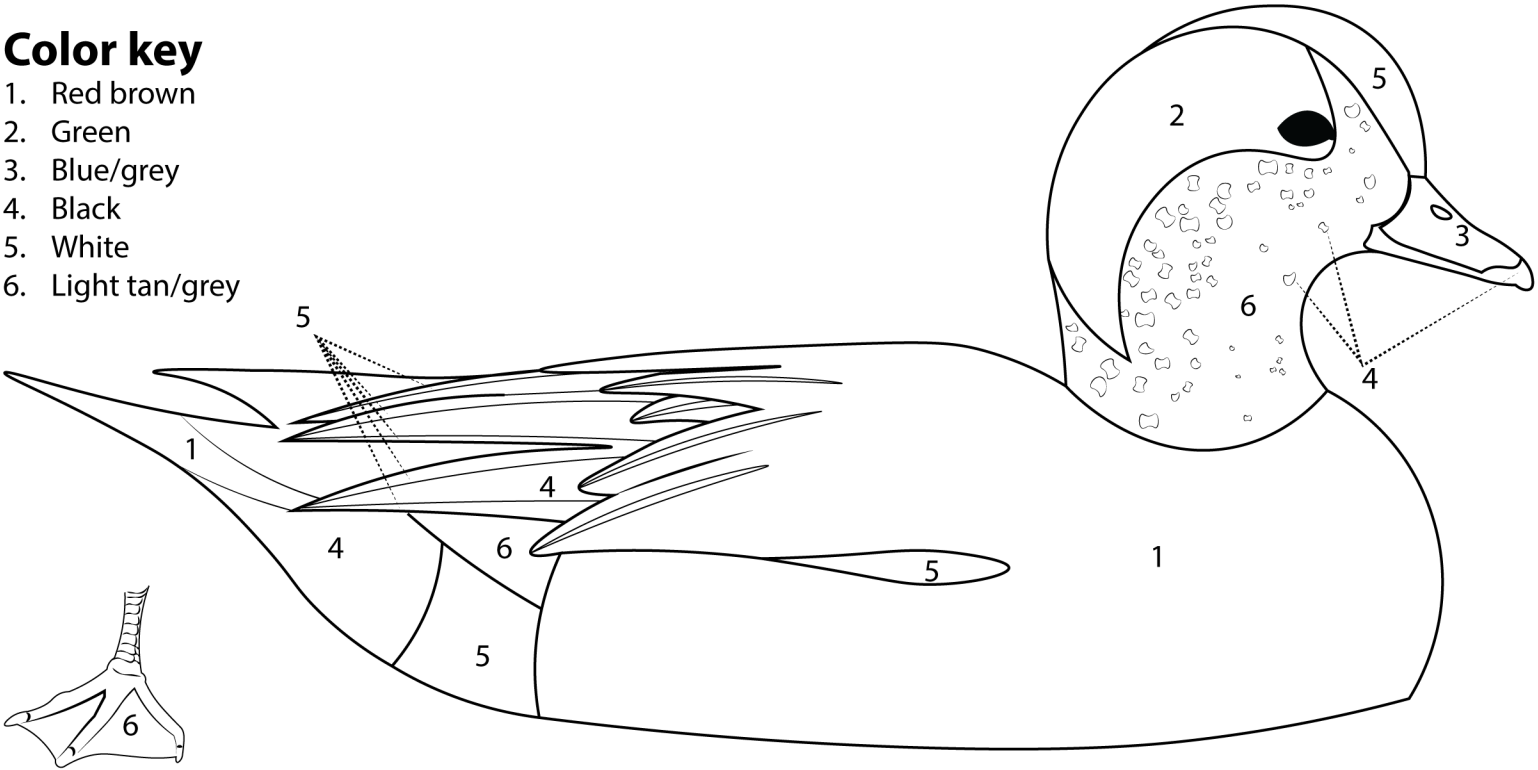
smallest

largest

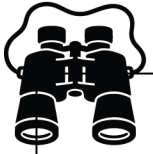
American Wigeon

Color key

1. Red brown
2. Green
3. Blue/grey
4. Black
5. White
6. Light tan/grey



Dabble with wigeon



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of wigeon:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Wigeon bills are short and narrow, perfect for snipping vegetation. They graze in the water by clipping floating plants, and on land they nibble like tiny sheep—earning them the nickname "the lawnmower duck."

In flight, they make a lot of noise, especially a squeaky whistle that sounds like a dog toy.

Size comparison



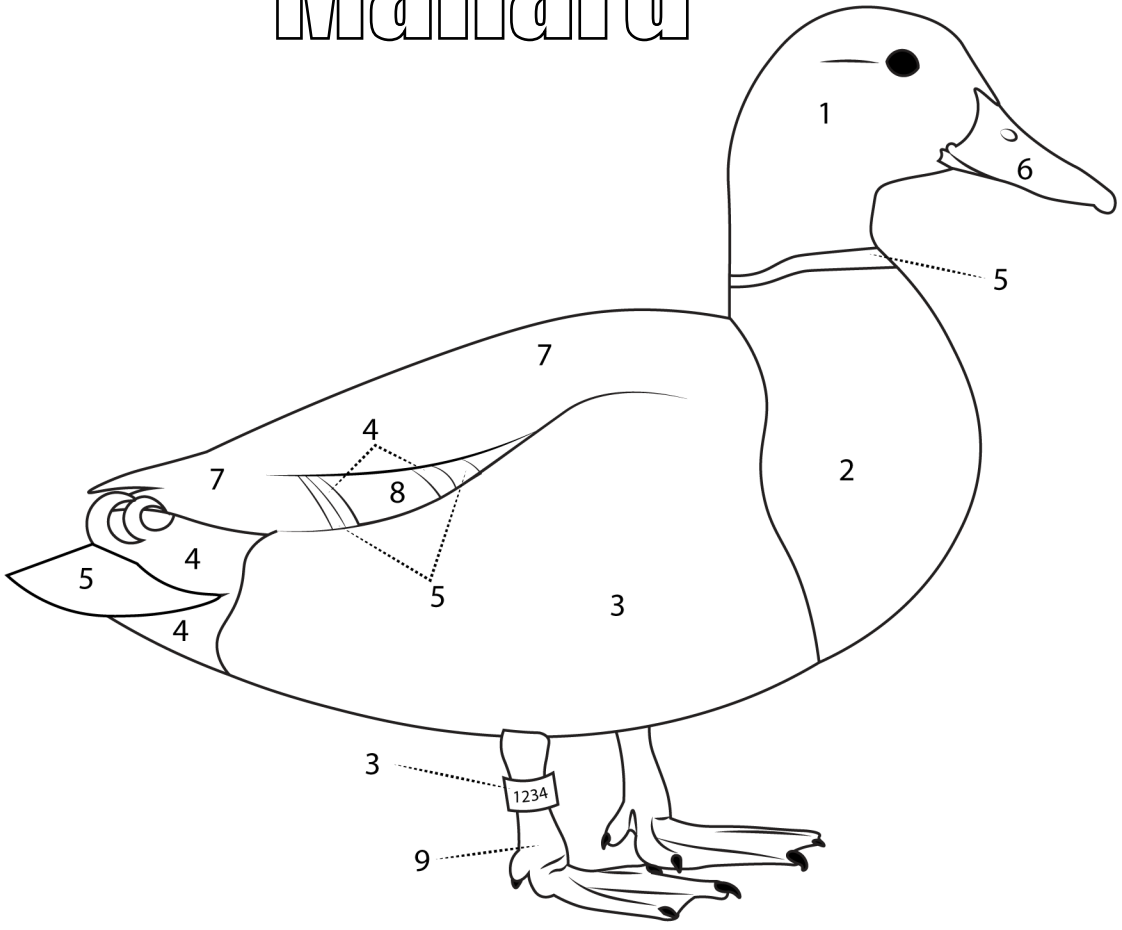
smallest

largest

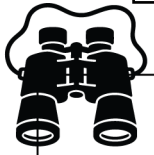
Mallard

Color key

1. Green
2. Red brown
3. Light grey
4. Black
5. White
6. Yellow
7. Dull brown
8. Blue
9. Orange



Dabble with mallards



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of mallards:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Mallards live almost everywhere from Alaska to Florida and are easy to spot—they even have an emoji. Because they are so common, scientists track their **populations** by capturing them at places like Creamer's Refuge and placing numbered **bands** on them. When people report banded ducks, scientists learn where they go, how long they live, and whether their numbers are rising or falling.

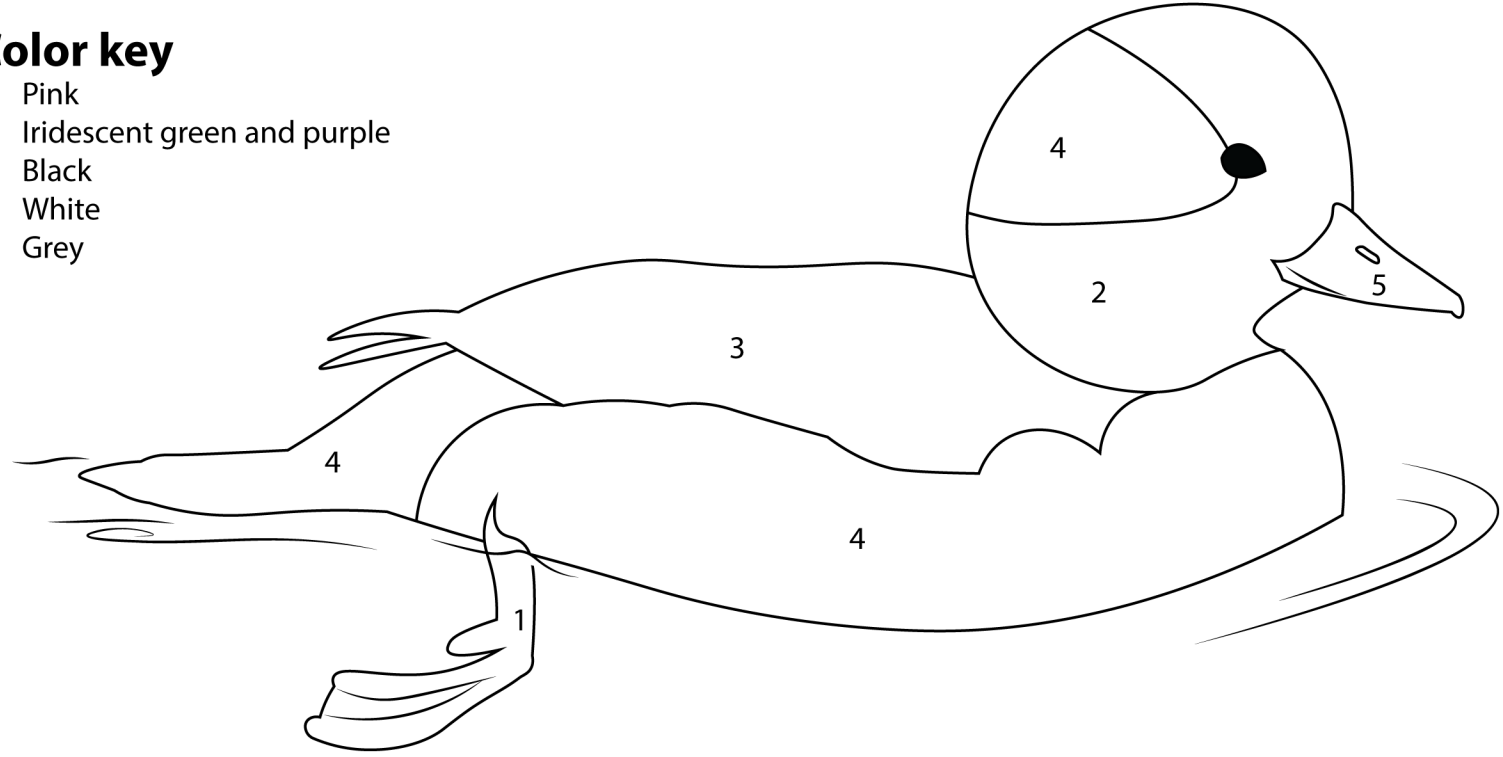
Size comparison



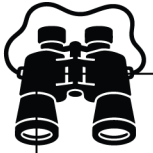
Bufflehead

Color key

1. Pink
2. Iridescent green and purple
3. Black
4. White
5. Grey



Dive with bufflehead



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of bufflehead:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Bufflehead are the smallest **diving ducks** in North America. Diving ducks go completely underwater to feed. Their legs sit farther back on their bodies, and they are usually heavier, which helps them dive deeper for food like aquatic insects and small fish. When taking off, they need a long "runway" and must run across the water before they can lift into the air.

Size comparison



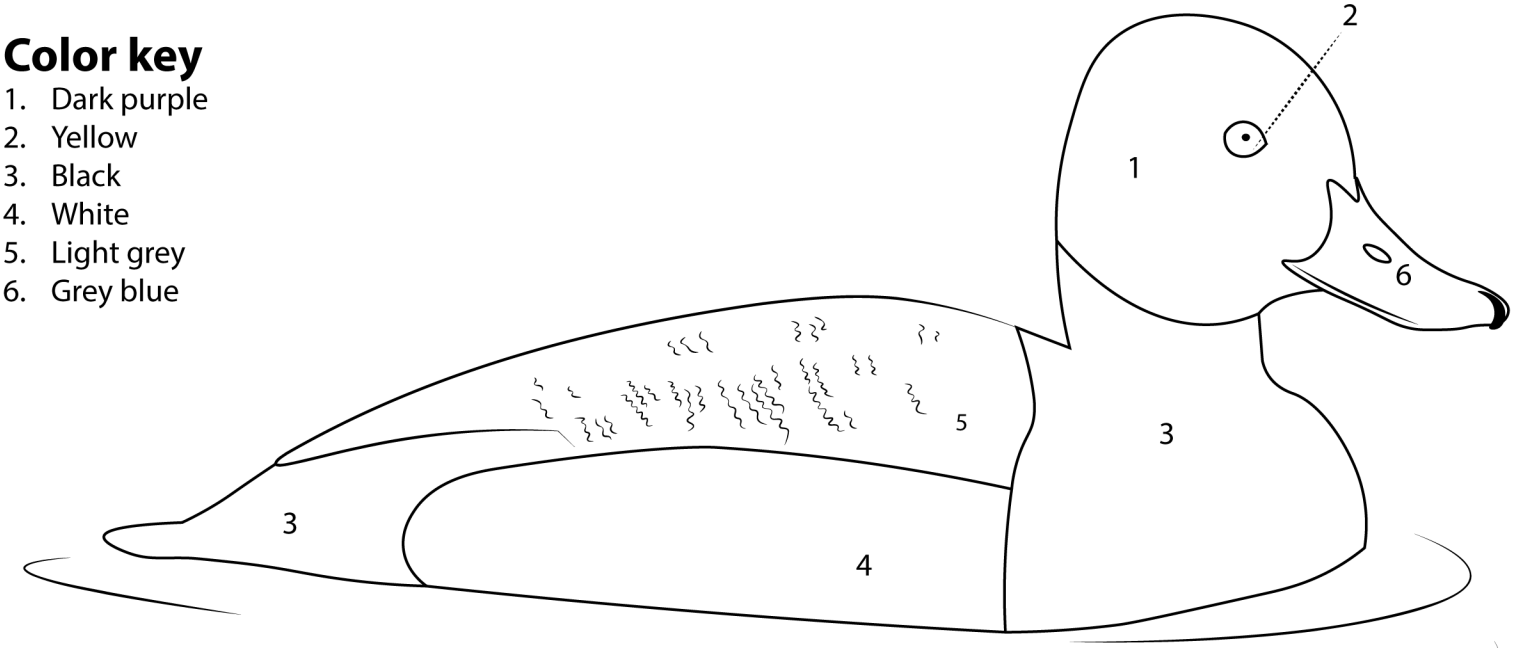
smallest

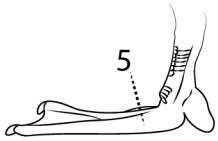
largest

Lesser Scaup

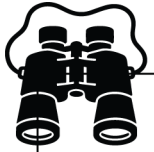
Color key

1. Dark purple
2. Yellow
3. Black
4. White
5. Light grey
6. Grey blue





Dive into scaup



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of scaup:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Scaup have special markings on their wing feathers called **vermicula**. These are tiny, wavy lines that look like little worms. These designs help camouflage scaup by breaking up their shape so they blend in with the ripples and shadows on the water.

Size comparison



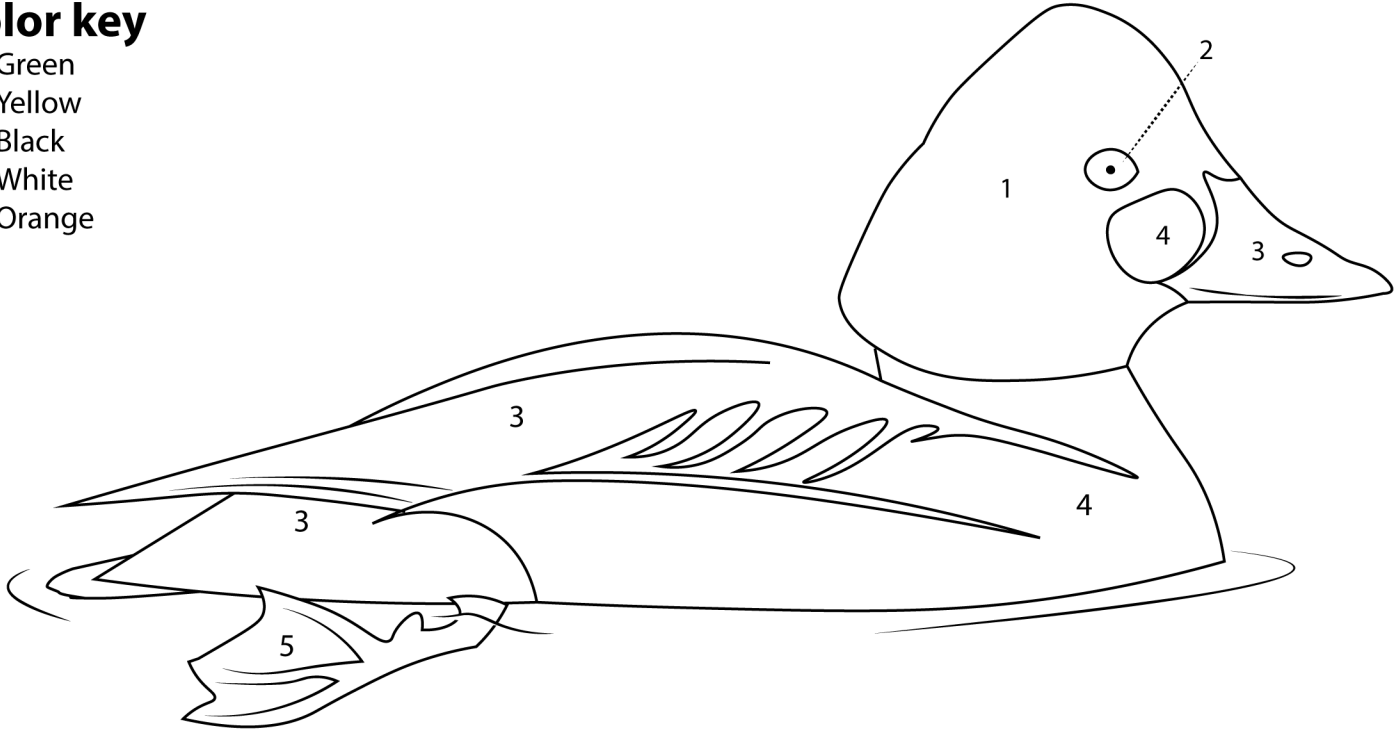
smallest

largest

Common Goldeneye

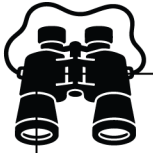
Color key

1. Green
2. Yellow
3. Black
4. White
5. Orange



Dive into goldeneye

Diver



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of goldeneye:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:

Duck details

Goldeneye are **cavity nesters**, which means they lay their eggs in holes high up in trees or in nest boxes. Occasionally, more than one mother lays her eggs in the same nest. When the ducklings hatch, they jump out—often from 20 to 40 feet! They bounce on the ground, then follow their mother to the water.

Size comparison



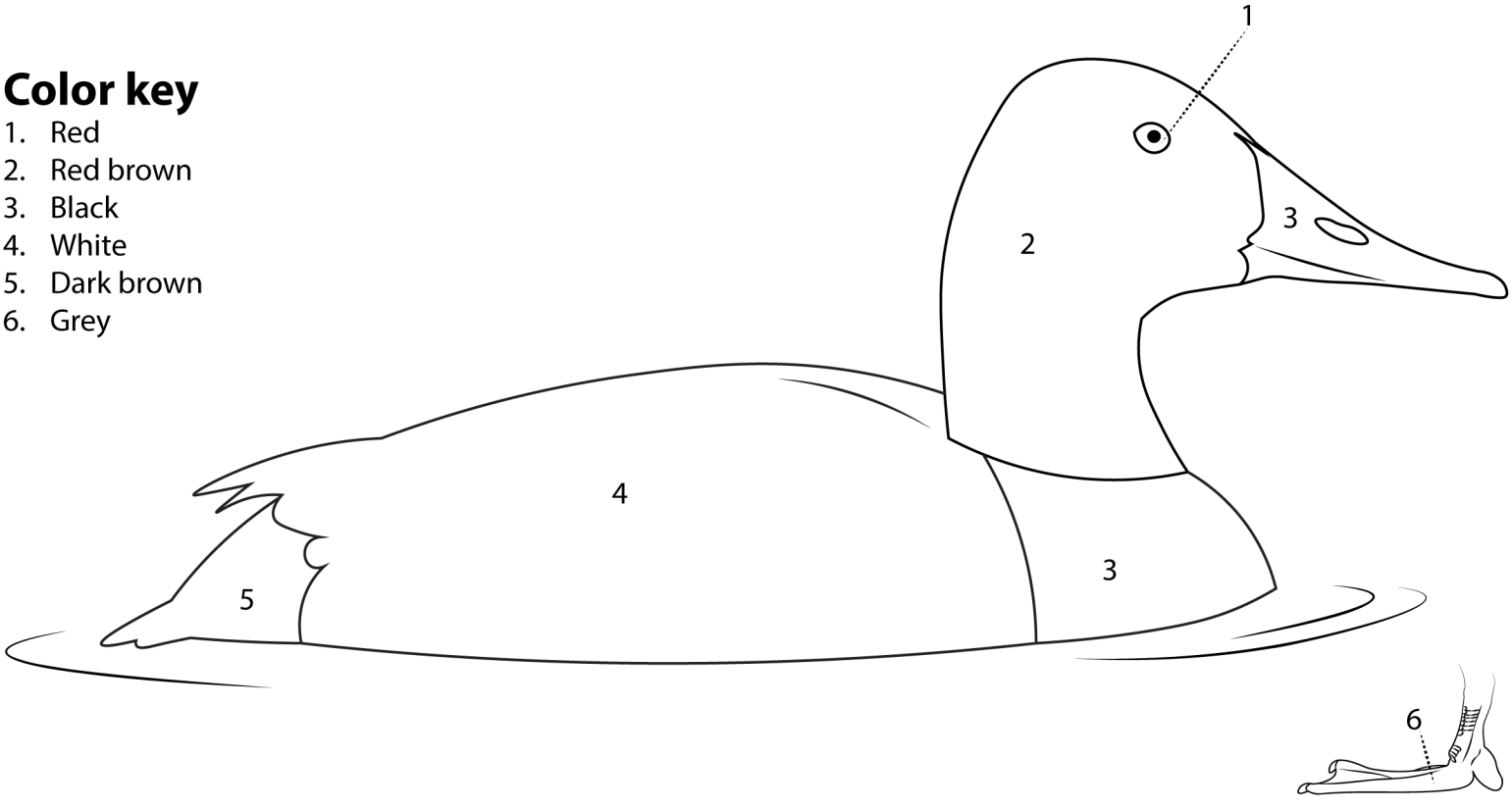
smallest

largest

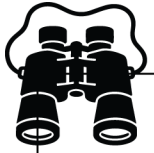
Canvasback

Color key

1. Red
2. Red brown
3. Black
4. White
5. Dark brown
6. Grey



Dive into canvasback



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of canvasback:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Canvasbacks are the biggest **diving ducks**. They weigh about 2–3 pounds. Their feet are far back on their bodies, which helps them swim but makes walking clumsy. They can dive down about seven feet and can fly very fast—up to 56 miles per hour.

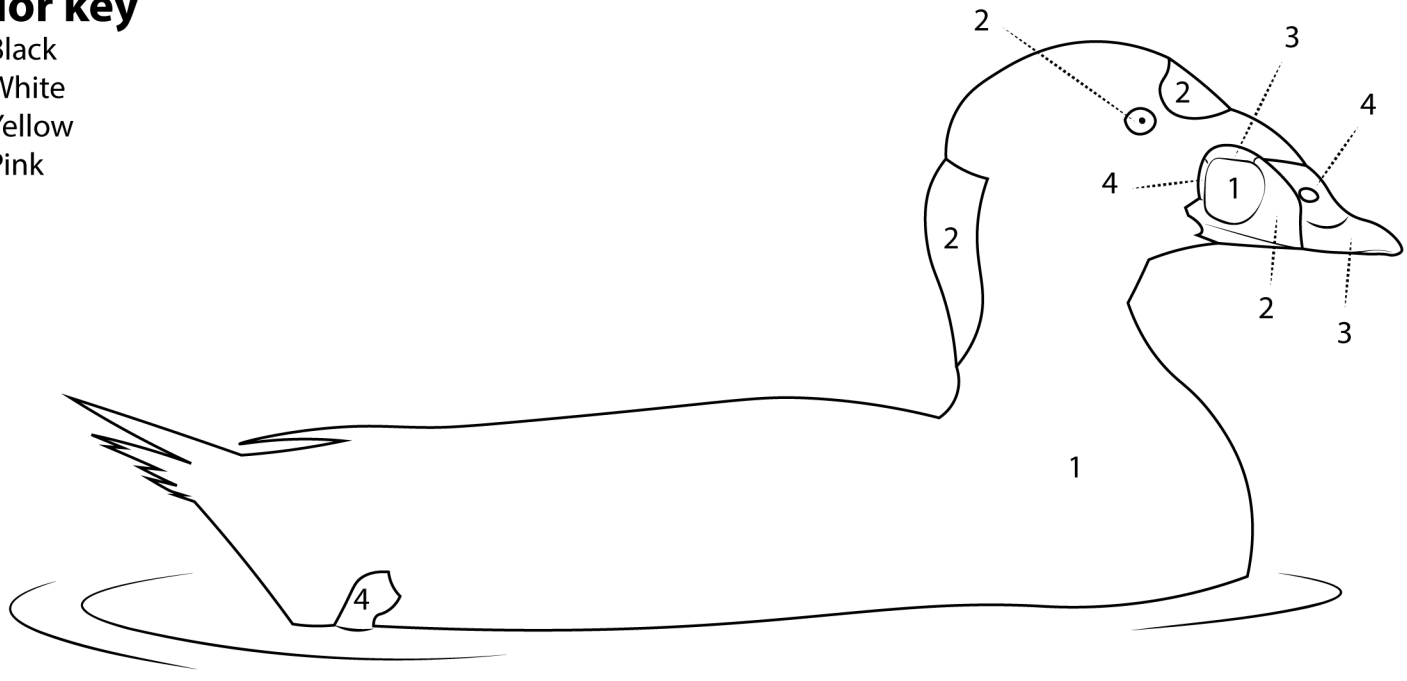
Size comparison



Surf Scoter

Color key

1. Black
2. White
3. Yellow
4. Pink



Search for scoters

Sea duck



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of scoters:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:

Duck details

Surf scoters get their name because they dive into crashing waves to find food. They eat mussels, clams, and snails from the ocean floor. Their big, rounded bill cracks the hard shells. After they swallow the food whole, it goes to their gizzard—a strong, muscular part of their stomach that works like teeth to crush and grind the shells.

Size comparison



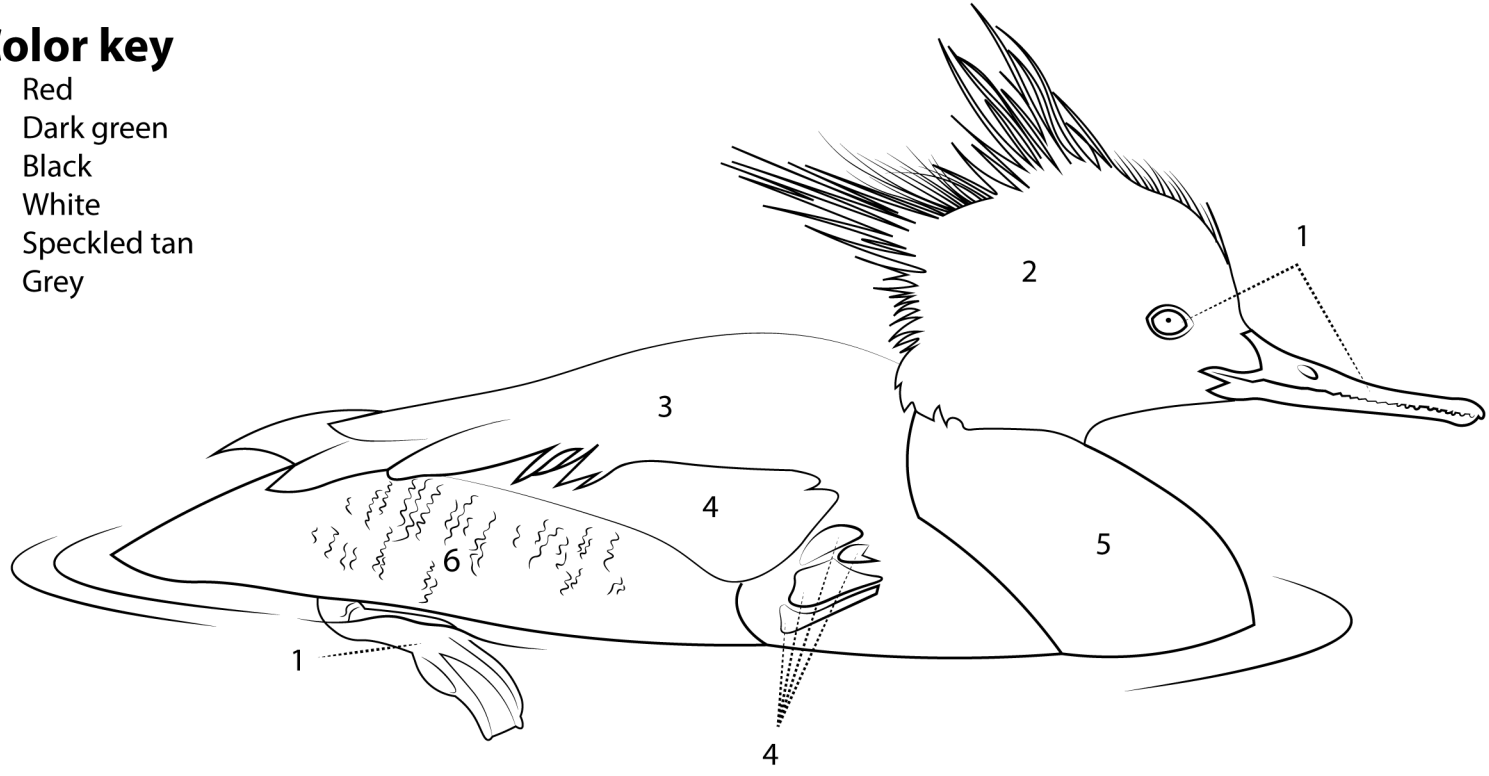
smallest

largest

Red-breasted Merganser

Color key

1. Red
2. Dark green
3. Black
4. White
5. Speckled tan
6. Grey



Monitor mergansers

Sea duck



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of mergansers:

.....

Location:

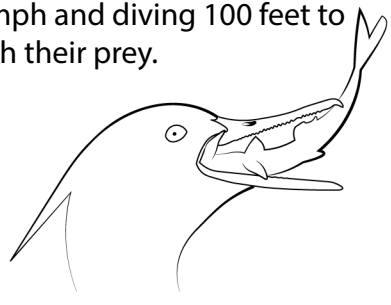
.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:

Duck details

Mergansers are fish eating ducks that live in both ocean and inland waters. Instead of comb-like **lamellae** for straining food, their bills are saw-like to grip slippery fish. They're one of the fastest ducks, flying up to 80 mph and diving 100 feet to catch their prey.



Size comparison



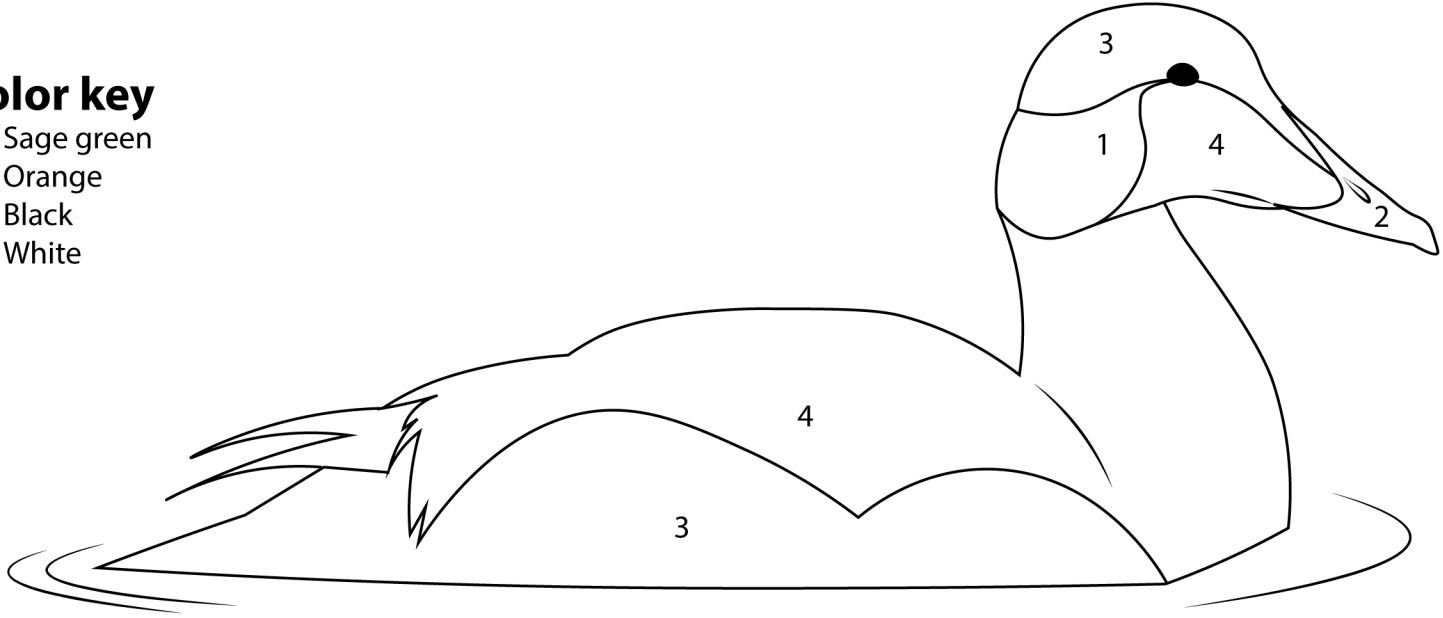
smallest

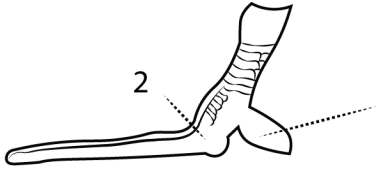
largest

Common Eider

Color key

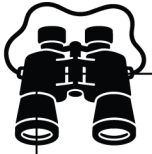
1. Sage green
2. Orange
3. Black
4. White





Soft, floppy, extra **lobed toe** that helps diving ducks like this swim and steer underwater. It also helps eiders balance and not slip when walking on wet, rocky shorelines.

Eye out for eiders



Duck watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of eiders:

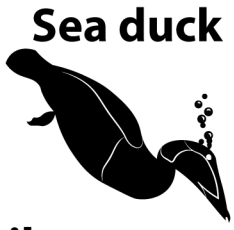
.....

Location:

.....

.....

Draw or write your observations:



Duck details

Common eiders are the largest ducks in Alaska. They have thick down and lots of fat to keep them warm in the Arctic. They have a wedge shaped bill for prying shellfish from rocks. Like all sea ducks, they have a special gland near their eye that helps them get rid of the salt when they drink seawater.

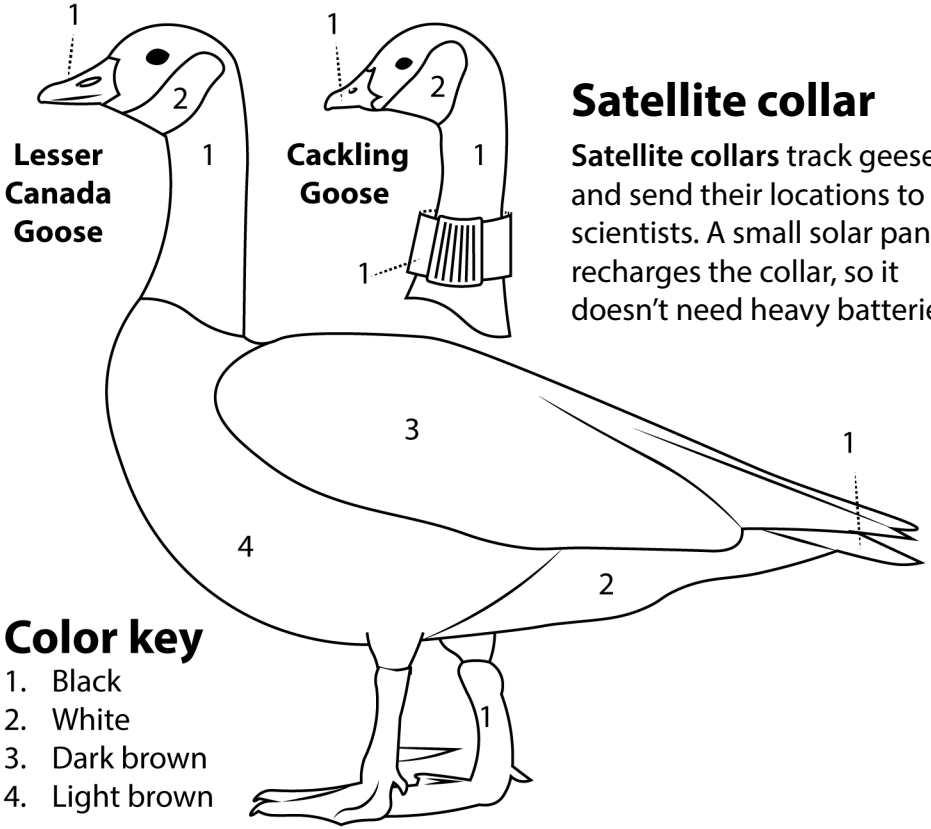
Size comparison



smallest

largest

Canada Goose



Satellite collar

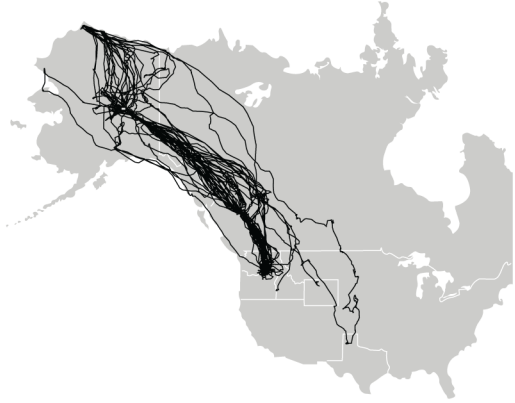
Satellite collars track geese and send their locations to scientists. A small solar panel recharges the collar, so it doesn't need heavy batteries.

Color key

1. Black
2. White
3. Dark brown
4. Light brown

Geese on the map

Alaska scientists put satellite collars on Canada and cackling geese. The geese collared at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge spread out to nest across the state, then almost all migrated to the Columbia Basin in Washington and Oregon for the winter. This map shows the movements of 27 geese collared on the refuge.



Check for Canada geese

Goose watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of Canada geese:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

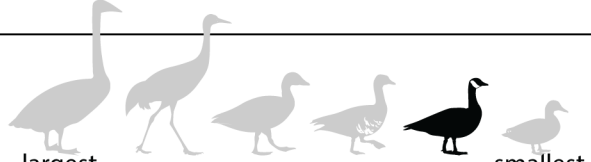
Draw or write your observations:

Goose guide

There are several **subspecies** of "white-checked geese." The most common at Creamer's Refuge is the lesser Canada goose. The cackling goose has the same coloration but is smaller with a much shorter bill.

Like other geese species, Canada geese usually stay with the same mate for life. The mother sits on the nest for up to 20 hours a day to keep the eggs warm, while the father stands guard to protect her from danger.

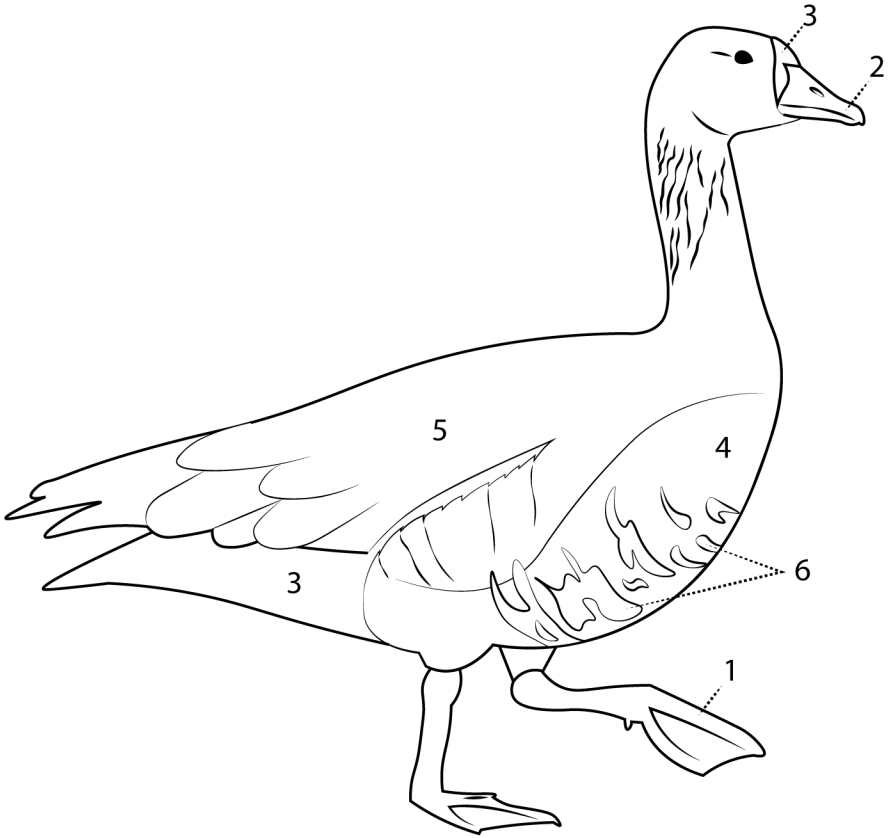
Size comparison



White-fronted Goose

Color key

1. Orange
2. Pink
3. White
4. Tan
5. Brown
6. Black



Watch for white fronts

Goose watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of white fronts:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

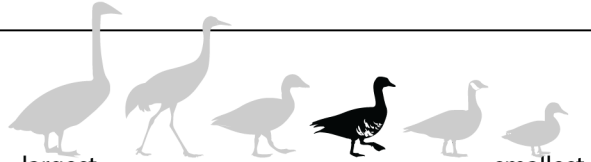
Draw or write your observations:

Goose guide

White-fronted geese are often called "speckle bellies" because of the irregular spots and bars on their breasts and bellies.

They make a high-pitched laughing sound when they fly. This helps the flock talk to each other and stay in formation.

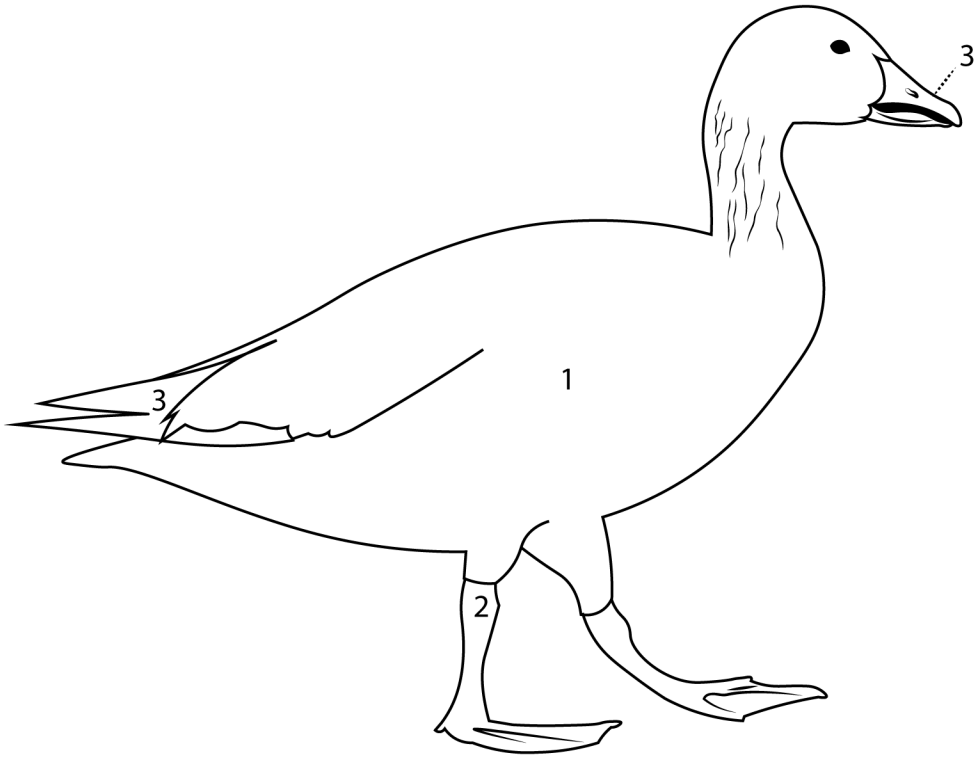
Size comparison



Snow Goose

Color key

1. White
2. Pink
3. Black



Search for snows

Goose watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of snow geese:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

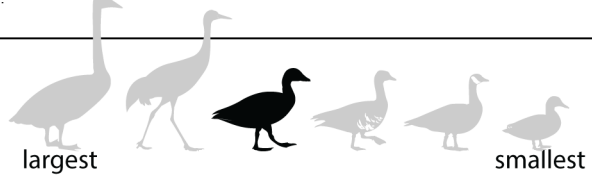
Draw or write your observations:

Goose guide

Snow geese are white to blend in with the snowy Arctic tundra where they nest.

Like other geese, snows have saw-like edges on their bills and tongue called **tomia**, which help them cut grasses, sedges and other plants. They also have **lamellae**, like ducks, to strain food from water.

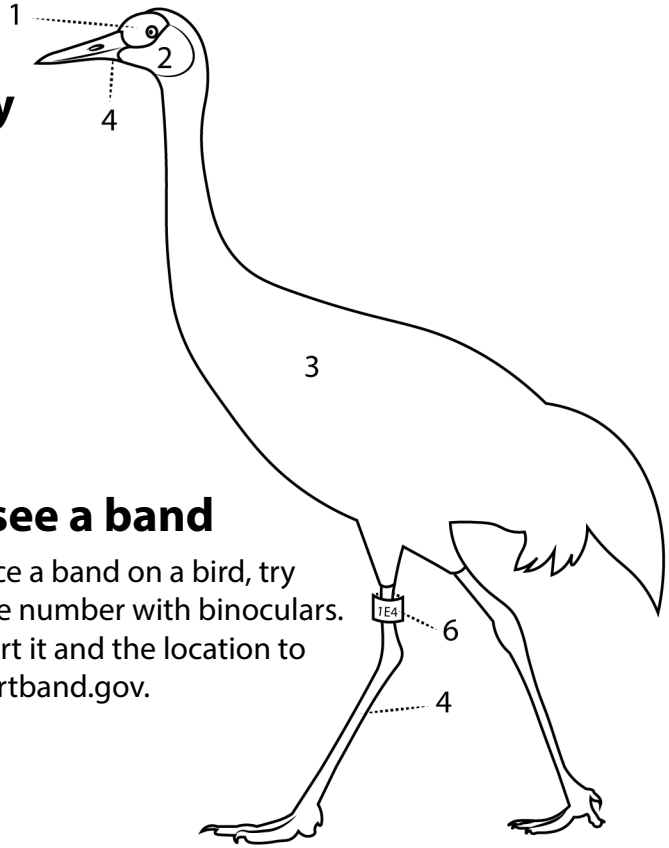
Size comparison



Sandhill Crane

Color key

1. Red
2. Cream
3. Grey blue
4. Dark grey
5. Rust
6. Yellow

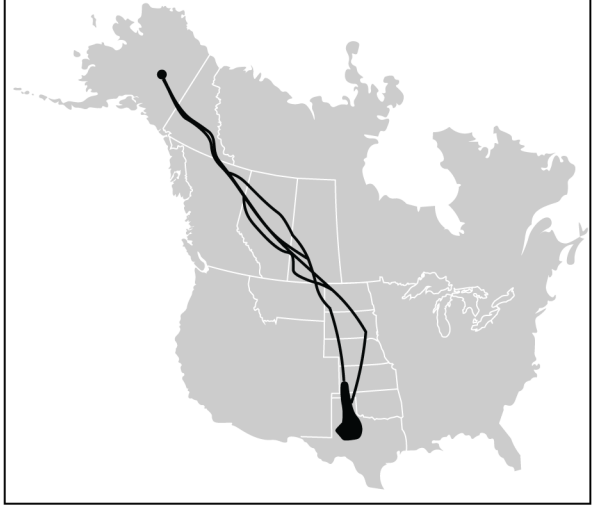


If you see a band

If you notice a band on a bird, try reading the number with binoculars. Then, report it and the location to www.reportband.gov.

Cranes on the map

Scientists at Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge put **satellite collars** on sandhill cranes to track their 3,300 mile migration from Fairbanks to Texas. The journey takes about six weeks, with long stopovers in Saskatchewan in fall and the Platte River, Nebraska in spring so the cranes can rest and feed.



Chronicle the cranes

Crane watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of cranes:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

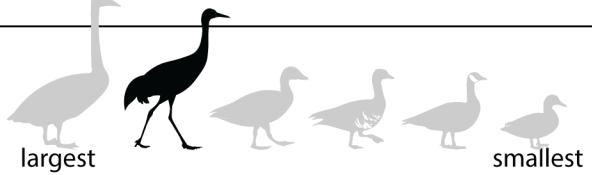
Draw or write your observations:

Crane clues

Sandhill cranes aren't **waterfowl**. They belong to a group called wading birds, which means they like to walk in shallow water. Their long legs help them move through wetlands and even perform special dances to impress their mates.

Cranes are omnivores, so they eat lots of different things. Their strong, pointed bill helps them poke around in mud and plants to find seeds, insects, frogs, small animals, and roots.

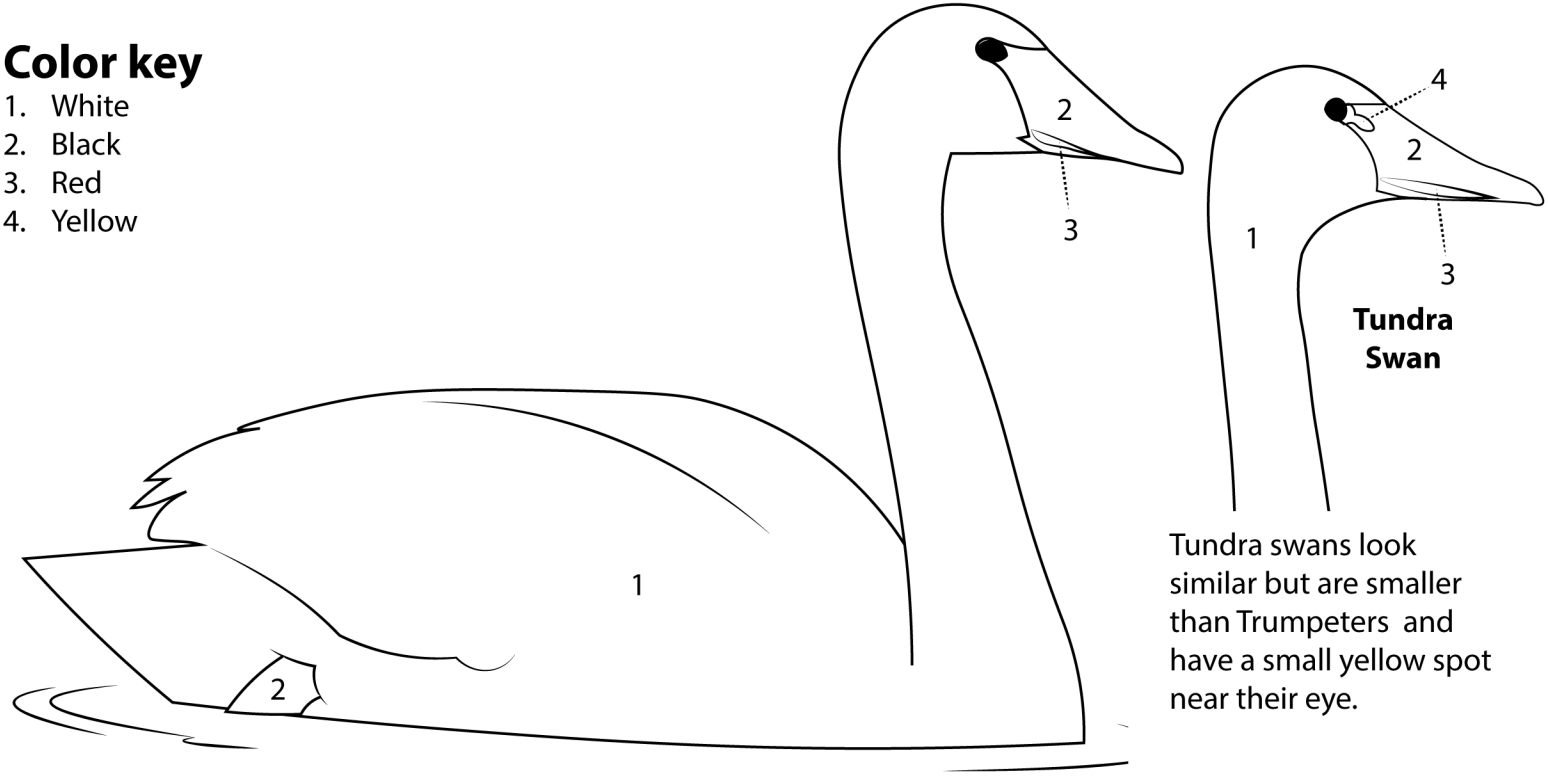
Size comparison



Trumpeter Swan

Color key

1. White
2. Black
3. Red
4. Yellow



Tundra swans look similar but are smaller than Trumpeters and have a small yellow spot near their eye.

Track trumpeters

Swan watching journal

Date seen:

.....

Number of trumpeters:

.....

Location:

.....

.....

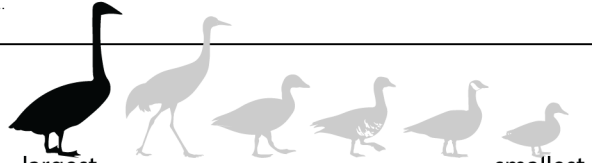
Draw or write your observations:

Swan secrets

Trumpeter swans are the largest **waterfowl** in North America, growing up to 5½ feet long. Even though adults are bright white to match their snowy **habitats**, some swans in Alaska get rust-colored stains on their heads and necks from iron in the water.

Trumpeter swans can live for 30 years or more and usually mate for life. In spring, pairs do special courtship dances, calling to each other and swimming in sync.

Size comparison



Who are we?

This coloring book was created by Creamer's Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Division of Wildlife Conservation. Visit the refuge to see waterfowl and cranes at 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

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www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=creamersfield.main

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Hunters founded the modern wildlife conservation movement. They, along with trappers and sport shooters, provided funding for this publication through payment of federal taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, and through state hunting license and tag fees.

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