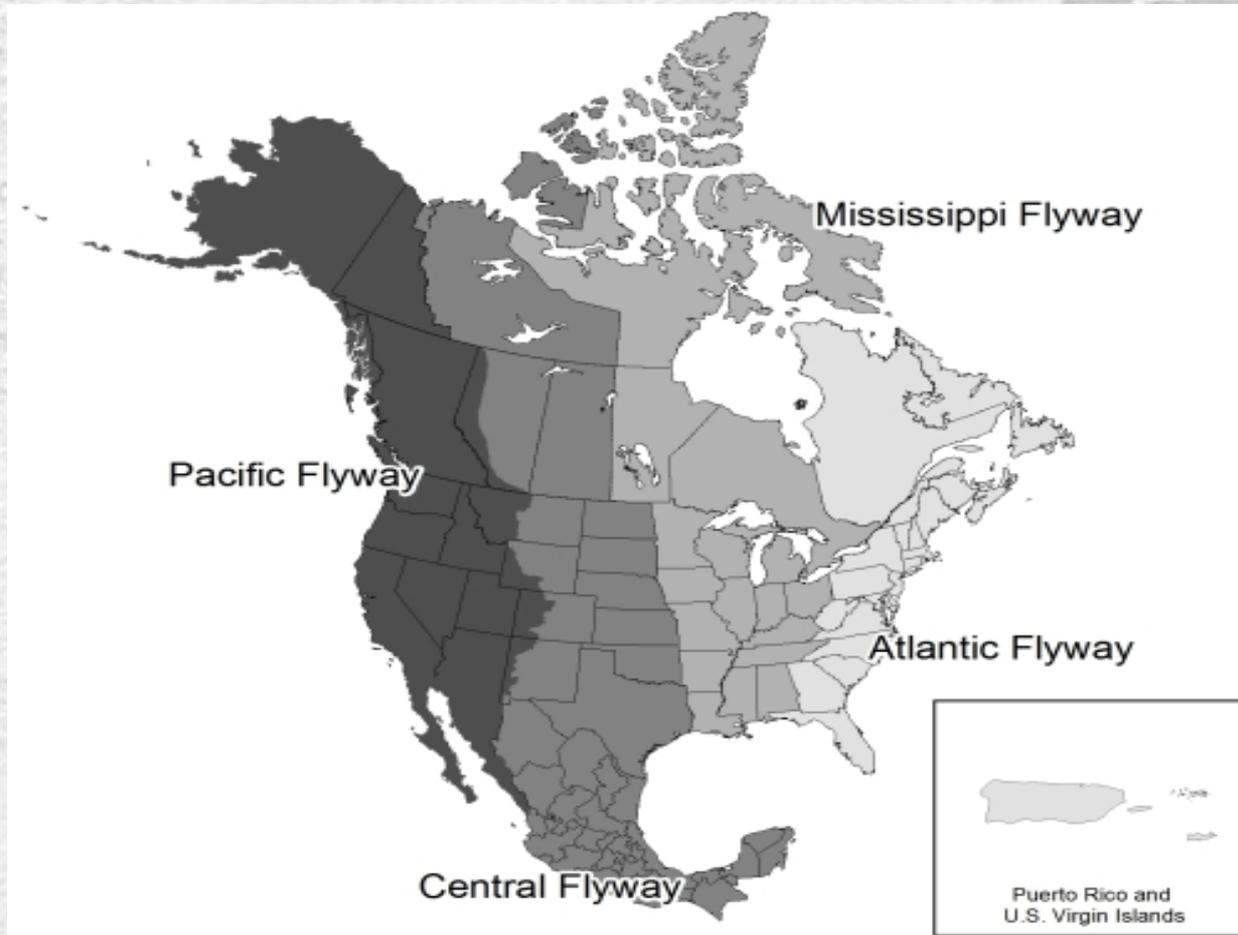


# Waterfowl Facts and Identification

By John Martsh  
R-3 Program Manager

# North American Flyway Map



Credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Migratory Bird Program

# Prairie Pothole Region



Credit: Prairie Pothole Joint Venture website



# Canada's Boreal Forest



Credit: Boreal Songbird Initiative

# Relative Sizes of Waterfowl



Credit: USFWS

# New Mexico Waterfowl

- A total of 26 species of waterfowl are found in New Mexico.
  - 10 Dabbling Ducks
  - 9 Diving Ducks
  - 1 Stiff-tailed Duck
  - 4 Geese
  - 2 Swans

# Body Parts for Identification

Pay attention to the shape and colors of the:

- Bill, head, wings (specifically speculum) and chest, on waterfowl.
- Drab versus bright colors to identify gender.
- Can you see vermiculation (pattern of dense, irregular gray lines) or the speculum (colorful portion of drake or hen's wing)?

# Waterfowl Life Cycle

Once mature, waterfowl go through a yearly cycle:

Fall Migration=>Winter=>Spring Migration=>

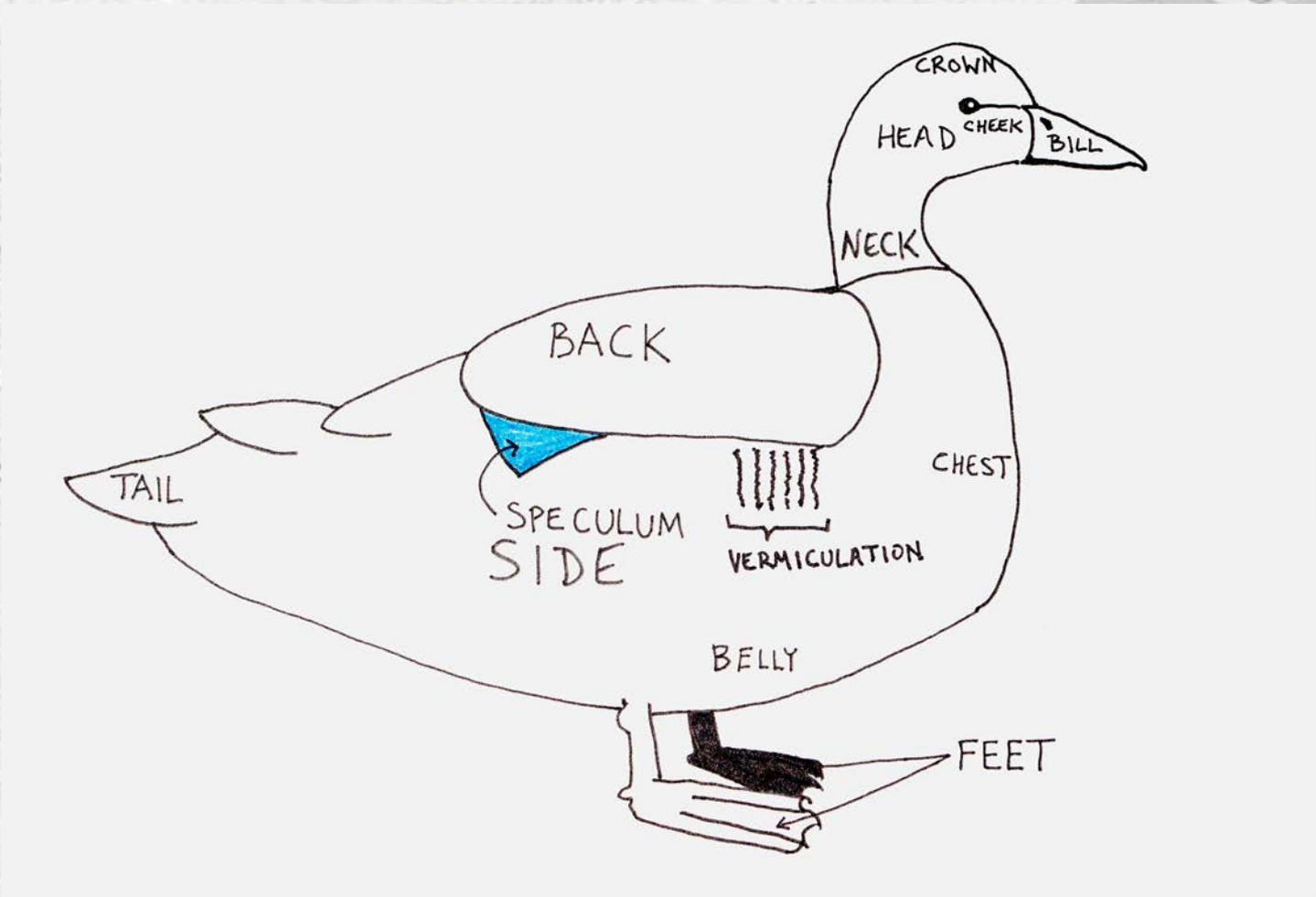
Pre-Nesting=>Nesting=>Hatching=>Brood

Rearing=>Post Breeding=>Molt

Females have shorter lifespans than males due to stress of breeding, nesting and raising young.

Wild swans live longest, averaging 20-30 years, geese average 10-24 years and ducks 5-10 years.

# Waterfowl Nomenclature



Artwork by John Martsh

# Ducks

- Divided into 2 broad categories.
- Size difference between drakes (males) and hens (females).
- Drakes are more colorful than hens, which tend to be drab, mottled colors.

# Dabbling Ducks

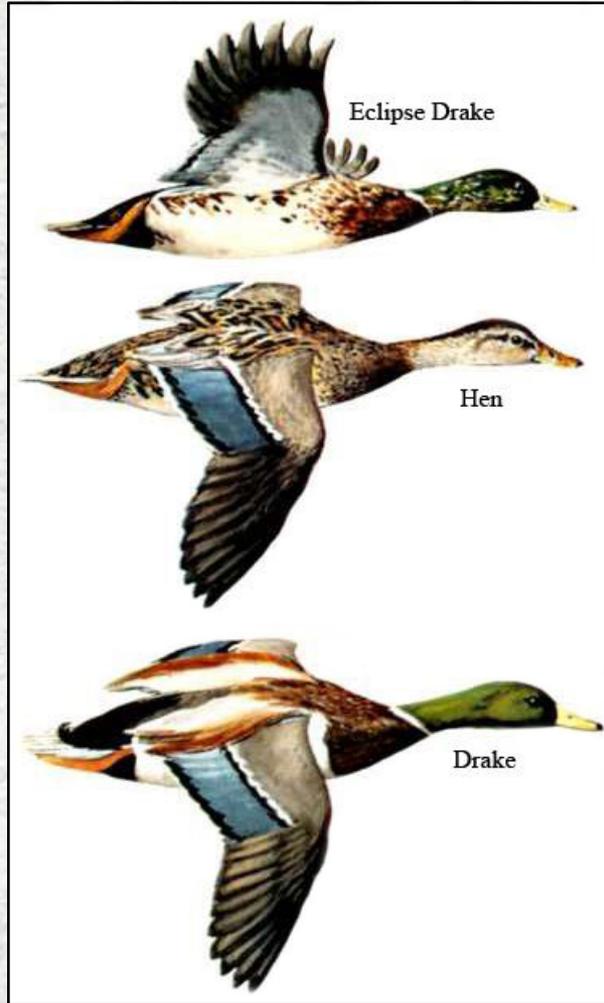
- Also called puddle ducks.
- Feed by bobbing their head underwater.
- Prefer smaller, shallow bodies of water with nearby cover.
- Legs exit from the middle of their belly.
- Swim with tail high above water's surface.
- Spring into the air on take off.
- More likely than divers to feed in agricultural fields because they walk and run well on land.

# Mallard



Credit: Mark Watson

# Mallard



Credit: USFWS

# Mexican Mallard



Credit: Jim Stuart



# Northern Pintail

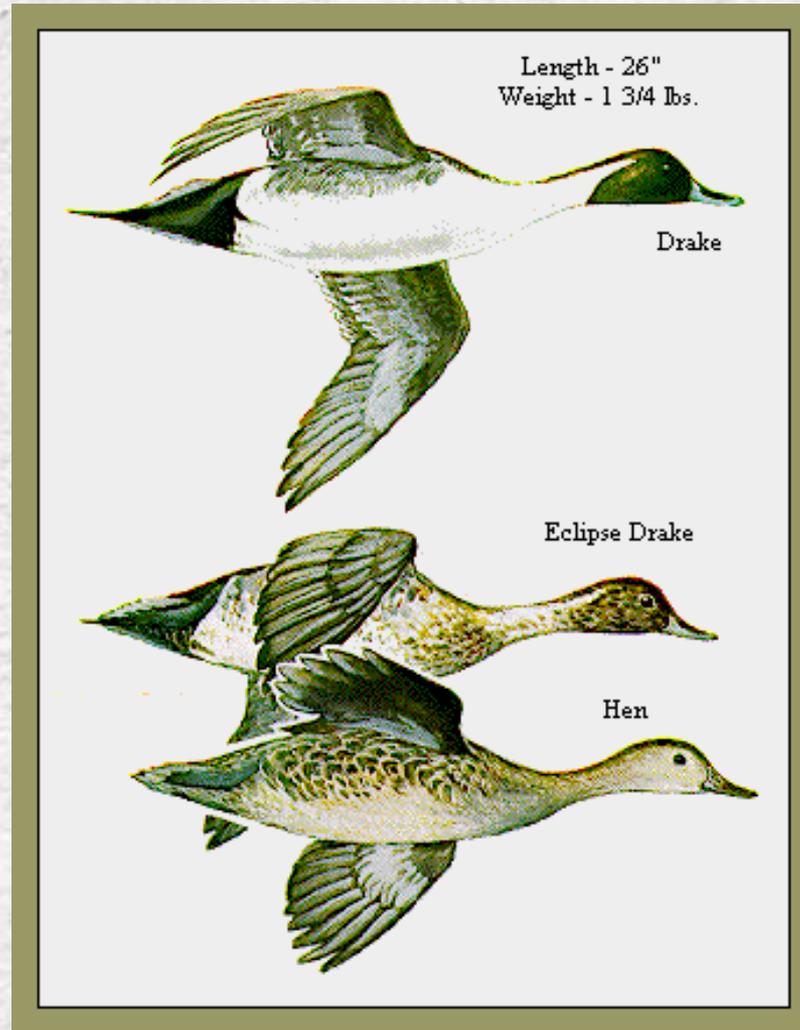


Credit: Jim Stuart



Credit: Jim Stuart

# Northern Pintail



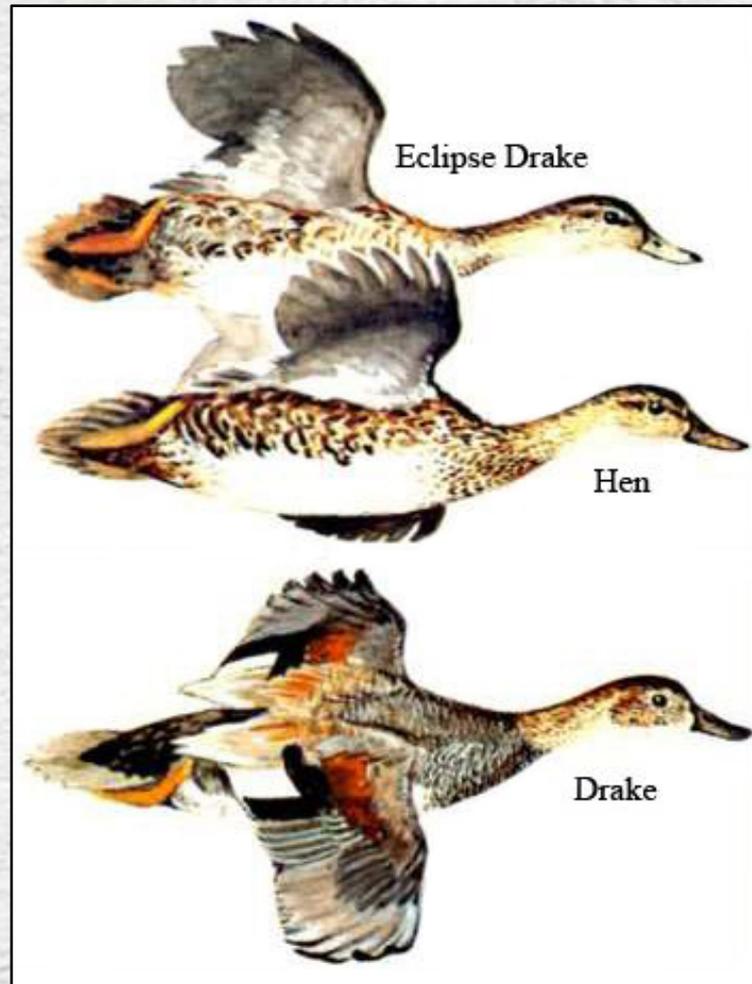
Credit: USFWS

# Gadwall



Credit: Jim Stuart

# Gadwall



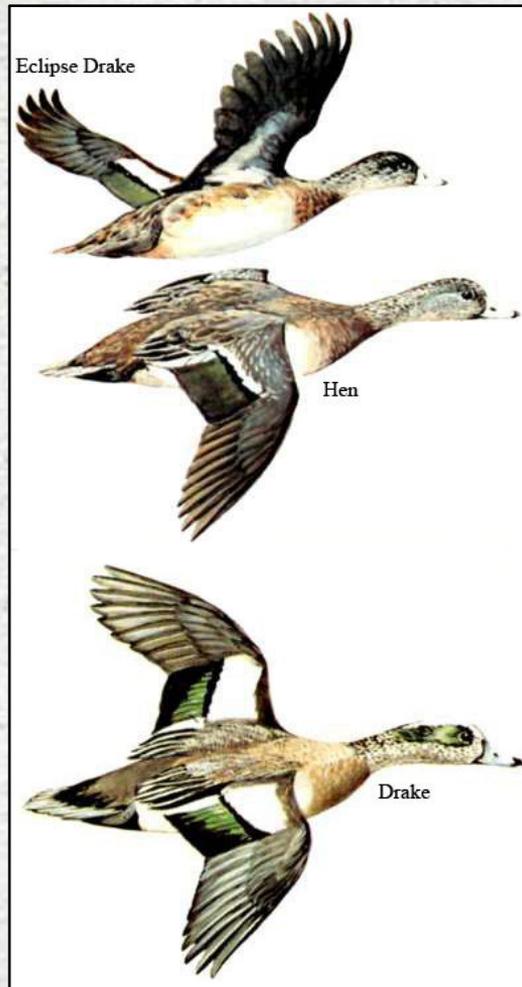
Credit: USFWS

# American Wigeon



Credit: Jim Stuart

# American Wigeon



Credit: USFWS

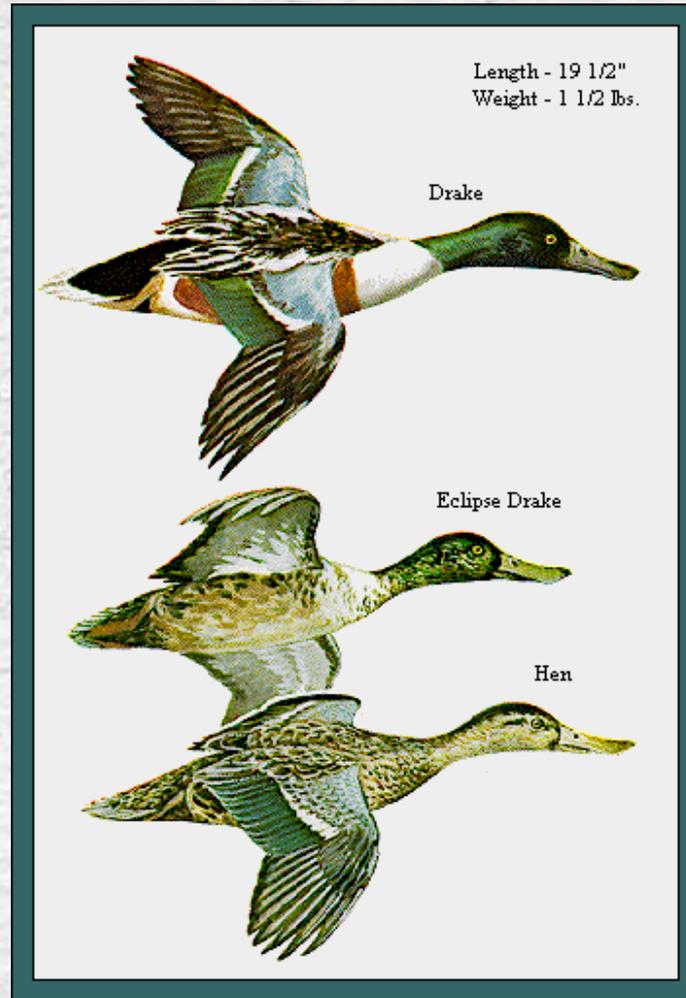


# Northern Shoveler



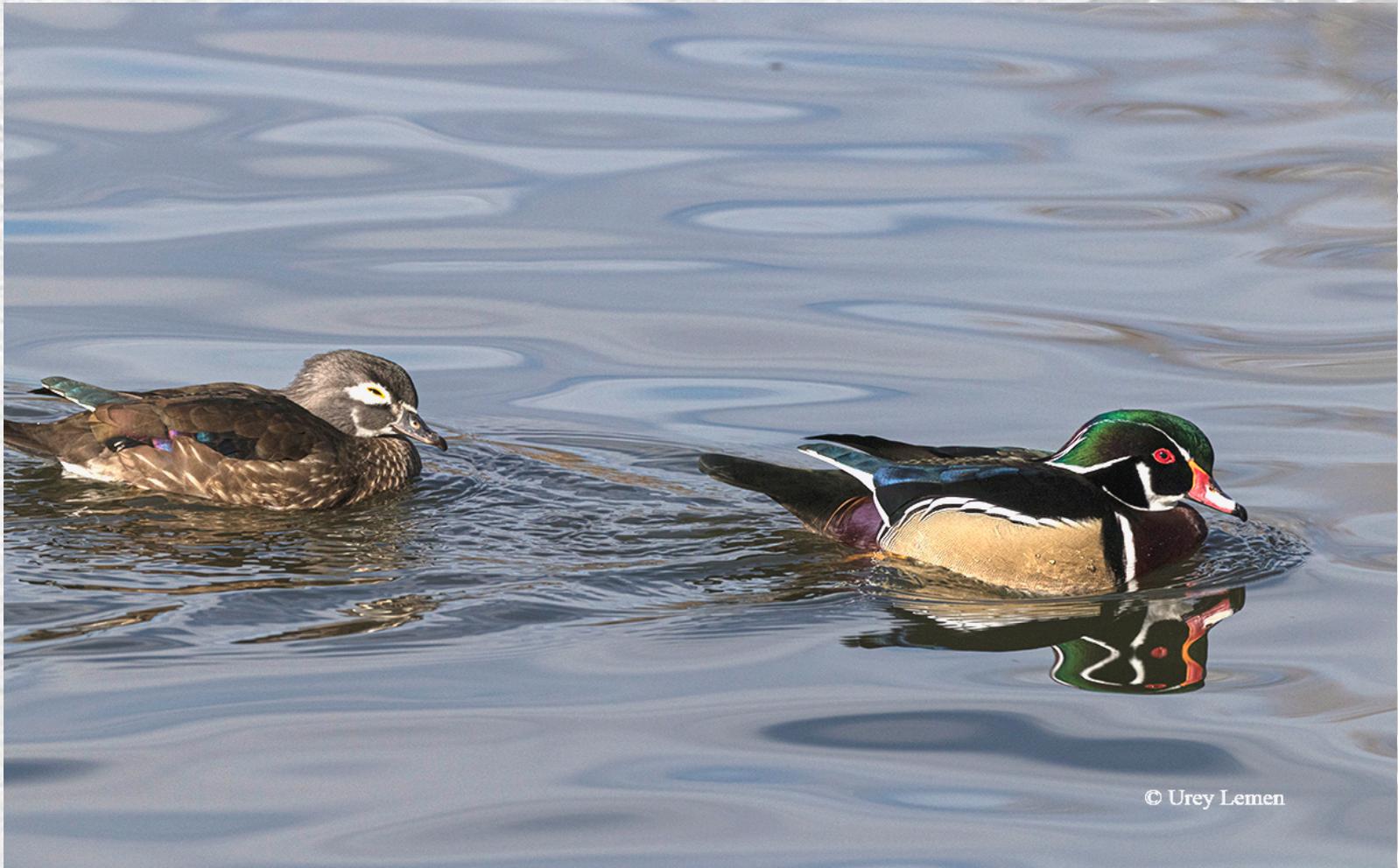
Credit: Jim Stuart

# Northern Shoveler

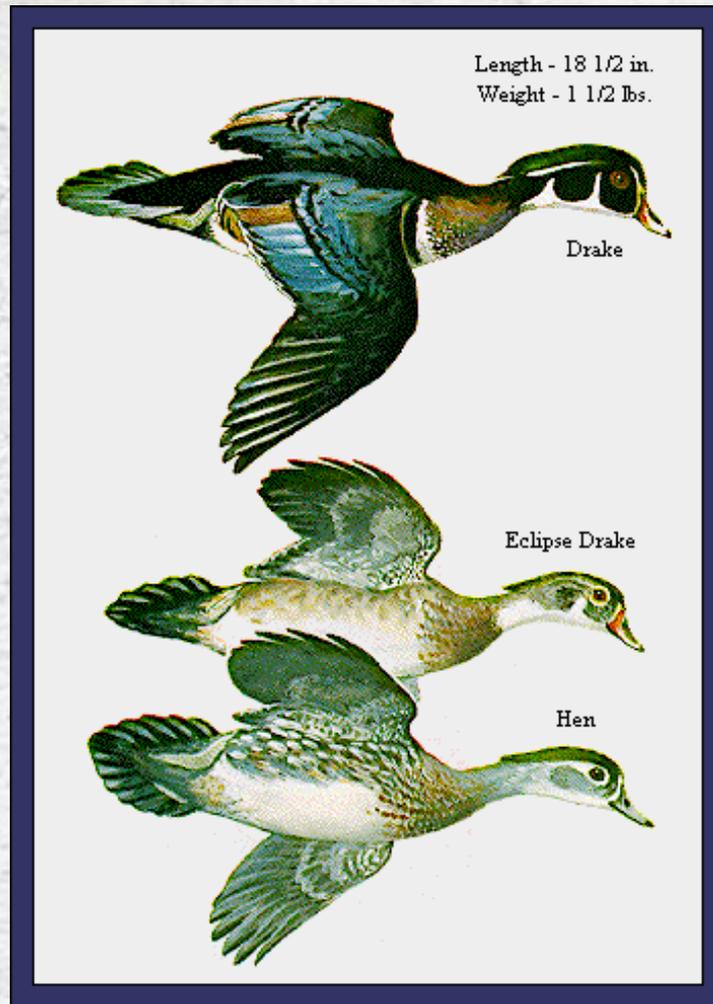


Credit: USFWS

# Wood Duck



# Wood Duck



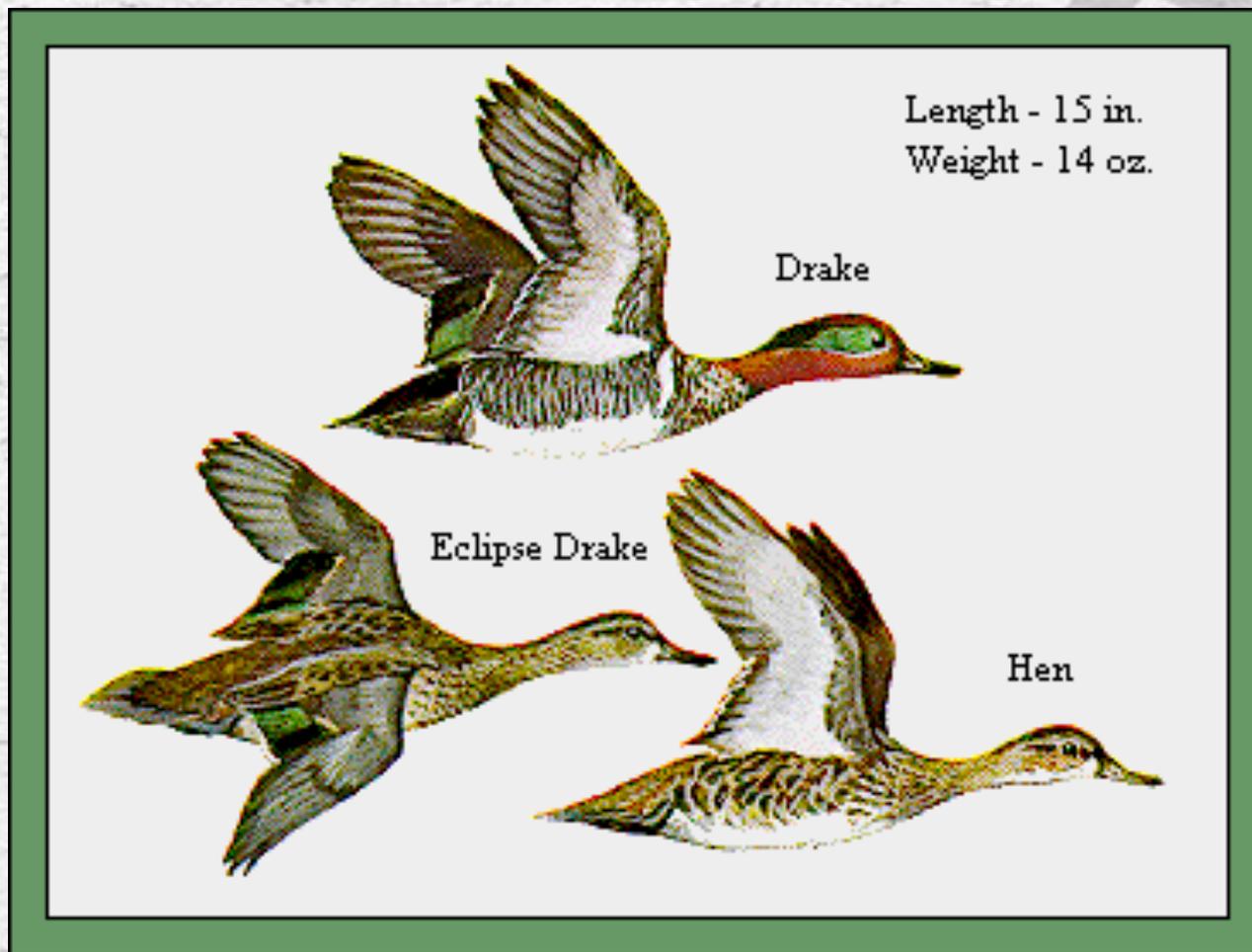
Credit: USFWS

# Green-Winged Teal



Credit: Jim Stuart

# Green-Winged Teal



Credit: USFWS

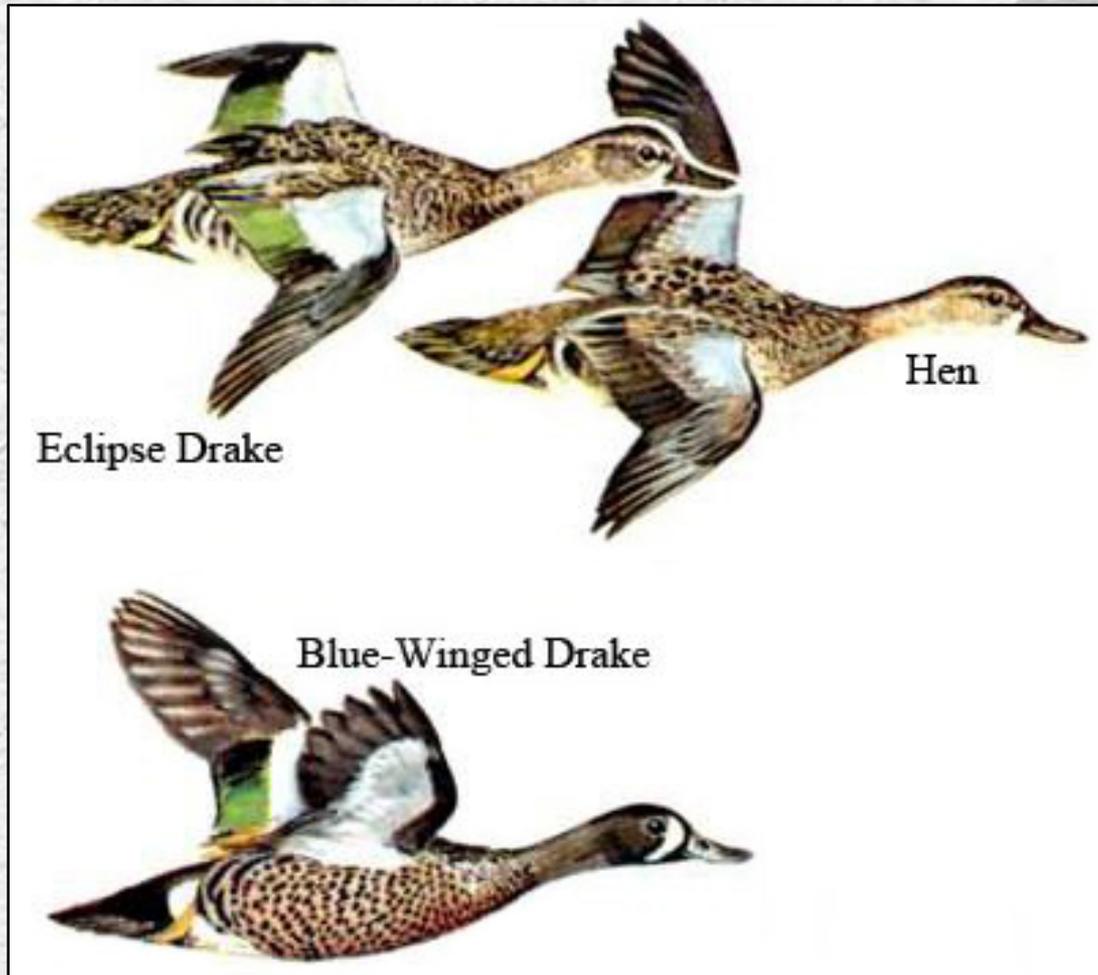
# Blue-Winged Teal



Credit: Jim Stuart



# Blue-Winged Teal



Credit: USFWS

# Cinnamon Teal



Credit: Mark Watson



# Cinnamon Teal



Credit: USFWS



# Diving Ducks

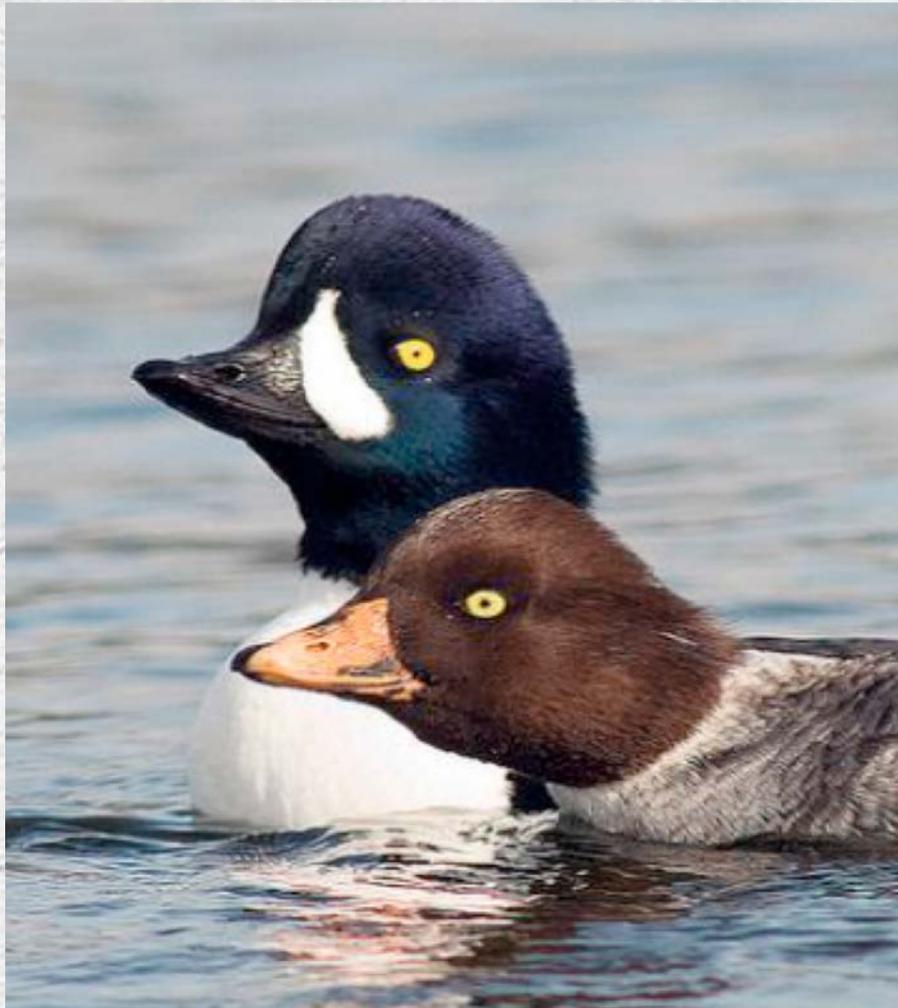
- Feed by diving completely underwater.
- Prefer larger, open, deep bodies of water and typically swim towards the middle.
- Legs exit towards the rear of the body.
- Swim with tail close to the water.
- “Walk” along water’s surface on take off.

# Common Goldeneye



Credit: Jim Stuart

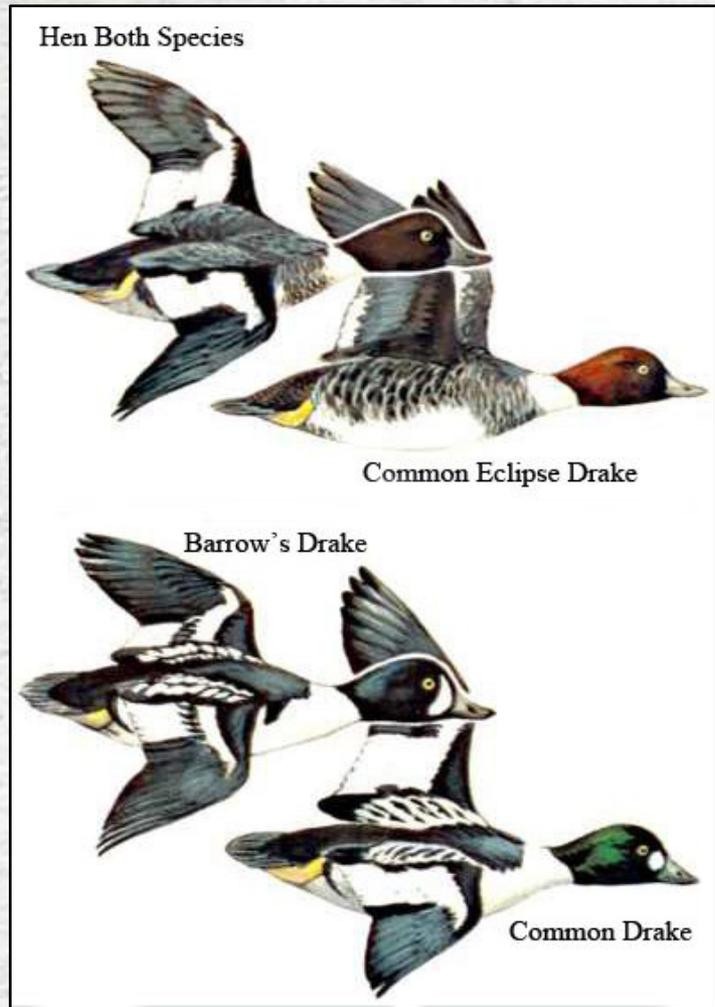
# Barrow's Goldeneye



Credit: USFWS



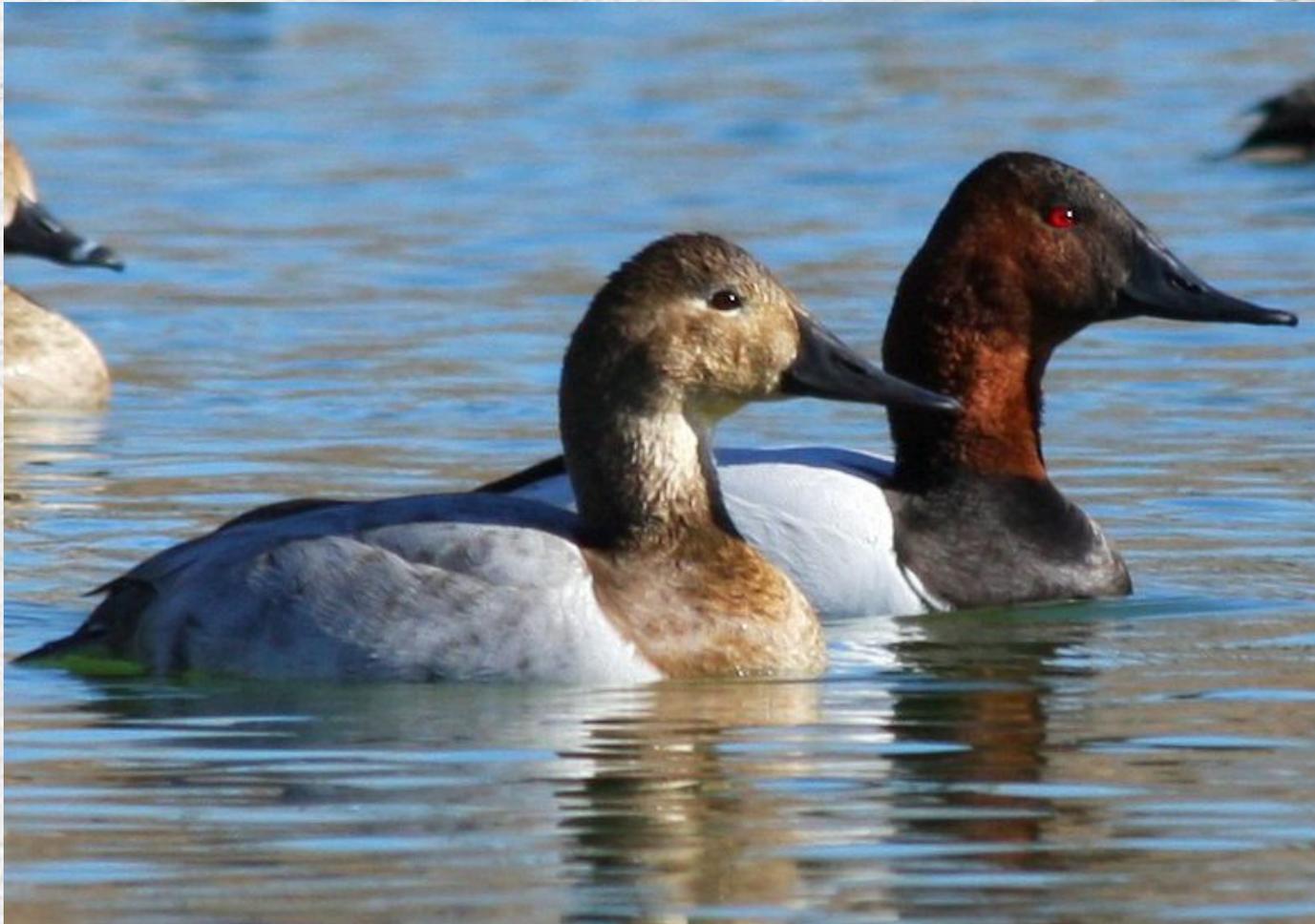
# Goldeneyes



Credit: USFWS



# Canvasback

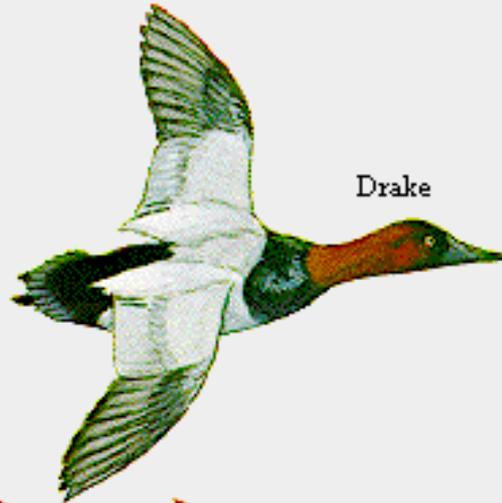


Credit: Jim Stuart

# Canvasback

Length - 22 in.  
Weight - 3 lbs.

Drake



Hen



Eclipse Drake

Credit: USFWS



# Redhead



Credit: Mark Watson



# Redhead

Length - 20 in.  
Weight - 2 1/2 lbs.



Drake



Eclipse Drake



Hen

Credit: USFWS

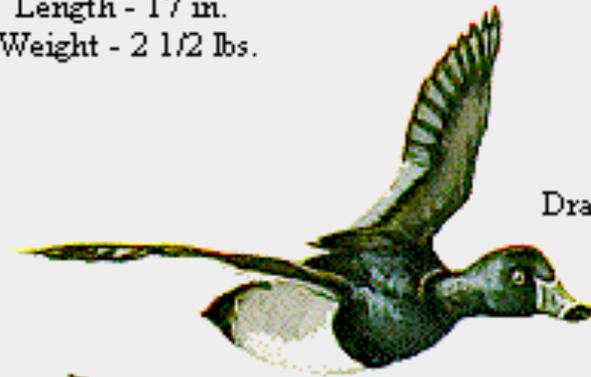
# Ring-necked Duck



© Urey Lemen

# Ring-necked Duck

Length - 17 in.  
Weight - 2 1/2 lbs.



Drake



Eclipse Drake

Hen

Credit: USFWS

# Lesser Scaup

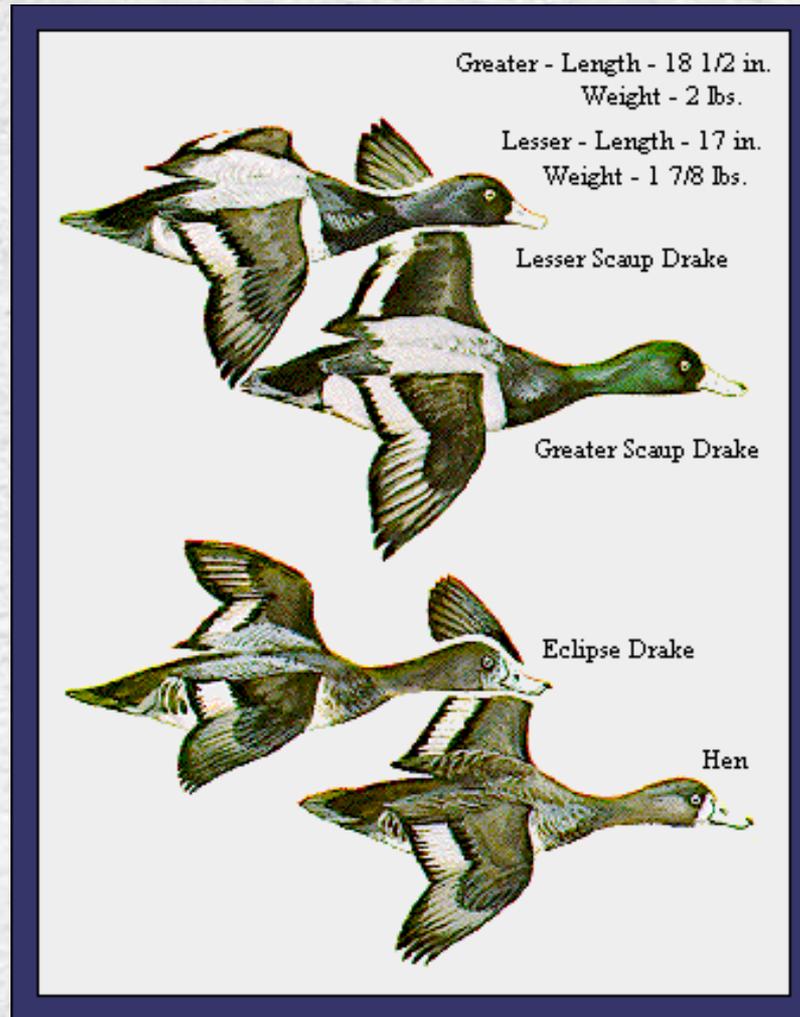


Credit: Jim Stuart



Credit: Jim Stuart

# Lesser Scaup



Credit: USFWS

# Bufflehead

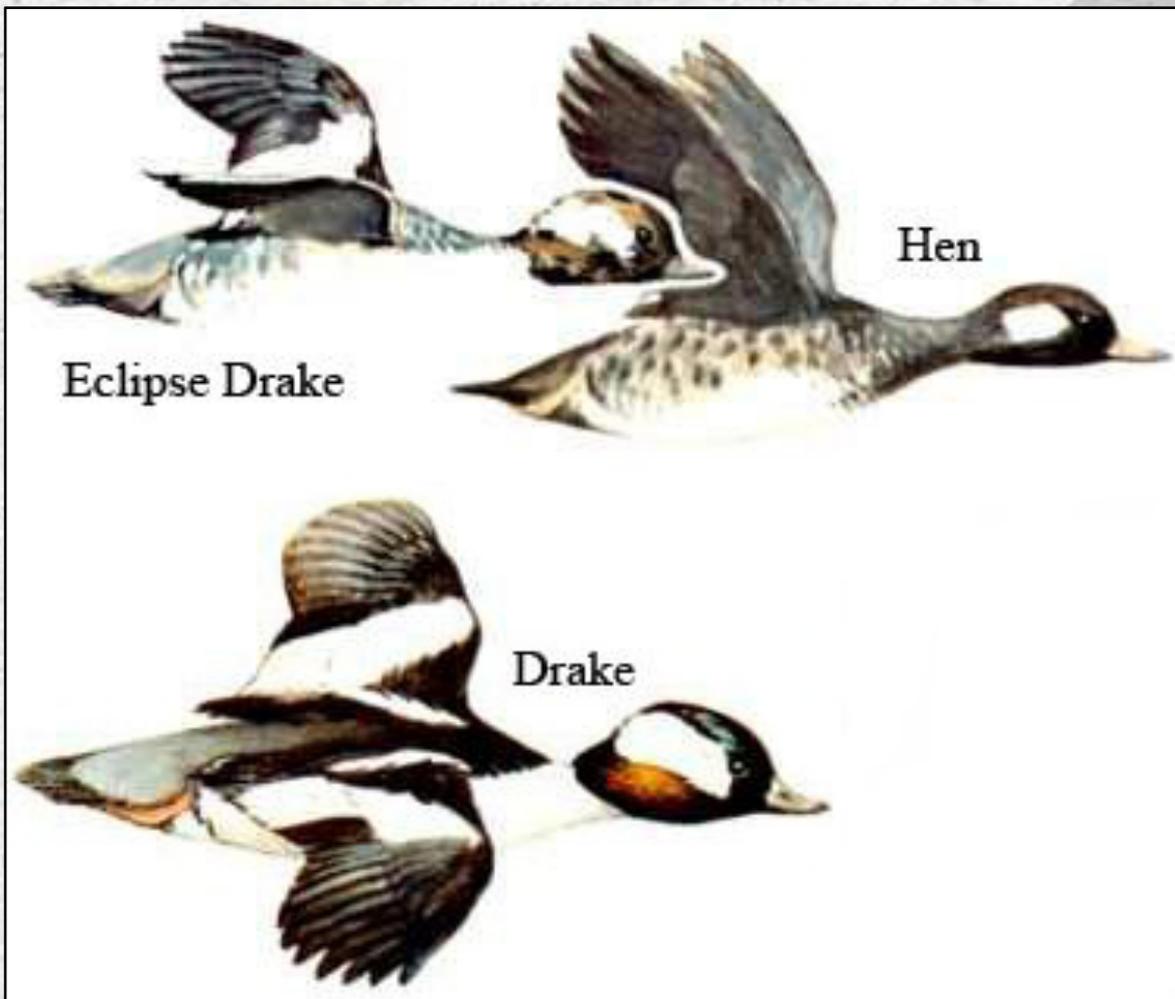


Credit: Mark Watson



Credit: Jim Stuart

# Bufflehead



Credit: USFWS

# Common Merganser



Credit: Mark Watson

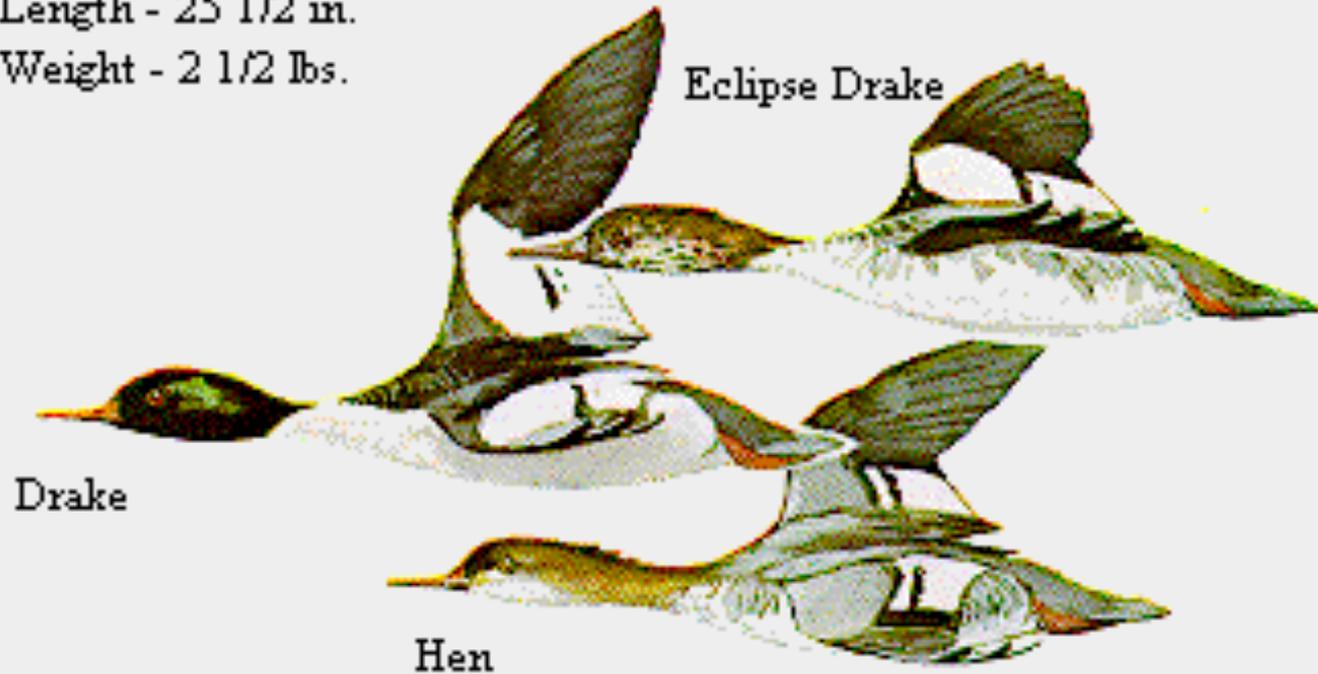


Credit: Mark Watson

# Common Merganser

Length - 25 1/2 in.

Weight - 2 1/2 lbs.



Credit: USFWS

# Hooded Merganser

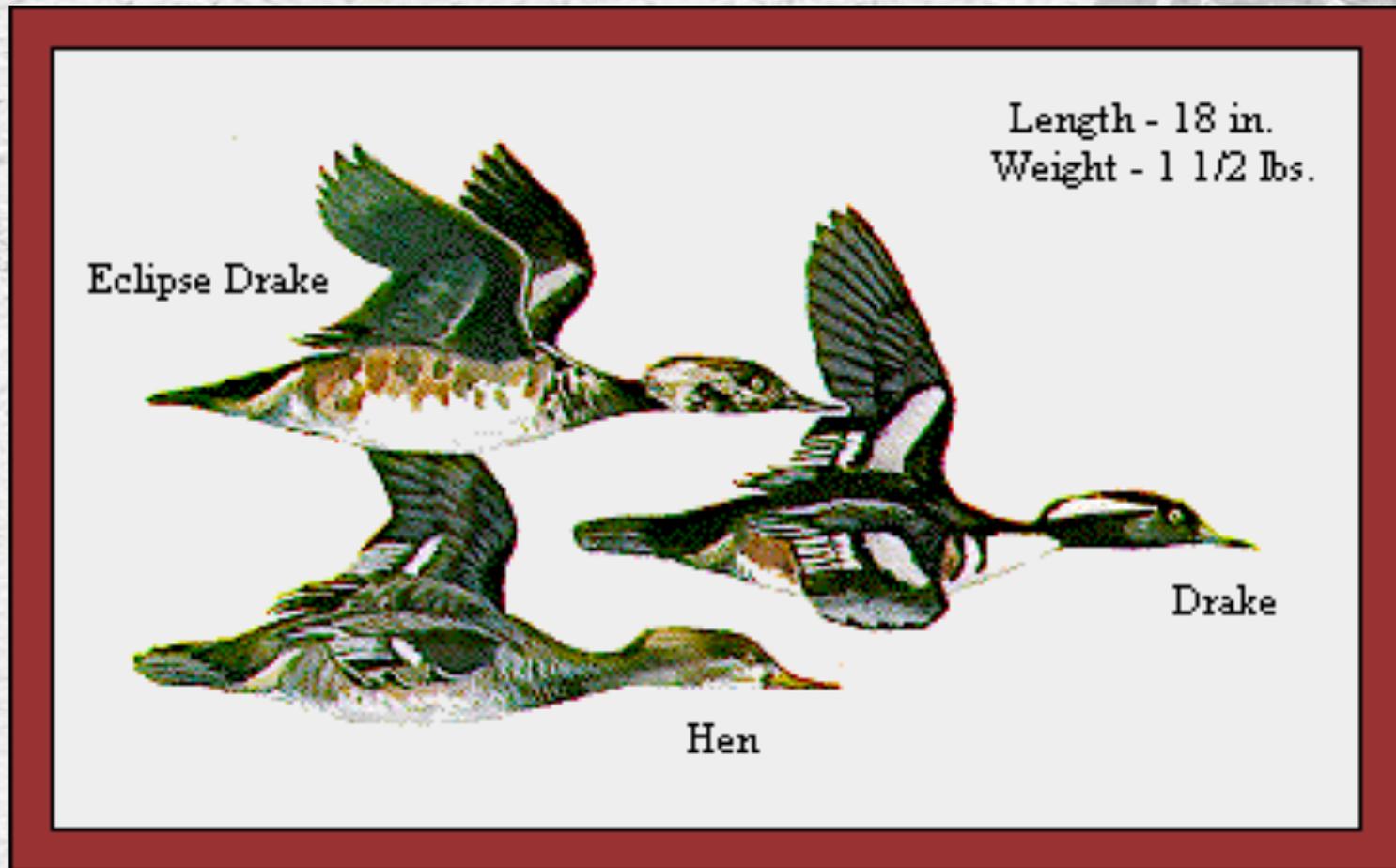


Credit: Mark Watson



Credit: Mark Watson

# Hooded Merganser



Credit: USFWS

# Stiff-tailed Duck

- Long, stiff-tail feathers, which are raised when the bird is resting.
- Long, puffy bill.
- Legs are set far back on body, making walking on land difficult.
- This duck rarely leaves the water.

# Ruddy Duck



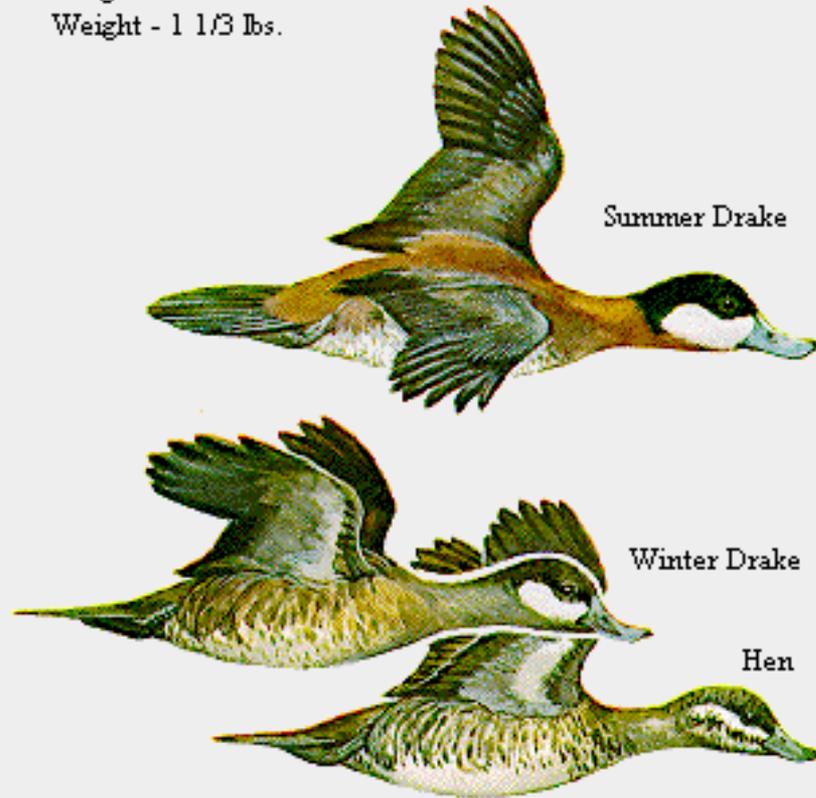
Credit: Jim Stuart



Credit: USFWS

# Ruddy Duck

Length - 15 1/2 in.  
Weight - 1 1/3 lbs.



Credit: USFWS

# Geese

- Geese are larger waterfowl than ducks, averaging about 6.5 pounds and 30” in length.
- Except for a slight size difference, males and females appear identical.
- Geese are quite vocal.
- Generally stick to larger flocks than ducks.
- Flocks are typically family groups.

# Ross' Goose



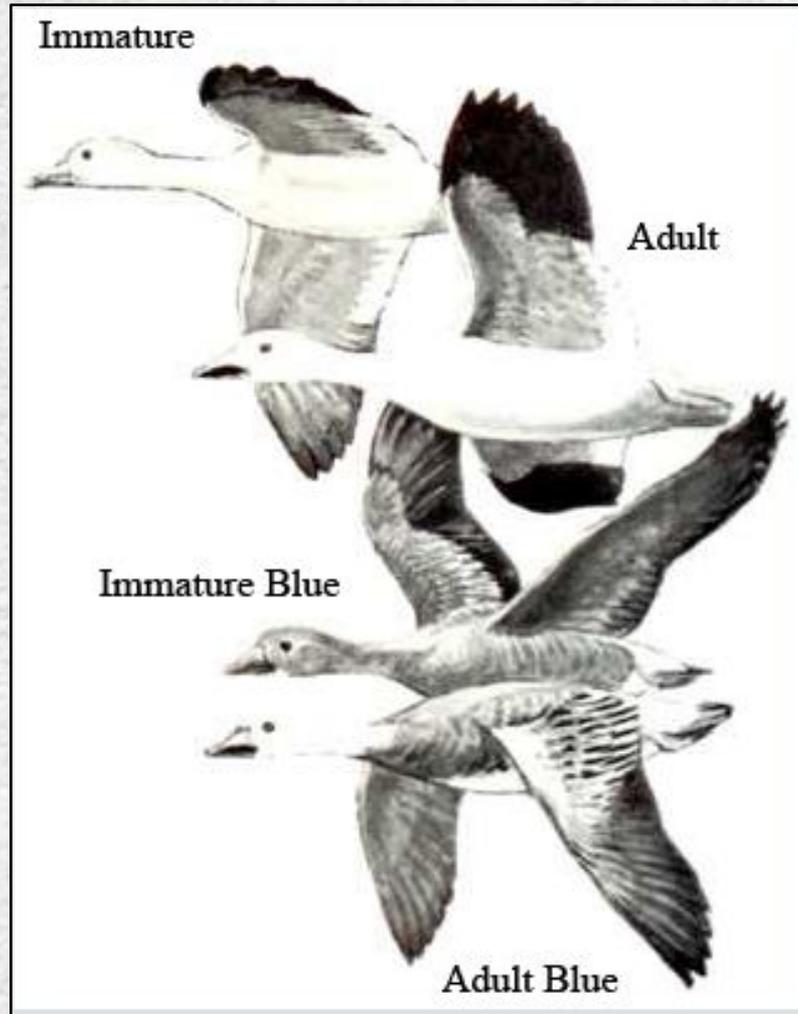
Credit: USFWS

# Snow Goose



Credit: John Martsh

# Snow Goose



Credit: USFWS

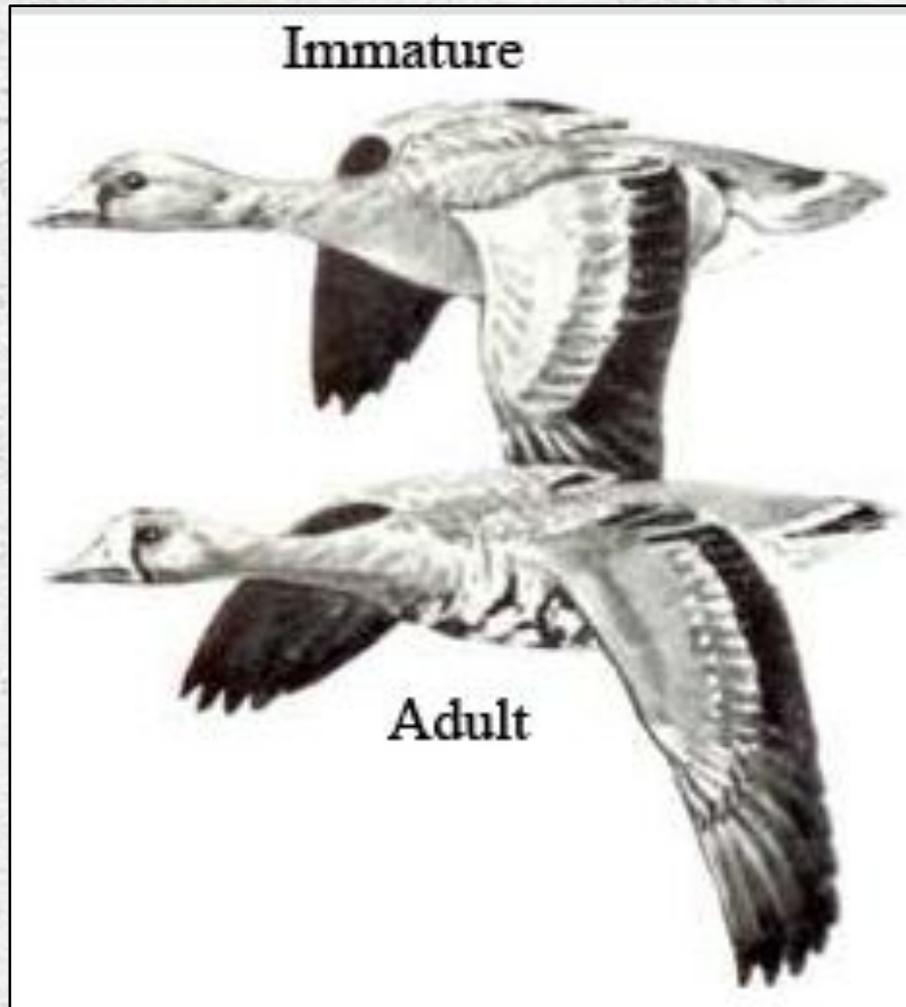
# White-fronted Goose



Credit: USFWS



# White-fronted Goose



Credit: USFWS

# Canada Goose



# Canada Goose



Credit: USFWS



# Swans

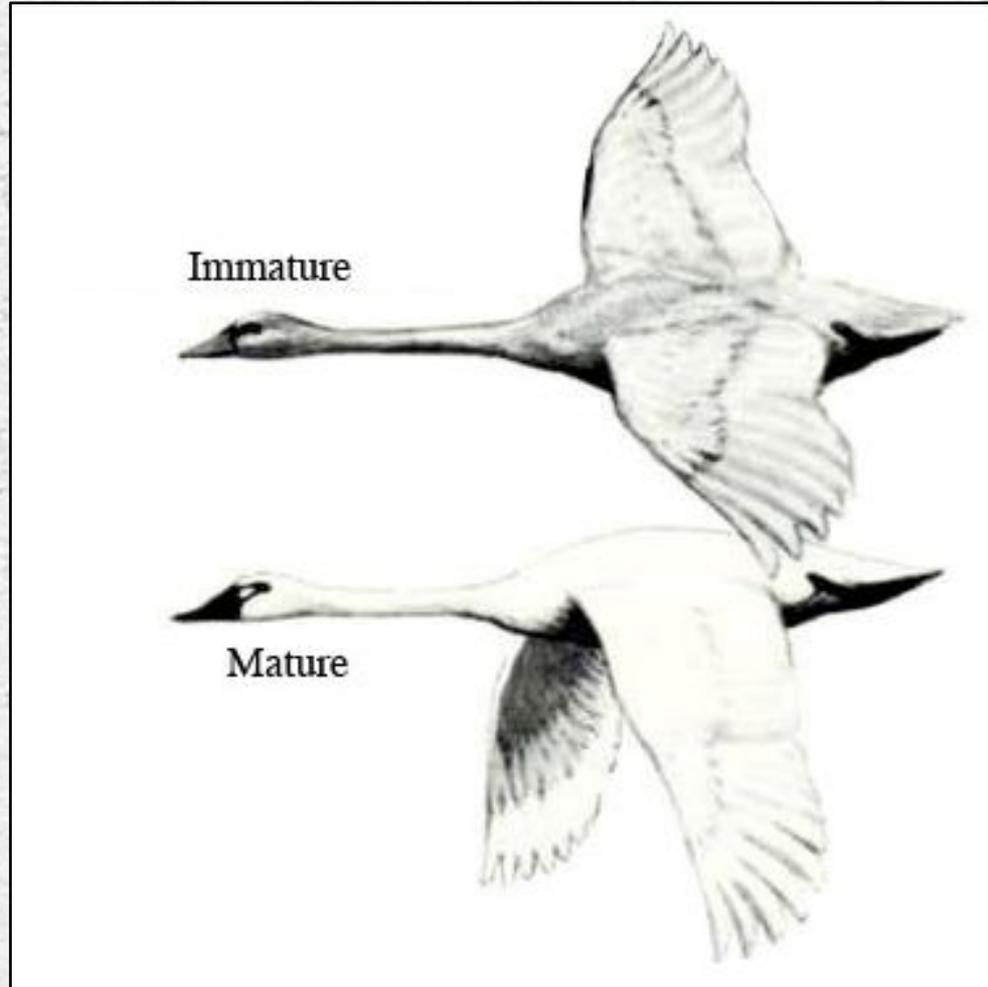
- Swans are the largest waterfowl, averaging a weight of 22 pounds and 56” in length.
- Males and females appear identical except for a slight size difference.
- Tundra and trumpeter both have black bills with white bodies, but mature tundra has a yellow spot on bill in front of eye.
- Trumpeter is much heavier and longer.

# Tundra Swan



Credit: Mark Watson

# Tundra Swan



Credit: USFWS



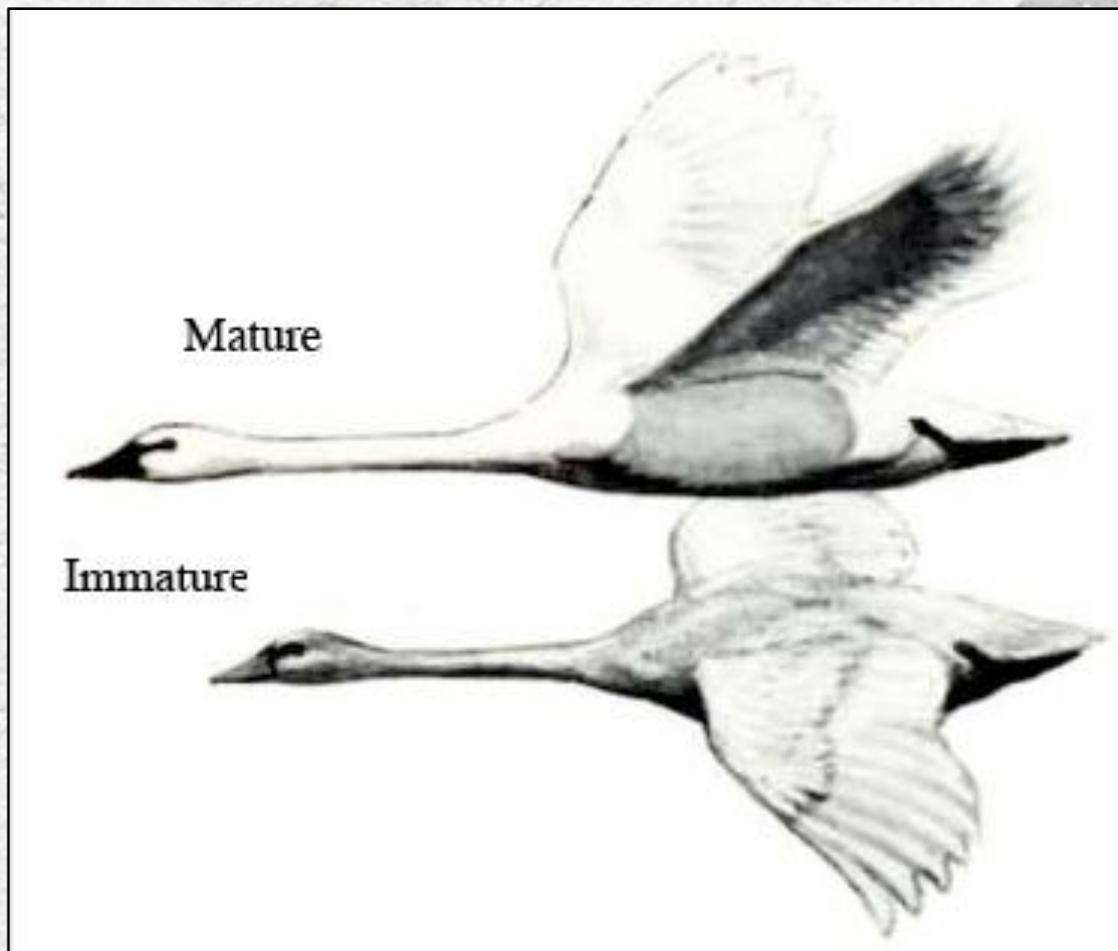
# Trumpeter Swan



Credit: Jim Stuart



# Trumpeter Swan



Credit: USFWS



# Conclusion

- Find a location with resident waterfowl year round.
- Use waterfowl identification booklet or cell phone application.
- Practice identifying ducks, geese and swans.
- Identify species.
- Identify gender.