



## WATERFOWL-DUCKS

### KEY FACTS:

Waterfowl are found on or near water. They have long necks and webbed feet. Ducks are smaller than geese.

Wild ducklings can look similar in some cases, but their behaviors are quite different, and it is important to know what the orphan is. If possible, ask a caller for a picture.

Here are a few common ducks that you will likely encounter:

**Mallard ducks** are the most common ducks and the males are easily recognizable by their green head, yellow bill, and white neck ring. The females are brown with an orange yellow bill and whitish tail. They are 'dabbling ducks' – they eat by dipping into the water and eating underwater plants. They never dive.

### Wood Ducks

Males are iridescent chestnut and green, with ornate patterns on nearly every feather. Females are brown with a distinct white pattern around the eyes. These birds live in wooded swamps, where they nest in holes in trees. They have strong claws that can grip bark and perch on branches.



### NESTS

Nests are usually on the ground near water. Wood ducks can make nests in tree cavities. Nests are built in March and April.

### Mallards-

- Females lay between 8-13 eggs in a clutch. Incubation period: 25-29 days. Chicks hatch alert and covered in down and are ready to leave the nest within 13 to 16 hours.

### Wood Ducks-

- Females lay between 6-16 eggs. Incubation period: 28-37 days. Chicks hatch alert and covered in down. Hatchlings jump down from the nest after the first day.

### IF YOUNG BIRDS ARE FOUND WANDERING AROUND ON THEIR OWN:

Look around for the parents. Young ducklings are unlikely to be on their own and are usually close to their parents. If there are no signs of the family, call a rehabilitator.

- Never put a lost duckling back with a mother duck unless you are absolutely sure it is the right mother. Another mother duck, or sometimes even other ducklings will reject the unrelated duckling or possibly even try to kill it.
- Never put a lost duckling back in the water without their family. They will not survive on their own.
- If rescue is necessary, ducklings should not be kept in water or have water in their container. They should be kept warm, dry, and quiet.
- Wood ducklings will attempt to jump out of a container. They need a dark low container with a lid and good cushioning.
- Other common ducks in MA are mergansers, teals, scoters, eiders, black, wigeons, goldeneyes, buffleheads, scaups, and canvasbacks.

### Who to call in MA with a permit for Waterfowl:

**Northeast:** Jodi Swenson: 978-325-250, Cape Ann Wildlife

**Southeast:** Sue Cowan: Cell 508-317-7140. Home 508-866-3981, Cowan Critters

**West of Worcester:** Ceacy Henderson: 413-768-8928, Colrain Center for Conservation and Wildlife

