
Mallard

Anas platyrhynchos

Class: *Aves*

Order: *Anseriformes*

Family: *Anatidae*

Characteristics:

Male mallards, known as drakes, are arguably the most easily recognizable duck with their bright green head, yellow bill and bright orange feet. The female, called a hen, displays the more common drab brown coloration of female ducks but can be identified by the bright blue stripe on the wing bordered by white and black.

Behavior:

Mallards are dabbling ducks, which means they dip their head and upper body into the water to feed. They rarely dive completely under the water. A female mallard's call sounds like the characteristic loud duck "quack." Males make more of a chattering, low-pitched sound.

Reproduction:

Mallards build a nest on the ground or in a protected cavity and the female lays about 12 eggs. The incubation period is around 28 days. During mating season, the males are quite aggressive and territorial toward other mallards but once the eggs are laid they leave the female and join up with bachelor groups. Once hatched, the ducklings leave the nest within 24-hours to feed with mom (Audubon).

Diet:

Wild: Plants, grains, invertebrates, fish, amphibians

Zoo: Wood ducks you see in the Idaho Falls Zoo are wild animals that have flown in, not part of the collection. They come mainly for food but also safety and nesting, so they'll eat the zoo animals' food of scratch grains, greens, and waterfowl pellets.

Conservation:

Mallards do not appear to be declining in any of their regions.

FYI:

Mallards are thought to be the most abundant duck on Earth (National Geographic).



Range & Habitat:

Any freshwater



Lifespan: up to 20 years in captivity, 5-10 years in the wild.

Special Adaptations: Mallards, like some other ducks, can and will mate with domestic ducks.

IUCN Conservation Status:

Least Concern

