

# Ducks

low the leader" line. A very large duck; drakes show more white than any other species.

Winters from ice-free water in the north to the coastal waters of the Southern States. The only call seems to be a startled croak.

## SPECIES WITH LIMITED RANGES

These birds: Harlequin, Oldsquaw, Fulvous Tree Duck, Surf Scoter, Common Scoter, White-Winged Scoter, Black-bellied Tree Duck and Common Eider; except the tree ducks, are primarily of the sea.

Harlequins go a little further south than Long Island and Puget Sound and north to Alaska. Oldsquaws have essentially the same range, plus the Great Lakes.

Fulvous tree ducks are beginning to spread into the east from Louisiana west to California, while the black-bellied is still restricted to Texas.

Scoter hunting is heaviest in New England, where all three species are locally known as "coots." Some flocks migrate along the coast as far as the Carolinas on the Atlantic and lower California on the Pacific.

Common elders are only in the North Atlantic, but related forms occur in the northwest and Alaska.

## DIVING DUCKS

Diving ducks frequent the larger, deeper lakes and rivers, and coastal bays and inlets.

The colored wing patches of these birds lack the brilliance of the speculums of puddle ducks, but are still important field marks in most species. Since most of them have short tails, their huge, paddle feet may be used as rudders in flight, and are often visible on flying birds. When launching into flight, most of this group patter along the water before becoming airborne.

They feed by diving, often to considerable depths. To escape danger, they can travel great distances underwater, emerging only enough to show their head or bill tip before submerging again.

Their diets of fish, shellfish, mollusks, and aquatic plants make them second choice, as a group, for sportsmen. Canvasbacks and redheads fattened on eel grass or wild celery are notable exceptions.

Since their wings are small in proportion to the size or weight of their bodies, they have a rapid wing beat in comparison with puddle ducks.

## PUDDLE DUCKS

Puddle ducks are typically birds of fresh, shallow marshes and rivers rather than of large lakes and bays. They are good divers,

but usually feed by dabbling or tipping rather than submerging.

The speculum, or colored wing patch, is generally iridescent and bright, and often a telltale field mark.

Any ducks feeding in croplands will likely be puddle ducks, for most of this group are sure-footed and can walk and run on land. Their food is mostly vegetable, and grain-fed mallards or pintails or acorn-fattened wood ducks are highly regarded.

They ride higher in the water than divers and launch themselves directly upward when rising, whether from land or water.

# Hunter Education

Continued from Page 8

Every hunter (including out-of-state hunters) born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, must successfully complete a Hunter Education Training Course. Minimum age of certification is 12 years and cost is \$10.

If you were born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, and you are:

- under 12 years of age, you must be accompanied\*.
- age 12 through 16, you must successfully complete a hunter education course, or you must be accompanied\*.
- age 17 and over, you must successfully complete a hunter education course; or purchase a "Hunter Education Deferral,"

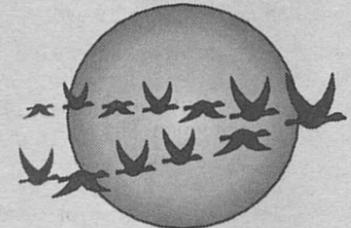
and you must be accompanied\*.

**New: Hunter Education Deferral (cost: \$10)** - Allows a person 17 years of age or older who has not completed a hunter education program to defer completion for up to one year. A deferral may only be obtained once and is only valid until the end of the current license year. A person who has been convicted or has received deferred adjudication for violation of the mandatory hunter education requirement is prohibited from applying for a deferral. Take the course by August 31 of the current license year and receive a \$5

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# SPORTSMAN'S HUNTING LODGE

1700 FM 102 North  
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Owners: Doug & Janie Schwemm

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With over 40 years dedicated to food and hospitality, the Schwemms guarantee you a true Sportsman's experience in Eagle Lake.



**GOOSE HUNTING CAPITAL OF THE WORLD**  
Eagle Lake, Texas

Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture

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