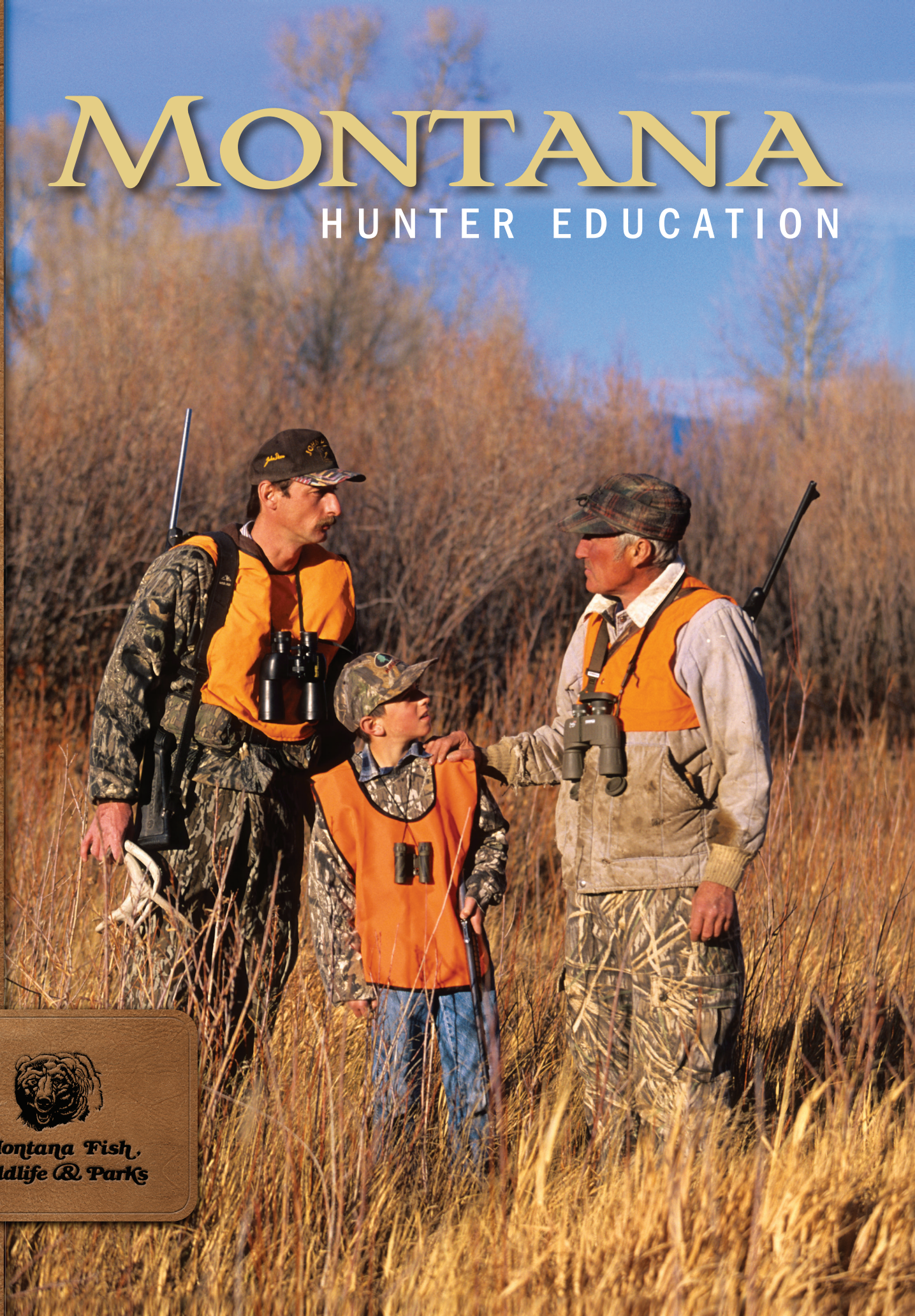


FOURTH EDITION

# MONTANA

## HUNTER EDUCATION



*Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks*



Dear Hunter Education Student:

Montana's hunter education instructors invite you to participate in a hunter education course. As you'll see, hunting is still very much a way of life in this state, and Montanans are proud of their hunting heritage.

Bountiful landscapes, clean water and air, and few inhabitants all make this an ideal place for wildlife and hunters to roam. Big game populations are at or near record numbers, and hunting access is good. Combine all of these factors, and you have all the components in place for some very special hunting.

This untamed and rugged country, however, can be unforgiving. We urge you to plan your hunt carefully and to always keep safety in mind. Being prepared and knowing what to expect are key ingredients for a memorable hunt. Please study all the information in this manual, and take the time before your hunt to carefully review Montana's hunting regulations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your instructor or contact any Fish, Wildlife & Parks office.

Hunters have worked hard to conserve Montana's wildlife populations and champion its hunting traditions. Keeping this heritage alive requires all hunters to be safe, legal, and responsible.

This manual is dedicated to the hundreds of volunteers who serve as hunter education instructors in Montana. These dedicated men and women give freely of their time, knowledge, and experience to help Montanans in becoming safe, responsible, and involved stewards of our wildlife and hunting heritage. To all of our instructors in the state, we owe a continuing debt of gratitude.

We wish you a lifetime of safe and enjoyable hunting.

Sincerely,  
Wayde Cooperider  
Outdoor Skills & Safety Supervisor

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# MONTANA

## HUNTER EDUCATION

### Wildlife Identification Guide



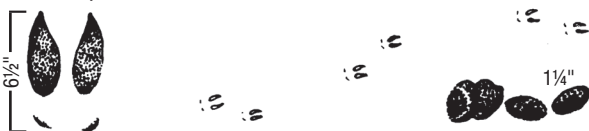
*Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks*

#### Moose



**Size:** length to 10 ft. (3 m); shoulder height to 7½ ft. (2.3 m); male weight to 1,400 lb. (635 kg); female weight 600-800 lb. (272.1-362.9 kg).

**Habitat:** wilderness forests near shallow lakes, marshes, and swamps.

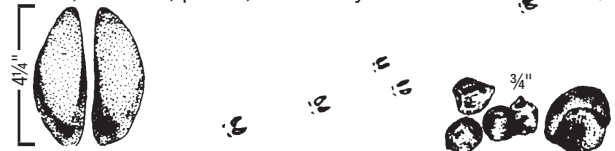


#### Elk



**Size:** length of bull to 9½ ft. (2.9 m); shoulder height 4-5 ft. (1.2-1.5 m); male weight 700-1,100 lb. (349.3-499 kg); female weight 500-650 lb. (226.8-294.8 kg).

**Habitat:** semi-open woodlands, mountain meadows in summer, foothills, plains, and valleys.





## White-Tailed Deer



**Size:** length to 6 ft. (1.8 m); shoulder height to 3¾ ft. (1.1 m); male weight 75-400 lb. (34-181.4 kg); female weight 50-150 lb. (22.7-113.4 kg).

**Habitat:** brushy areas, low mixed woodlands, and forest edges.



## Mule Deer



**Size:** length to 6½ ft. (2 m); shoulder height 3-3½ ft. (.9-1.1 m); male weight 125-400 lb. (61.2-181.4 kg); female weight 100-150 lb. (45.4-68 kg).

**Habitat:** forests, desert shrubs, plateaus, brushy areas, and rock uplands.

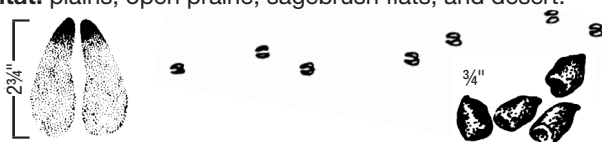


## Pronghorn



**Size:** length to 4½ ft. (1.4 m); shoulder height to 3½ ft. (1.1 m); weight 75-140 lb. (34-63.5 kg).

**Habitat:** plains, open prairie, sagebrush flats, and desert.

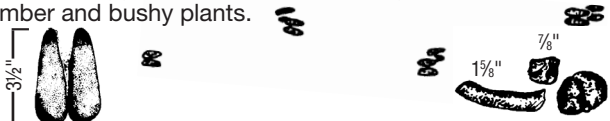


## Bighorn Sheep



**Size:** shoulder height 2½-3½ ft. (.8-1.1 m); male weight 125-275 lb. (56.7-124.7 kg); female weight 75-150 lb. (34-68 kg).

**Habitat:** rugged mountain slopes in high country with sparse timber and bushy plants.





## Mountain Goat



**Size:** head and body to 5 ft. (1.5 m); shoulder height 3½ ft. (1.1 m); weight to 276 lb. (125.2 kg).

**Habitat:** mountain tops above timberline in summer and lower elevations in winter.



## Grizzly Bear/ Brown Bear



**Size:** length 6-7 ft. (1.8-2.1 m); shoulder height 3-3½ ft. (.9-1.1 m); weight 325-850 lb. (147.4-385.6 kg).

**Habitat:** Grizzly bears can be found in woodlands, forests, alpine meadows, and prairies. In many habitats they prefer riparian areas along rivers and streams.

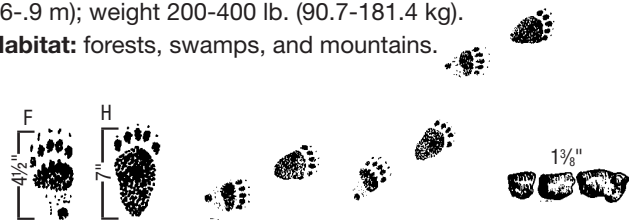


## Black Bear



**Size:** length 5-6 ft. (1.5-1.8 m); shoulder height 2-3 ft. (.6-.9 m); weight 200-400 lb. (90.7-181.4 kg).

**Habitat:** forests, swamps, and mountains.



## Mountain Lion/Cougar



**Size:** head and body 42-54 in. (106.7-137.2 cm); tail 30-36 in. (76.2-91.4 cm); shoulder height 26-31 in. (66-78.7 cm); weight 80-260 lb. (36.3-117.9 kg).

**Habitat:** forests, remote mountains, plains, and swamps.



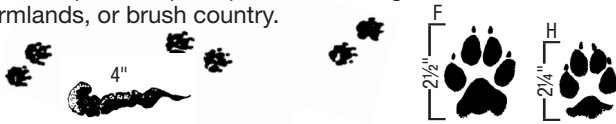


## Coyote



**Size:** head and body 46-49 in. (118-125 cm); tail 13-15 in. (33-38 cm); weight 24-31 lb. (11-14 kg).

**Habitat:** prefers open spaces such as grasslands, farmlands, or brush country.



## Wild Turkey



**Size:** male to 48 in. (121.9 cm); female to 36 in. (91.4 cm).

**Habitat:** open timberland, mountain forest, logged-over land, and prairies where food is available.



## Hungarian (Gray) Partridge



**Size:** 12-14 in. (30.5-35.6 cm).

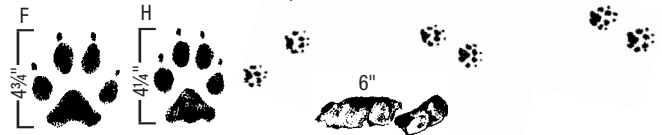
**Habitat:** open farmland with weeds for shelter and grain fields.

## Grey Wolf



**Size:** head and body 51-71 in. (130-180 cm); tail 17-18 in. (43-45 cm); weight 67-110 lb. (30-50 kg).

**Habitat:** wilderness areas: plains, forests, and tundras.



## Ring-Necked Pheasant



**Size:** male 30-36 in. (76.2-91.4 cm); female 21-25 in. (53.3-63.5 cm).

**Habitat:** farmland with adjacent growth for cover, mixed woods, and open prairie.

## Blue Grouse



**Size:** 15-21 in. (38.1-53.3 cm).

**Habitat:** coniferous forests, logging slash, burned-over timberland, and sub-alpine clearings.



## Ruffed Grouse



**Size:** 16-19 in. (40.6-48.3 cm).

**Habitat:** brushy timberlands and coniferous forest edges.

## Greater Sage Grouse



**Size:** male 26-30 in. (66-76.2 cm); female 22-23 in. (55.9-58.4 cm).

**Habitat:** high sagebrush plains and plateaus.

## Sharp-Tailed Grouse



**Size:** 15-20 in. (38.1-50.8 cm).

**Habitat:** open brushlands, prairies, clearings, and forest edges.

## Mourning Dove

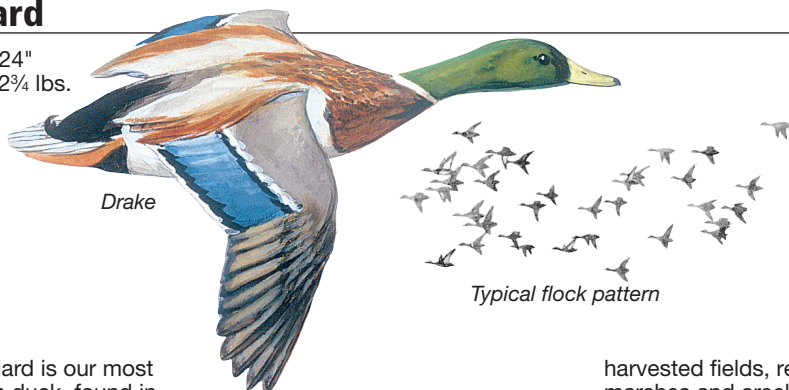


**Size:** 11-13 in. (27.9-33 cm).

**Habitat:** dry uplands, grainfields, suburbs, and deserts.

## Mallard

Length: 24"  
Weight: 2¾ lbs.



The mallard is our most common duck, found in all flyways. The males are often called "greenheads." The main wintering area is the lower Mississippi basin, and along the gulf coast, but many stay as far north as open water permits. Flocks often feed in early morning and late afternoon in nearby

harvested fields, returning to marshes and creeks to spend the night.

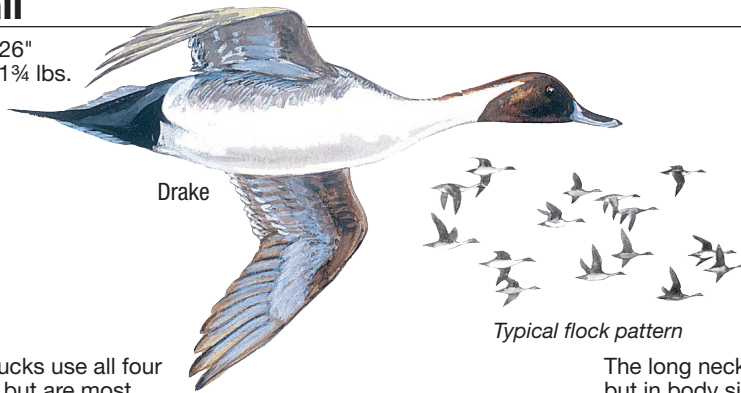
The flight is not particularly rapid. Hens have a loud quack; the drake's voice is a low-pitched *kwak-kwek*.





## Pintail

Length: 26"  
Weight: 1¾ lbs.



Drake

Typical flock pattern

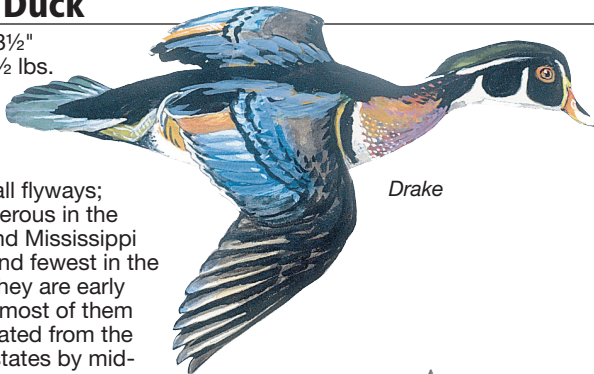
These ducks use all four flyways, but are most plentiful in the west. They are extremely graceful and fast fliers, fond of zig-zagging from great heights before leveling off to land.

The long neck and tail make them appear longer than mallards, but in body size and weight pintails are smaller. They are agile on land and often feed in grain fields. The drakes whistle; the hens have a coarse *quack*.



## Wood Duck

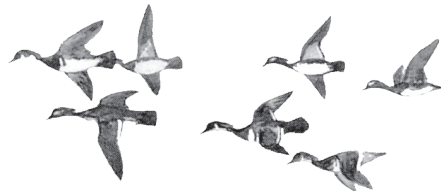
Length: 18½"  
Weight: 1½ lbs.



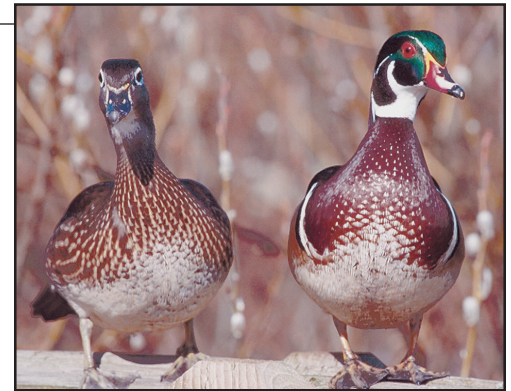
Drake

Found in all flyways; most numerous in the Atlantic and Mississippi Flyways and fewest in the Central. They are early migrants; most of them have migrated from the northern states by mid-November.

These ducks frequent wooded streams and ponds; and perch in trees. They fly through thick timber with speed and ease and often feed on acorns, berries, and grapes on the forest floors.



Typical flock pattern

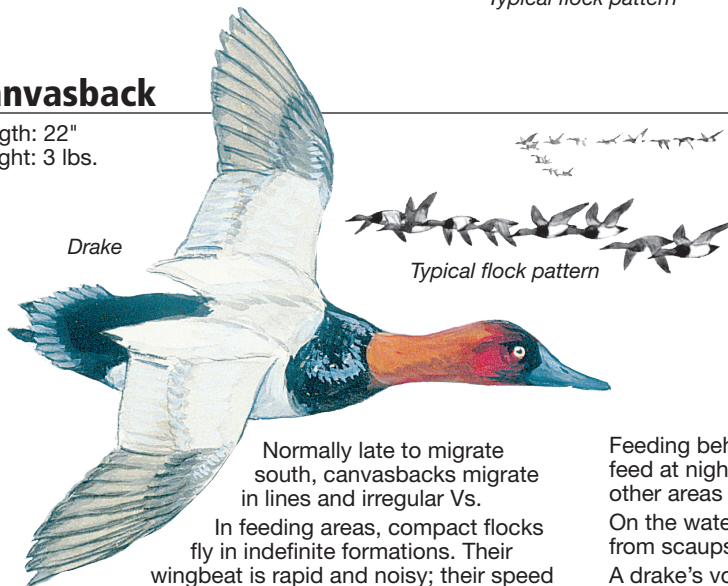


Flight is swift and direct; flocks are usually small.

In the air, their wings make a rustling, swishing sound. Drakes call *hoo-w-ett*, often in flight; hens have a *cr-r-ek* when frightened.

## Canvasback

Length: 22"  
Weight: 3 lbs.



Drake

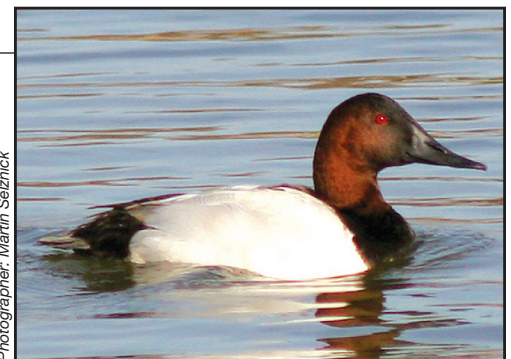
Typical flock pattern

Normally late to migrate south, canvasbacks migrate in lines and irregular Vs.

In feeding areas, compact flocks fly in indefinite formations. Their wingbeat is rapid and noisy; their speed is swift.

Feeding behavior is highly variable. In some areas they feed at night and spend the day rafted up in open water; in other areas they feed inshore mornings and evenings. On the water, body size and head shape distinguish them from scaups and redheads.

A drake's voice is a *croak*, *peep* and *growl*; hens have a mallard-like *quack*.

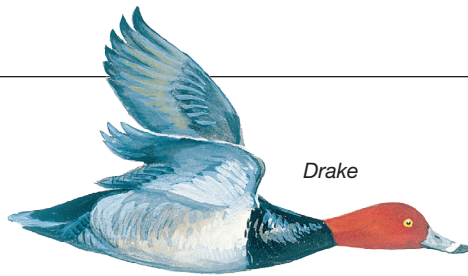


Photographer: Martin Selznick



## Redheads

Length: 20"  
Weight: 2½ lbs.



Drake

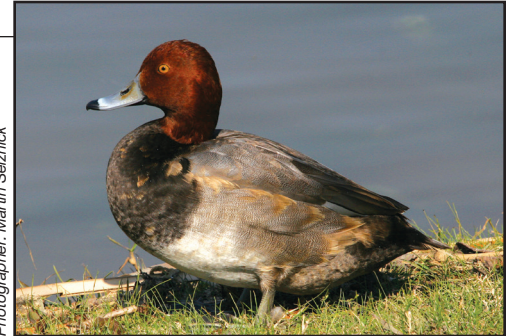
Redheads range from coast to coast, with the largest numbers in the Central Flyway. Migratory flocks travel in V's, move in irregular formations over feeding area. Redheads are often found associating with canvasbacks.

In the air, they give the impression of always being in a hurry.



Typical flock pattern

Photographer: Martin Selznick

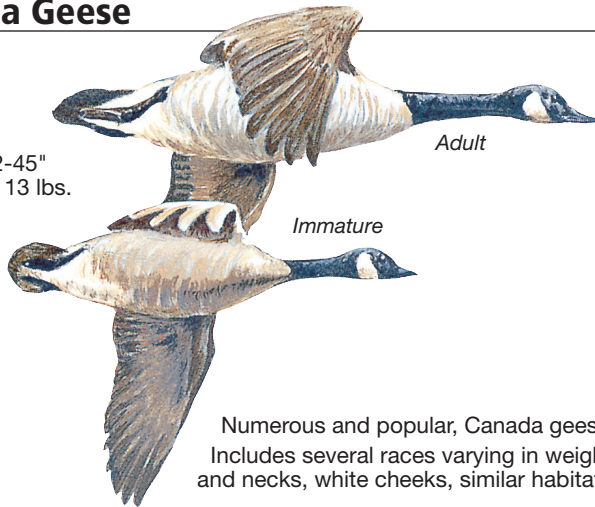


Redheads usually spend the day in large rafts in deep water; they feed morning and evening in shallower sections.

Drakes *purr* and *meow*; hens have a loud *squak*; higher than a hen mallard's.

## Canada Geese

Length: 22-45"  
Weight: to 13 lbs.



Adult

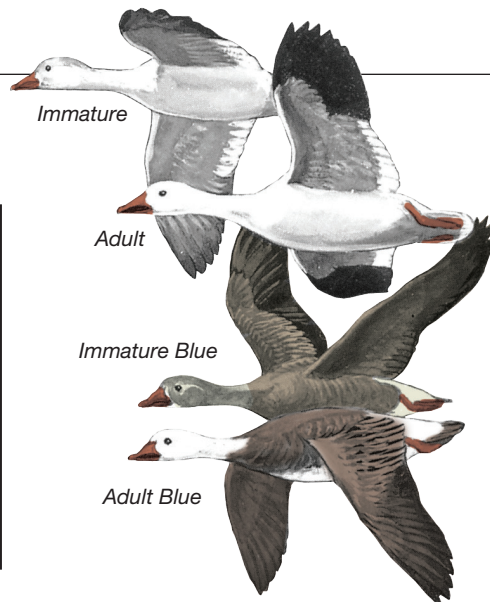
Immature

Numerous and popular, Canada geese are often called "honkers." Includes several races varying in weight from 3 to over 12 pounds. All have black heads and necks, white cheeks, similar habitats and voices. Sexes are identical.



## Snow Geese

Length: 26"  
Weight: 3 ½ – 7 ¾ lbs.



Immature

Adult

Immature Blue

Adult Blue



Two races of snow geese are recognized: greater snows along the Atlantic Coast, and lesser snows elsewhere on the continent. Blue geese are a color phase of the lesser snow.



## Montana's Hunting Heritage Pass it On



- Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.
- Always treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- Always be sure of your target and beyond.
- Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.

### Hunter Education Program

Tel: 406-444-9948

[fwp.mt.gov/education](http://fwp.mt.gov/education)



Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks

*Ethical behavior is doing the right thing when no one else is watching—even when doing the wrong thing is legal.*

*—Aldo Leopold*