

Spring Tales

Newsletter

Sea Ducks

Olaf Oliveira Riemer / Wikimedia Commons



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Fun Fact

Did you know that Tundra Swans have more feathers than any other bird?! Most birds have between 3,000-8,000 feathers, depending on size, but Tundra Swans have over 25,000 each!



Mdf / Wikimedia Commons

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Winter Adaptations



How Do Their Feet Not Freeze? A duck's blood gets cooled before going into the feet, then warmed up before returning to the body. Bird feet are made up of mostly tissue and bone which do not use up much blood. Most of the blood goes to the muscles in the wings and legs to help birds move!



Fluff up! Feathers act like a built-in blanket, helping birds keep warm in the cold. Birds ruffle their feathers in cold weather to make the "blanket" thicker. Ruffling makes pockets of air between the feathers, which get warm from body heat, keeping more heat close to the body.



Laura L. Whitehouse/USFWS



Linda Tanner / Flickr



Andreas Trepte / www.photo-natur.de



Laura L. Whitehouse/USFWS



Sea Ducks

They look like clowns and they sound like mice... just what are these critters? Sea ducks are a family of waterfowl that spend most of their lives out in the ocean. This diverse family counts Mergansers, Goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Scoters, Eiders, Harlequin Ducks and Long-tailed Ducks (above) as part of their group. They are impossible to miss since their bright feathers are so striking against the dark gray waters of the Pacific and Arctic Oceans, where most sea duck species live.

Sea ducks are expert divers and some species even dive to depths of over 100 feet to get their food. You can tell what kinds of food a species eats by looking at its bill. Mergansers have tooth-like points on their bills to help them hold onto slippery fish, while scoters have large, powerful bills to pry mollusks from rocks.



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The soft, warm feathers of Eiders (called eiderdown) have been collected in Europe for hundreds of years to make fancy pillows, blankets, and jackets. Just how *much* does one eiderdown pillow cost? Take the quiz below to find out and prepare to be shocked! Answers are on the last page.



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You can find Scoters, Mergansers and other sea ducks along the entire California coast, but the most popular hunting is in northern California. Hunting season usually lasts from October to January and hunting can be done at many wildlife refuges and parks on the coast.

TRIVIA

About how much does one eiderdown pillow cost?

- A. \$500 B. \$1,500 C. \$2,500 D. \$5,000

How many pounds of eiderdown does it take to stuff a mattress?

- A. 50-60 lbs. B. 90-100 lbs. C. 190 -200 lbs. D. 300-310 lbs.

What is a nickname for the Harlequin Duck?

- A. Sprig B. Clown duck C. Squeaker D. Sea Mouse



Dick Daniels / Flickr



Emily Willoughby/emilywilloughby.com



Olaf Oliveiro Riemer



Andrea Westmoreland / Flickr

Baby Pictures

How much has your appearance changed since you were baby? Birds grow up faster than humans and their appearance changes a lot between hatching and becoming an adult. Look at the pictures below. Can you match each baby bird in the first row to the adult bird they will look like in the second row?



A



B



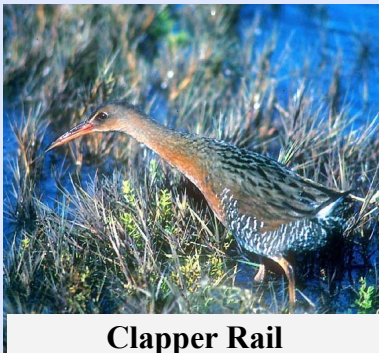
C



D



Mallard Duck



Clapper Rail



American Coot



Sandhill Crane

Baby Pictures Answers: D, C, A, B

TRIVIA Answers: 1) D, 2) A, 3) D

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Molly Maupin, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 Ext. 121 or mmaupin@calwaterfowl.org

For more information and our calendar of events go to www.calwaterfowl.org