

Spring Tales Newsletter

Summertime Waterfowl



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Hen Mallard sitting on her nest.

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Waterfowl stay busy during Summer, from hatching and raising babies, to shedding and re-growing all its feathers to prepare for the rest of the year.



Drake mallard in the process of molting its worn feathers, getting ready to make new, strong and bright feathers.

Waterfowl Nesting

California has lost more than 90% of its original wetlands and only has less than 1% of its native grasslands left! This is a huge problem when it comes to our waterfowl trying to find a good place to live and nest. Waterfowl typically start nesting anywhere between mid-March to July. We know that not all waterfowl are the same, and that goes for where they like to nest as well. Ducks, geese and swans can be separated into upland, overwater and cavity nesters.

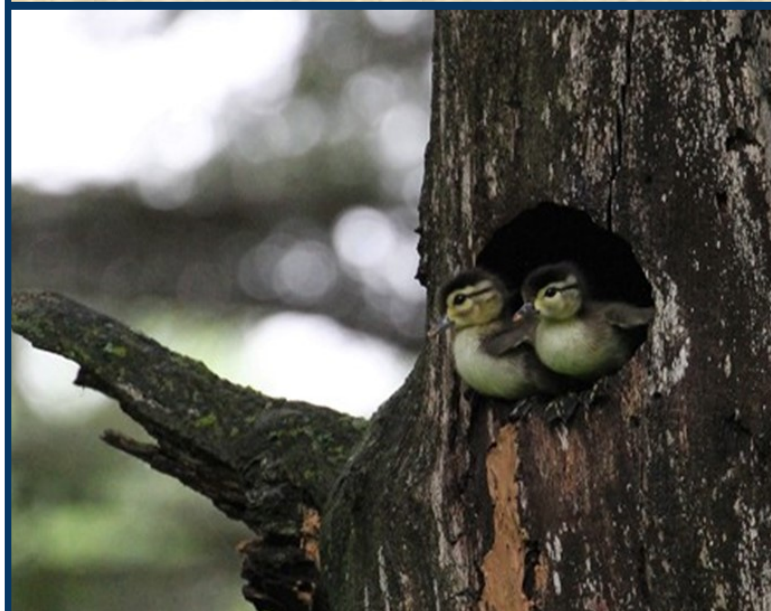


Upland Nesting

Most dabbling ducks, such as mallards, blue-winged teal and pintails are considered upland nesters. These waterfowl will make a shallow depression in a field or grassland to start the nest building process.

Cavity Nesting

Cavity nesters include wood ducks, buffleheads and hooded mergansers to name a few. These nests are typically made in holes found in dead or decaying trees. CWA's Wood Duck Program makes artificial nest boxes for our beloved wood ducks. This program helps hatch around 30,000 ducklings every year!

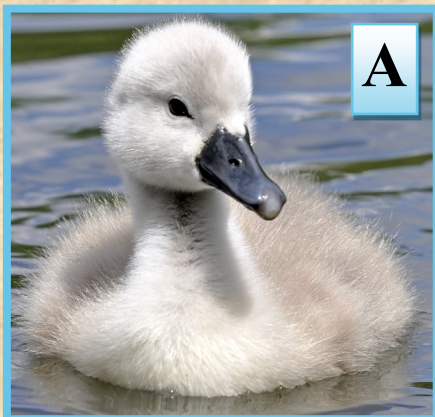


Overwater Nesting

Diving ducks, like canvasbacks, redheads and ring-necks prefer to nest overwater. These nests are typically found in flooded cattails, bushes, willows, or sometimes on floating mats they create by weaving together vegetation.



A baby duck is called a duckling, baby goose is called a gosling and a baby swan is called a cygnet (sig-net). Can you tell which baby waterfowl below is a duckling, gosling or cygnet?



Answers: A: Cygnet B: Duckling C: Gosling

CWA's Egg Salvage Program

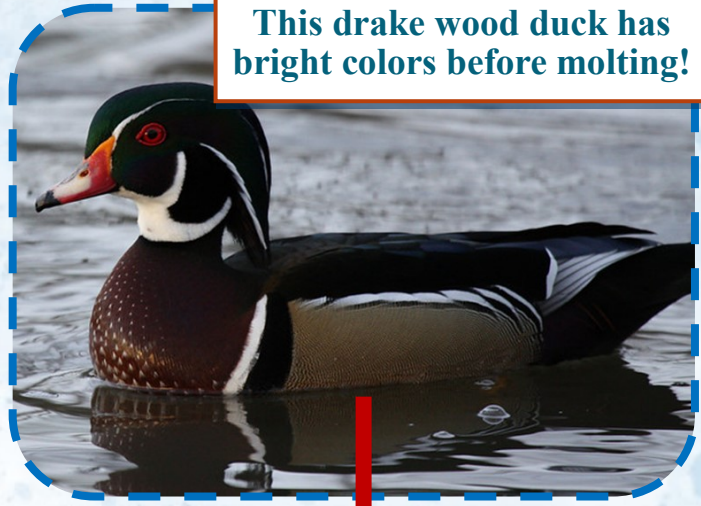
CWA works with many farmers, hatcheries and volunteers to save ducks and eggs from being destroyed when it is time for farmer's fields to be harvested. In the last 10 years, close to **58,000 ducks** have been rescued! Help color in the drawing below of Farmer Combine stopping to help save the ducks nested in his field!



Bad Hair Day

Feathers are very important to our waterfowl. They provide many different things for birds, such as flight, warmth, flotation and camouflage, as well as bright colors on drakes to help attract mates. Because feathers wear out over time, waterfowl must go through a process called molting, it will end up replacing all its feathers throughout its body, including their flight feathers. Because they cannot fly during the molting process, waterfowl can be vulnerable, so they have adapted in certain ways to be able to protect themselves from predators. They live near water, which provides them with the necessary food, shelter, and safety to help them survive. The drake's bright colors will fade into dull colors, which helps them camouflage. To regrow their feathers, waterfowl must eat a high protein diet consisting mostly of invertebrates and plants.

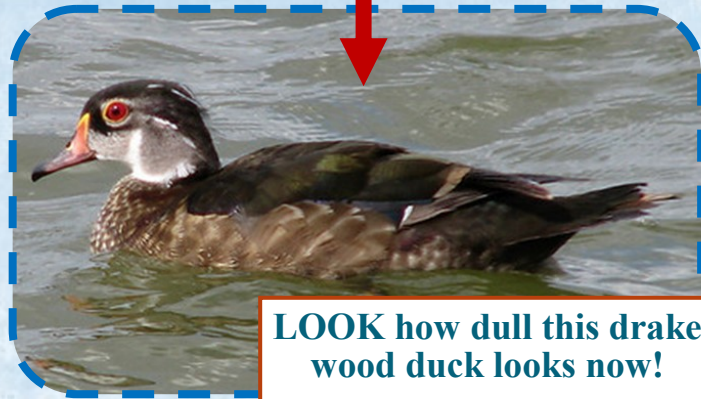
This drake wood duck has bright colors before molting!



Slowly losing feathers!



LOOK how dull this drake wood duck looks now!



a) Multiple loss of flight feathers



b) Pin feathers begin to develop



c) Flight feather shafts begin to harden



d) Fully formed flight feathers

Check out the process of how a duck slowly grows all its flight feathers back after molting!

Nature Scavenger Hunt

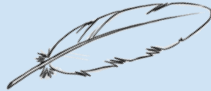
Go outside and see if you can find everything on this list. Check them off as you find them!



Rocks



Leaf



Feather



Spider



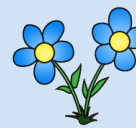
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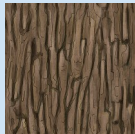
Tree



Animal Tracks



Flower



Tree Bark



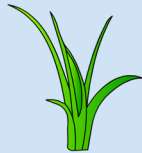
Water



Cloud



Branch



Grass



Squirrel



Bird



Clover

For more information on our education programs or to get involved, contact Molly Maupin, Education Coordinator at (916) 648-1406 Ext. 102 or mmaupin@calwaterfowl.org

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