

Field Notes

Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre

February 2006

DABBLERS & DIVERS

Ducks can be grouped into two large groups: the dabblers and the divers. Although both live in wetlands and look similar when swimming - the big difference lies *under* the surface.

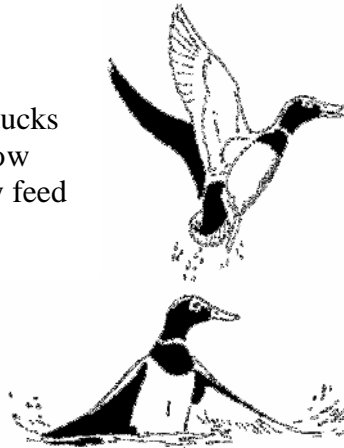
Dabblers

Dabblers — also known as puddle ducks — are typically birds of fresh, shallow marshes. They can dive, but usually feed by dabbling or tipping rather than submerging. They feed on aquatic plants and insects found near the surface of the water.

Their speculum (coloured wing patch) is usually iridescent and bright, often an identifying field mark. Their legs are situated beneath the midpoint of their bodies. They walk easily and spring straight into the air when taking flight.

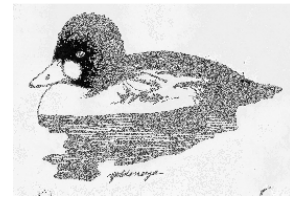
Dabblers that call Oak Hammock Marsh home include:

- Green-winged Teal
- American Black Duck
- Mallard
- Northern Pintail
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Gadwall
- American Wigeon

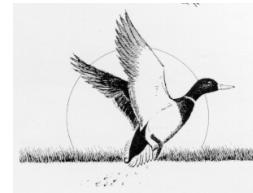


Did you know?

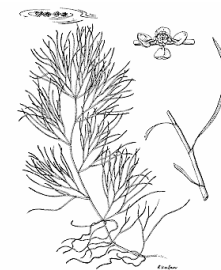
That Scaup and Common Goldeneye can dive up to 15 metres deep.



That Mallards can rise vertically 10 to 12 metres to clear tree tops.



That Sago pondweed is probably the most valuable aquatic plant for waterfowl.



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Divers

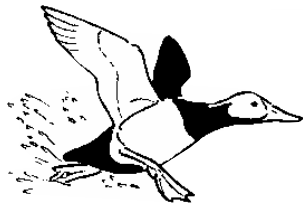
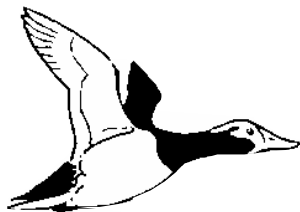
Diving ducks frequent larger, deeper lakes and rivers, coastal bays and inlets.

Their coloured wing patch lacks the brightness of the speculum of the dabblers. Many have short tails and huge paddle-like feet that are visible when flying.

Divers's legs are well back on their bodies, this being ideal when diving and swimming for food - but awkward on land. Their diet consists of fish, shellfish, molluscs, and aquatic plants.

Divers run along the surface like an overloaded float-plane, building momentum for liftoff.

They have smaller wings in proportion to body size and weight, so divers have a more rapid wingbeat than dabblers.



their

Divers that call Oak Hammock Marsh home include:

- Canvasback
- Redhead
- Ring-necked Duck
- Greater Scaup
- Lesser Scaup
- Ruddy Duck
- Common Goldeneye
- Bufflehead

DABBLERS



DIVERS

