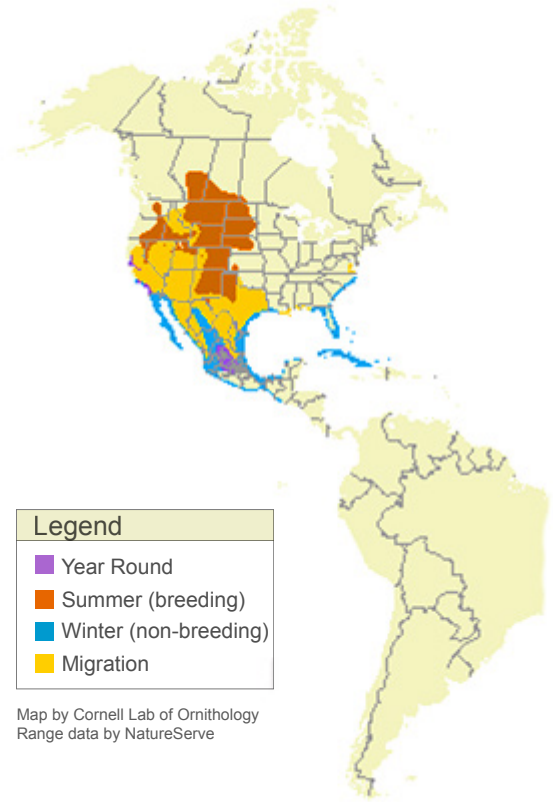


American Avocet

Recurvirostra americana

With its elegant profile and striking coloration, the American Avocet is unique among North American birds. In summer it can be found in temporary and unpredictable wetlands across western North America where it swings its long upturned bill through the shallow water to catch small invertebrates.



Keys to Identification

Adult Description

- Large shorebird with long legs.
- Long, up-turned bill.
- Black and white upperparts.
- Rusty or gray neck and head.

Immature Description

Similar to adult, but light buff colored head.

Cool Facts

- In response to predators, the American Avocet sometimes issues a series of call notes that gradually changes pitch, simulating the Doppler effect and thus making its approach seem faster than it actually is.
- Nesting American Avocets aggressively attack predators, sometimes physically striking Northern Harriers or Common Ravens.
- American Avocet chicks leave the nest within 24 hours after hatching. Day-old avocets can walk, swim, and even dive to escape predators.

Measurements

Both Sexes

- Length - 16.9 - 18.52 inches
- Wingspan - 28.3 inches
- Weight - 9.7 - 12.3 ounces