

# Common Merganser

*Mergus merganser*

A large diving duck with a long thin bill, the Common Merganser is found along large lakes and rivers across the northern hemisphere. The long bill has toothy projections along its edges that help the duck hold onto its slippery fish prey.

## Keys to Identification

### Adult Description

- Large, slender diving duck.
- Long, thin, orange bill.
- White patches in wing visible in flight.
- Male with bright white sides and iridescent green head.

### Male Description

#### Breeding (Alternate) Plumage:

Head iridescent greenish black. Neck, underparts, and sides white. Back and tail gray. Black line along sides of back. Outer part of wings black. Bill scarlet-orange.

#### Nonbreeding (Basic) Plumage:

Head rusty brown with short, ragged crest. Chin white. Breast, back, wings, and tail slaty gray. Belly and flanks white. Bill scarlet-orange. White patch in wing visible in flight. Like female, except crest on head may be shorter and wing has larger white patch.

### Female Description

Head rusty brown with short, ragged crest. Chin white. Breast, back, wings, and tail slaty gray. Belly and flanks white. Bill scarlet-orange. White patch in wing visible in flight.

### Immature Description

Immature resembles adult female.

