

# Gadwall

*Anas strepera*

In a world where male ducks sport gleaming patches of green, red, or blue, the Gadwall's understated elegance can make this common duck easy to overlook. Males are intricately patterned with gray, brown, and black; females resemble female Mallards, although with a thinner, darker bill. We don't tend to think of ducks as pirates, but Gadwall often snatch food from diving ducks as they surface. This widespread, adaptable duck has dramatically increased in numbers in North America since the 1980s.

## Keys to Identification

### Size and Shape

Gadwall are about the same size as Mallards. Gadwall have a fairly large, square head with a steep forehead. The bill is noticeably thinner than a Mallard's. In flight, the neck is slightly thinner and the wings slightly more slender than a Mallard's.

### Color Pattern

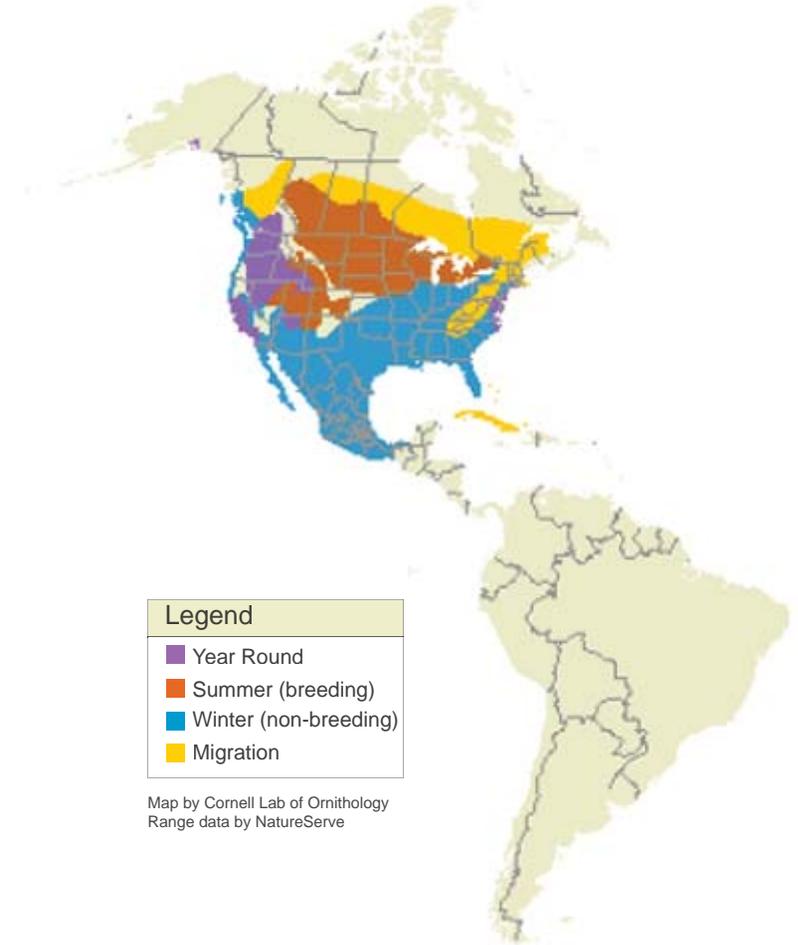
Male Gadwall are gray-brown with a black patch at the tail. Females are patterned with brown and buff. Females have a thin orange edge to their dark bills. In flight, both sexes have a white wing patch that is sometimes visible while swimming or resting.

### Behavior

Gadwall feed with other dabbling ducks, tipping forward to feed on submerged vegetation without diving. They sometimes steal food from flocks of diving ducks or coots. You'll often see these ducks in pairs through the winter, because they select their mates for the breeding season as early as late fall.

### Cool Facts

- Gadwall sometimes steal food from American Coots and from other ducks.
- The oldest known Gadwall was 19 years 6 months old. It was banded in Saskatchewan in 1962 and shot during hunting season in Louisiana in 1981.



## Measurements

### Both Sexes

- Length - 18.1 - 22.4 inches
- Wingspan - 33.1 inches (2.76 feet)
- Weight - 17.6 - 44.1 ounces (1.1 - 2.76 pounds)