

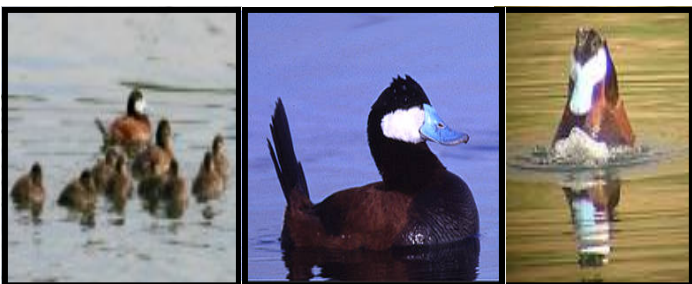


# RUDDY DUCK

*Oxyura jamaicensis*



Male ruddy ducks have a brightly-colored cinnamon body, a white cheek patch, and a bright blue bill. Female ruddy ducks are brown, and they have a horizontal stripe across their gray pale cheek. In both males and females, the tail is short and stiff, and it is often held upright. These ducks are very good divers, and they often dive to escape danger. Ruddy ducks are shallow divers, and they feed by picking things up from the bottom of the lake or skimming the top of the water. They are also strong fliers, and they take long trips from their nests to avoid predators.



## SPECIES QUICK FACTS

### SIZE

The ruddy duck averages about 15 inches in length.

### WEIGHT

The ruddy duck weighs between one and two pounds.

### FOOD HABITS

The ruddy duck dives to feed on pond weeds, algae, and wild celery. They also feed on seeds of sedges, smartweeds, grasses, aquatic insects, shellfish, and crustaceans.

### HABITAT

The habitat of the ruddy duck includes marshes, lakes, ponds, rivers, and coastlines.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The ruddy duck breeds throughout western North America from the Northwestern Territories southward to Mexico. It also breeds in scattered localities in the Midwest and Northeast. It winters on the Great Lakes and along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts from southern Canada southward.

### FUN FACT

The only way to tell the difference between a male and female ruddy duck in the winter is the black stripe across the female's gray cheek.