

*Ducks are at home on land, in the air, and both on and under the water. Read this article to learn more about how ducks survive.*

## The Lives of Ducks



### If It Looks Like a Duck...

1 Waterfowl are birds that spend most of their time on or around bodies of water. Most waterfowl are ducks. They are usually found around lakes, ponds, marshes, or coastal bays and inlets. Ducks migrate, spending their summers in the cooler North and flying to the warmer South in winter.

### Dabblers and Divers

2 There are many kinds of ducks. They are divided into two main types, based on the way they feed. Some ducks eat mainly by skimming the surface of water with their wide bills to gather their food. These ducks are called “dabblers” or “dabbling ducks.” Occasionally they also tip their bodies up and plunge their heads under water to snatch something tasty. Their diet consists mostly of plants.

3 Other ducks dive down under the water to feed. These are called “divers” or “diving ducks.” Divers eat fish and shellfish that are usually found under the surface, although they eat some



aquatic plants as well. They can plunge quite deep to grab food with their more pointed bills. They can also swim a long way under water to escape a predator or to pursue their dinner.

4 The bodies of the two kinds of ducks look different, too. Both have webbed feet, which enable them to swim fast. Dabblers have smallish feet that are located under the center of their bodies. They can walk on land fairly well and can sometimes be seen eating grain or insects in fields. Because they have large wings, dabblers are able to take off and land on small areas of water. They can drop down and fly almost straight up, something like a helicopter.

5 Diving ducks have more streamlined bodies. Their short legs and big feet propel them rapidly underwater. However, because their big feet are set toward the back of their bodies, divers are unstable when they try to walk. They have smaller wings and fly faster than dabblers. They usually feed on larger bodies of water, because they need a long runway to take off when they fly. Divers seem to walk on the water as they flap their wings and pick up speed before they lift into the air.

- 25** The wide bills of dabbling ducks help them survive because they enable these ducks to
- A** breathe in more air.
  - B** escape from predators.
  - C** skim the water's surface for food.
  - D** take off and land almost straight up.
- 26** What is the purpose of paragraph 1 of the article?
- A** to introduce the topic
  - B** to explain how ducks survive
  - C** to compare two types of ducks
  - D** to describe how ducks walk, swim, and fly
- 27** During the period after a drake has lost its feathers, its coloring becomes dull and drab. This is a way in which nature helps
- A** feed the duck.
  - B** shelter the duck.
  - C** protect the duck.
  - D** punish the duck.
- 28** What are some of the physical features that help ducks survive? Use important and specific details from the story to support your answer.

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