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Anatidae

DUCKS

HOODED MERGANSER

Lophodytes cucullatus L 17–19 in

Small, bizarrely shaped diving duck with slender bill and large head.

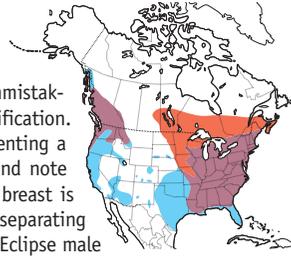
Dives frequently in search of small fish and invertebrates. Male is unmistakable; size, proportions, and color in female are good means of identification.

ADULT MALE Has large crest that can be flattened or fanned, presenting a large, gleaming white patch on otherwise dark head. Bill is dark and note beady yellow eye. Back is mainly dark and breast is white, marked with two black lines on sides, separating breast from otherwise orange-brown flanks. Eclipse male is similar to adult female, but with duller colors; retains bright eye.

ADULT FEMALE Orange-buff head with long, shaggy crest. Plumage is otherwise mainly gray-brown, darkest on back; belly is white. Eye is dark. **JUVENILE** Similar to adult female. **VOICE** Mostly silent. **STATUS AND HABITAT** In summer, found in forested wetlands; nests in tree holes. Outside breeding season, most birds move to southeast wetlands, favoring freshwater sites. **OBSERVATION TIPS** Typically shy during breeding season; easier to observe in winter although still has retiring habits.



MALE



FEMALE



MALE

HOODED MERGANSER

COMMON MERGANSER

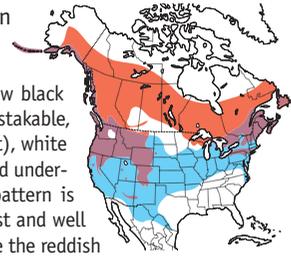
Mergus merganser L 24–26 in

Large, slender-bodied, and elegant diving duck that swims with a stately posture. Dives frequently for fish and invertebrates. In flight, upper surface of male's inner wing is white, except for narrow black line; in female, white is restricted to trailing edge. **ADULT MALE** Unmistakable, with bright red-orange bill, glossy green head (looks dark in poor light), white body, and black back. Close view reveals pink wash on white breast and underparts. Eclipse male resembles adult female, although white wing pattern is retained. **ADULT FEMALE** Orange-red head and neck with shaggy crest and well defined white throat. Body plumage is grayish, palest on breast. Note the reddish

orange bill. **JUVENILE** Resembles adult female, but with duller colors. **VOICE** Male utters ringing display calls. Otherwise silent. **STATUS AND HABITAT** Widespread and common. In summer, favors wooded lakes and rivers; nests in tree holes. Outside breeding season, moves south to ice-free freshwater lakes across region; occasionally found on coasts. **OBSERVATION TIPS** Ice-bound lake margins often concentrate birds in winter.



MALES AND FEMALE



FEMALE

COMMON MERGANSER

MALE

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

Mergus serrator L 22–24 in

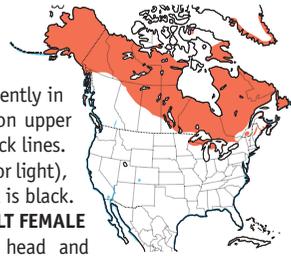
Slim diving duck. Recalls Common Merganser, but smaller and both sexes have shaggy, spiky, crest rather than a sleek head. Dives frequently in search of fish and invertebrates. In flight, both sexes show white on upper inner wing; extent is greatest in males, the white divided by two black lines.

ADULT MALE Has a narrow reddish bill, a green head (looks dark in poor light), white neck, and streaked orange-red breast. Flanks are gray and back is black. Eclipse male is similar to adult female, but retains wing pattern. **ADULT FEMALE**

Reddish bill, dirty orange head and nape, but a paler throat; body plumage is otherwise grayish buff. **JUVENILE** Resembles adult female. **VOICE** Males utter soft, grunting display calls. Otherwise silent. **STATUS AND HABITAT** Common. In summer, found on tundra and boreal forest lakes. Outside breeding season, most birds move to coasts although some may occur on large, ice-free freshwater lakes. **OBSERVATION TIPS** Easiest to find in winter: search estuaries and large, sheltered bays.



MALE



FEMALE

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER

MALE