

Bird Watching at Silver Lake

Please, Do Not Feed the Ducks!

Wetlands, lakes, and streams provide the safe havens for waterfowl and other birds. Everyday more of their habitat is disturbed by human activity and ultimately decreases due to development.



Waterfowl have several defenses against large animals - swimming, flying, and camouflage. They have no defense against humans, their biggest enemy. Oil spills, pesticides, and habitat loss kill many each year.

It will take a major effort to rehabilitate and preserve these habitats to revive waterfowl populations.

These are some of the bird species you might spot on the lake.

Take a Look!

Double-Crested Cormorant
- *Phalacrocorax auritus*

An orange-yellow patch of skin beneath the bill makes double-crested cormorants easy to spot. Watch them on rocks or high perches with their wings spread out, drying their feathers. Today El Niño events and adverse ocean conditions keep their populations down.



Mallards
- *Anas platyrhynchos*

Mallards are surface feeders, dipping into the shallows of marshes for food.

Watch them tip over with their tails in the air to feed. Mallard numbers are reduced from historical levels, but they are still one of the most abundant ducks in the world - adapted to life in close connection with humans.

Common Merganser
- *Mergus merganser*

Bright red bills easily identify common mergansers. These large, sleek diving ducks are heavy in comparison to the size of their wings. Since this makes lift-off difficult, they take flight by running across the water. When startled, mergansers make a harsh, croaking "karr-karr" sound.



Bufflehead
- *Bucephala albeola*

Washington's smallest diving duck, the bufflehead (or cow-head) is easy to spot! The male has a deep greenish-purple back, with a wedge of white on the back of its head. Loss of habitat remains a threat to these ducks. Females instinctually nest where they were hatched. Even when this habitat is gone, it is difficult to populate a new area.

Canada Goose - *Branta canadensis*

All Canada geese have a grayish body and black head with a distinct white marking on the cheek. Few birds form such close bonds, mating for life and caring for young together.

Honking across the sky in V-shaped flocks, Canadas once announced the shift of seasons. Today some do not migrate annually. Instead they find plenty of food in parks, golf courses, and waterways throughout the year where their dog-sized droppings and appetites for grass have made them a nuisance.



American Widgeon
- *Anas americana*

A large white patch on its forewing identifies the American widgeon. In flight, widgeons stay in tight flocks rather than a "V" formation. Widgeons feed primarily on aquatic grasses in the shallows, but can also be seen grazing on land or stealing food from other birds in deeper water.



American Coot
- *Fulica americana*

The American coot is a medium-sized black bird with a white bill, yellow legs, and white-tipped wings. Spot these noisy birds moving across the water by pumping their heads back and forth! American coots are abundant, often becoming a nuisance in golf courses and parks.