

# What the DUCK?

CaptVijay Wadhwa  
captvijaywadhwa@gmail.com

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BEAK AND A BILL?

Not a thing—the words are synonymous.

Ornithologists tend to use the word “**bill**” more often than “**beak**.” Some people use “beak” when referring to songbirds with pointed bills, and “bill” when discussing birds like ducks with more fleshy beaks. However, both words are used in reference to a wide variety of species. One important caveat: if you tell that old joke about the duck going into the drugstore to buy some **chap stick**, and the cashier asks how he’s going to pay for it and the duck says, “**put it on my bill**” - well, that joke just doesn’t work if you say “**beak**.”

2001. Hunting and the environment - Mallard Specimen & Color Variety



1960. Upland Goose Color Variety



Ducks have 16 or fewer bones in their necks, while geese and swans have between 17 and 24 neck bones.

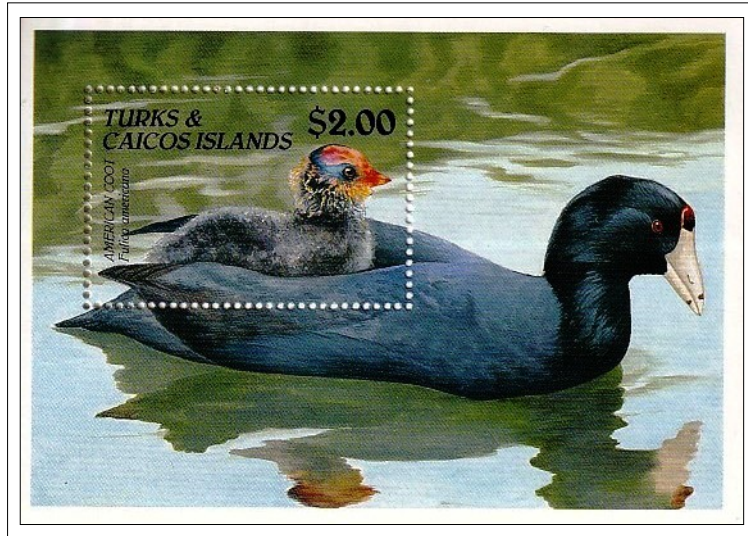
1996. Muscovy Duck

Gutter Pair Color Variety



The wildfowl and wetlands trust

1990 American Coot MS with an Imperf Proof mounted on board. (Displayed below) Extremely scarce. From archives



"Mallard Pair— Early Winter"  
from a painting by St. Beeman

Couple de mallards— Début d'hiver  
d'après de Robert Beeman

**1985**

Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp

Timbre sur la conservation des habitats fauniques du Canada

**\$4**

Not valid for postage. Ne peut servir à l'affranchissement.

**B**eginning in 1985, the Migratory Birds Regulations will require people intending to hunt migratory game birds, to purchase this habitat conservation stamp which they must affix to their permit before hunting.

**À** compter de 1985, en vertu du Règlement sur les oiseaux migrateurs, les chasseurs d'oiseaux-gibier migrateurs devront acheter ce timbre sur la conservation de l'habitat et l'apposer sur leur permis avant de chasser.

1985. Mallard – Mallards are large ducks with **hefty bodies, rounded heads, and wide, flat bills**. Pair in early winters. A stamp booklet, not valid for postage, issued by Wildlife Habitat Conservation Trust, Canada.

American coots have white bill, with a red swelling along the upper edge. Their lobed toes make coots powerful swimmers, especially in open water with weird feet. Comparable to webbing on a duck's foot, the **palmdate toes help a coot push through the water**. On land, the lobes fold back when the bird lifts its foot, which facilitates walking on a variety of surfaces like mud, grass, and even ice They have a wingspan of 58 to 71 cm. Their feathers are dark grey, with a white patch under the tail.



1960. Kelp Geese

The Kelp Goose (*Chloephaga hybrida*) is an extremely beautiful animal to look at. It is a moderately-sized gorgeous bird. Its males and females have different colors, the males being mostly white, and the females being mostly dark brown, but they are both equally beautiful. It has many other endearing qualities.