

External Anatomy of Poultry Kept on Small or Backyard Flocks: Duck

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Ducks have many of the same basic external parts as other fowl, such as chickens. However, some unique characteristics exist in the external anatomies of ducks. For example, a duck's head (shown in Figure 1) differs from a chicken's head in several ways. Ducks have no comb and, other than the crested duck, no head covering other than feathers. The **bill** of a duck is flatter than the beak of a chicken and has a protrusion on the upper tip known as the **bean**. A duck has webbed toes, which are important for swimming. For all breeds except the Muscovy, male ducks have curled feathers at the base of the tail (called sex feathers), whereas females do not (see Figure 2). A duck's wing is comprised of several types of feathers, as shown in Figures 3.

Fig. 1. Parts of a duck's head. Source: University of Illinois. Used with permission.

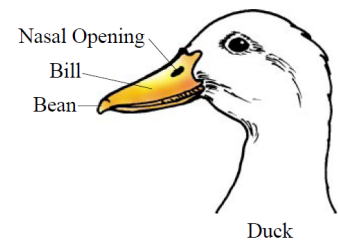


Fig. 2. Comparison of female duck and male duck, showing the location of the sex feathers. Source: Jacquie Jacob, University of Kentucky.



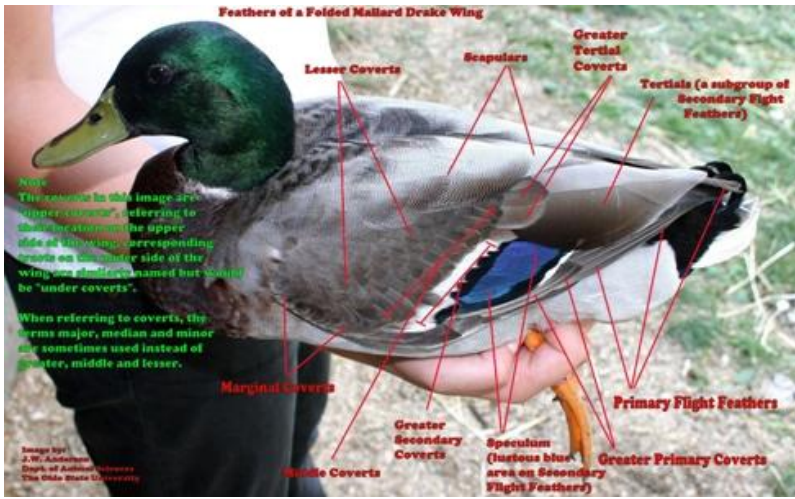


Fig. 3. Parts of the wing of a male mallard duck. Source: John Anderson, The Ohio State University.