

Bird of the Month - October

Northern Shoveler



Male Northern Shoveler

IDENTIFICATION

- Both males and females have large, flat bills
- Males have green heads, orange feet and brick red rectangle on the sides
- Females are streaky brown-gray with orange feet
- Both sexes show sky blue in the wing when flying
- Bright white chest in the male

FOOD

- Uses that huge “shovel” bill to feed on small swimming invertebrates and aquatic vegetation

PREDATORS

- Humans, raccoons, skunks, coyotes, falcons, hawks and eagles



Female Northern Shoveler



Male Northern Shoveler In Flight

BEHAVIORS AND FUN FACTS

- Mistaken for mallards because of the green head
- Bill is larger and flatter than other local ducks
- Breeds in the wetlands and nests in short grass
- “Dabbles” less often than other dabbling ducks. Instead, it swims with its bill on the surface skimming invertebrate food
- Females may produce as many as 12 eggs
- Call is short and soft compared to Mallard