

Wildlife in Croatan by Susanna H. Miller (Suditi)

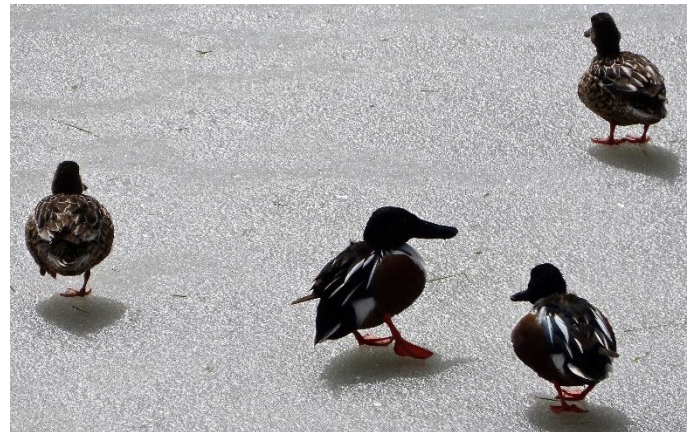
With the sort of weather we have had lately, it seems a good time to recognize the waterfowl of Croatan. These waterfowl include just a few of the diving and dabbling ducks, but by no means all of the numerous waterfowl species that visit and live here.

This month I thought I would share some of the photos I have taken over the years... all from my backyard. I will include the common names, a quick line, maybe, and a link (go to the Croatan Civic League online version for active links), but will leave you to explore their biology online if you wish.



Northern Shovelers have an amazingly long and broad bill. Right before the lake iced over one winter, they swam in tight circles as though to prevent the ice from forming as long as possible.

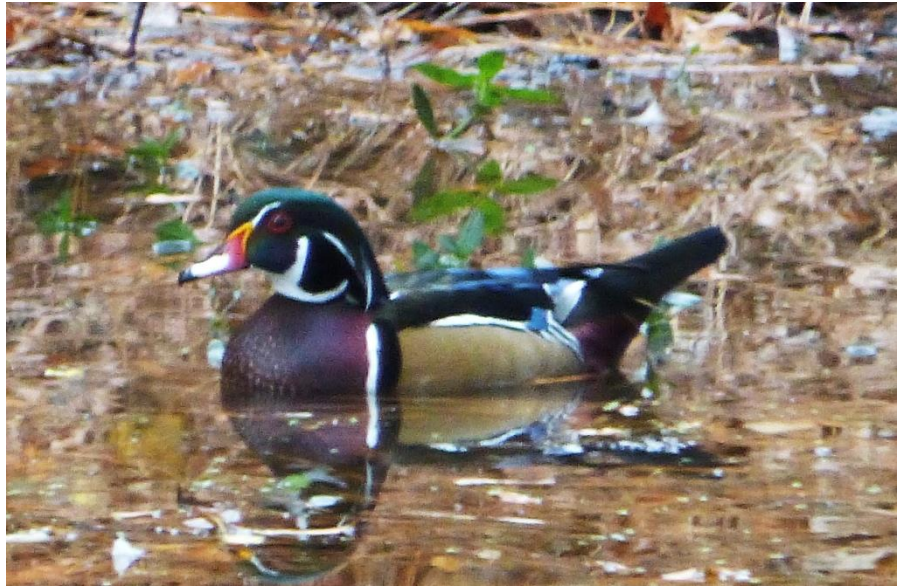
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Shoveler



Wood ducks are colorful, shy cavity nesters... one of the only forest nesting ducks... Nest boxes helped their numbers increase when forests with big enough nest trees became scarce.

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/wood_duck





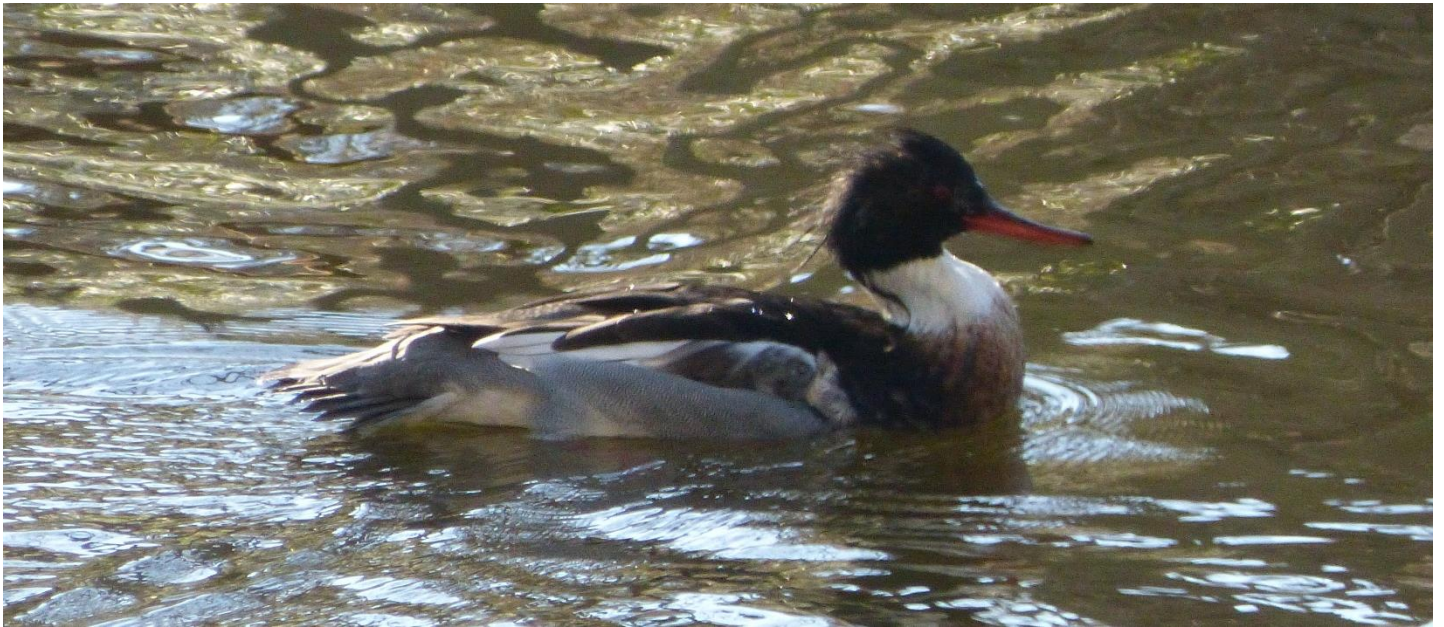
Ring necked ducks are cute little diving ducks seen in the winter months. Neat fact from my link... The oldest known Ring-necked Duck was a male, and at least 20 years, 5 months old. He was banded in 1964 in Louisiana and was shot in 1983, in Minnesota. If you wonder why some ducks stay a certain distance away, you will often find it just beyond shotgun range.

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Ring-necked_Duck





The Red-breasted Merganser is a showy bird known as a “Sawtooth” for its serrated beak that holds on to the fish it catches. https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Red-breasted_Merganser



Last but not least (well... it is the least in size...) The Pied-billed Grebe is the smallest and, maybe the most interesting... including; eating feathers, trapping water for buoyancy and carrying young on their backs. https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pied-billed_Grebe



I so hope you enjoy some of our more interesting waterfowl neighbors... if you have not yet met them. All photos are mine. Visit the links to hear calls and see additional great information. All links are to Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Bird I.D. pages. This great source also offers live webcams for birds all over the world. Enjoy your feathered neighbors!