



MALLARD *ANAS PLATYRHYNCHOS*

Mallard is the most common and widespread species of duck in the UK. They breed in all parts of the UK, wherever there is a suitable wetland habitat. UK mallard numbers are made up of a resident breeding population and birds that migrate here for the winter from Iceland and northern Europe.

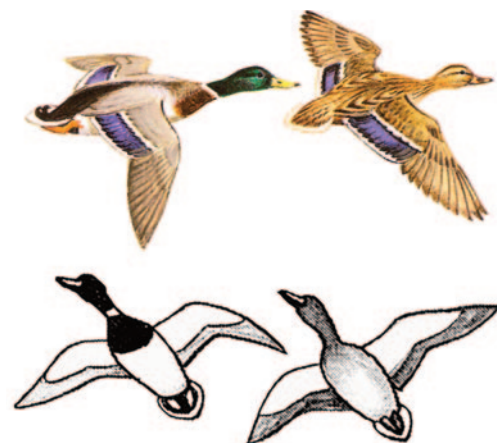
Breeding mallard numbers swelled, especially in England, from the 1960s to around the year 2000. However, in the last ten years there has been a slight decline in our resident breeding birds. Wintering bird numbers have also declined since the late 1980s. Consequently, the species' conservation status was moved from the green to the amber list.



Identification features:

- Long body with long, broad bill.
- Male colouring - dark green head, yellow bill and purple-brown on the breast.
- Female colouring - mainly brown with an orange bill.
- Male mallard moult in late summer and bright feathers are replaced with mottled brown ones.

Length: 51-62cm
Wingspan: 81-98cm
Weight: 750-1500g



Population:

UK resident population: 61,000-146,000 pairs

UK wintering population: 710,000 birds

Conservation status:

UK conservation status:

Amber

European conservation status:

Least Concern

Global conservation status:

Least Concern

Mallard key facts



Drake ♂



♀ Hen
or duck



Preferred habitat:

Mallard prefer calm, shallow sanctuaries, but they can be found in almost any body of freshwater across the UK, Europe, Asia and North America. They are also found in salt and brackish water and are commonly found in wetlands.

Diet:

Mallard eat a wide variety of food, from vegetation to small invertebrates. Their diet includes snails, slugs, beetles, flies, worms, shrimp, seeds, plant matter, and roots.

Where you can see them

Mallard can be seen anywhere there is a suitable wetland habitat all year round in the UK. They can also be seen feeding on farmland.

Breeding:

- Start to nest in March.
- Eggs normally laid between mid-March and the end of July.
- Typical clutch - 12 eggs.
- Incubation period - about 28 days.
- Young stay in the nest for at least ten hours, before being led to water by the female, usually in the early morning.
- Young take 50-60 days to fledge and become independent.