

Mallard — Nillqitaq

Nillqitat amlertut.—There are many mallards.

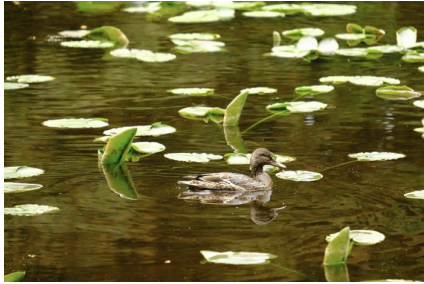


Photo: Female mallard duck among the lily pads in
Lake Gertrude, AM725

Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) are an abundant species of dabbling duck found in wetlands around the world. These animals eat a wide range of foods, from plants and insects to fish eggs, invertebrates, and snacks offered by people. They are present across Alaska during the summer breeding season but migrate south in winter. They can be found along the Gulf of Alaska coast throughout the year but are most common between April and November. Mallards feed in flocks, often with other types of ducks, and are easy to identify. The males, or drakes, have a distinctive green head and a yellow bill with a swatch of blue wing feathers. The females, or hens, are a speckled brown, with a swatch of purple wing feathers. Both males and females have bright orange feet.

Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) are among the most popular waterfowl harvested by Alutiiq hunters, along with buffleheads, gadwalls, green-winged teals, goldeneyes, scaups, and widgeons. Scoters are a favorite for duck soup, but Mallards are preferred for roasting. However, hunters avoid taking mallards in the early fall. At this time of year, their meat can taste bitter from eating fish eggs. Similarly, mallards are less popular in late winter when their fat reserves are depleted. Elders also caution people not to eat mallards while taking certain plant medicines as it can interfere with the effectiveness of the treatment