



WOOD DUCK

(Aix sponsa)

ANIMAL FACTS

WILD LOCALITY:

Throughout North America (most numerous in the Eastern United States)

HABITAT:

Wooded Areas, Forests, Marshes, Lakes, Rivers, & Ponds

LIFESTYLE:

Arboreal Terrestrial, & Aquatic (tree dwelling, ground dwelling, & swimming)

DIET:

Vegetation & Insects (omnivore)

LIFE EXPECTANCY:

10-15 years in the care of humans (less in the wild)

ADULT SIZE:

600-850g

ACTIVITY:

Diurnal (mostly active during the day)

CONSERVATION STATUS:

Least Concern

THREATS:

Habitat Loss, Hunting, Invasive Species, & Pollution

FUN FACTS:

The scientific name for the Wood Duck is *Aix sponsa*, which loosely translates to “water bird in a bridal gown.” Wood Ducks are one of the most stunningly beautiful species of water fowl in all of nature. They are sexually dimorphic, meaning males and females look different from one another. The male has beautiful brightly colored and iridescent plumage which is used in attracting a mate each year. Females are also beautiful, but are more naturally colored with mostly brown feathers. Even their eye color is totally different. The male Wood Duck has bright red eyes, and the female has deep brown eyes. Wood Ducks get their common name from their habit of roosting in trees more often than other ducks, and from the way that they nest. They are cavity nesters, and when a female is ready to lay her average of seven to fourteen eggs, she will seek out a hollow tree hole (usually an abandoned home of another animal, or a tree that has naturally rotted.) Arguably though, the most impressive thing about Wood Ducks occurs when they are only twenty-four hours old. After the day-old chicks recover from hatching, they start to become hungry. Then their mother will instinctively fly out of the nest, and the babies take a drastic leap of faith onto the ground or into the water below –sometimes from as high as 50 feet up to follow her!