

176 Maass Executive Appointment

SOUTHBOUND COURSE • REDHEADS

The male redheads are easily identified by the bright, rusty chestnut color on their head and neck and they enjoy settling on ponds, lakes and marshes. They are most often found in North America from the eastern great plains of Canada and southern Manitoba to the Texas Coast. Shown in the painting, a small group of redheads are coming in for a stop-over in a shallow lake in Minnesota on their way south for the winter.

AHEAD OF THE STORM • PINTAILS AND MALLARDS

Both the pintail and the mallard are relatively large in size and a very common species of duck. Both species are very handsome and are quite recognizable with their distinctive coloring. Conversely, the pintail migrates early in the winter to warmer climates while the mallard is one of the last species to leave in the late fall/early winter.

FOLLOW THE LEADER • GREEN-WINGED TEALS

The common, or green-winged teal is the smallest North American duck. Usually found in dense flocks, it breeds across America from Alaska to California and from Newfoundland to Pennsylvania, wintering from southern Canada to northern Mexico. The Delta Marsh just west of Winnipeg, Manitoba has been the setting for many of Maass' paintings, as he has traveled there every fall since the mid-70's. This small flock of green-winged teals are shown jumping out of an area of the East Delta Marsh.

MORNING EXERCISE • MOURNING DOVES

Considered a songbird or a game bird depending on which of the forty-eight states one lives, the mourning dove is comfortable in a range of climates. In the East, they reside in areas from the suburbs to the forests. The Midwest woods and grainfields are another favorite home and in the West, they're easy to spot in valleys, grasslands and deserts. They are so amiable to most habitats for two reasons. First, they'll eat nearly any seed whether it's produced by grasses, weeds or farm crops. Second, they'll nest anywhere – trees and vines, roof gutters, chimneys, fence tops, even on the ground, if necessary.

SCENIC ROUTE • CANADA GEESE

Canada geese populations have steadily increased due to their adaptability to a wide range of environments and the abundance of food. In metropolitan areas, these geese can be seen eating grass on golf courses, parks, even neighborhood lawns. Their favorite foods are plentiful in country settings and include winter wheat and corn. Canada geese prefer to migrate only as far as necessary. These geese are leaving a wetland area near Mount Shasta in northern California.

CHANGE IN THE WIND • CANVASBACKS AND BLUEBILLS

Found only in North America, the canvasback is often found with another species of duck, as in the case of this painting, bluebills. The bluebill is built for swimming underwater for long distances in search of food while the canvasback typically dives into twelve feet of water or less for food but can go down as far as thirty feet to reach vegetation when necessary. Always comfortable on open water, the waterfowl shown above are fighting a brisk wind in a bay off Currituck Sound, off the coast of North Carolina.

LATECOMERS • NORTHERN SHOVELERS

The shoveler duck is common worldwide and is easily recognized for its spatulate bill. In North America, it visits all of the 48 contiguous states throughout the course of a year. A sociable bird, the shoveler associates with other species of ducks just as frequently as it is found in the company of its own kind. The ducks in flight have just spotted a few others feeding in the shallow marsh above and are about to join them. The birds on the water are using their enlarged spoon-like bills to scoop food. This marsh is along the backwaters of the Mississippi River near Quincy, Illinois.

MOUNTAIN SUNSET • HOODED MERGANSERS

Like the loon, hooded mergansers are diving ducks that primarily eat small fish along with a few mollusks, crustaceans and aquatic insects. They dive down in water not only to hunt for food, but also to escape danger. In addition to their standard forward plunge, they have the unique ability to sink quietly from the surface into the water to ensure their safety. Mergansers can be found as far south as Mexico on up through Alaska. They also make their home in Greenland. With Mount Scott looming in the background, these mergansers are enjoying the upper Klamath National Wildlife Refuge in South Central Oregon.

COMING IN LATE • BLUEBILLS (LESSER SCAUPS)

Lesser scaups, built for swimming underwater, are usually found on larger bodies of water where they dive in search of clams, snails, crustaceans, aquatic insects, seeds, and aquatic plants. This highly sociable duck often gathers in great "rafts," especially during migration and is a favorite of waterfowl hunters. This flock of lesser scaups, commonly called bluebills, are coming into a marsh in eastern Michigan.

SECLUDED SANCTUARY • WOOD DUCKS

As the name implies, the wood duck inhabits heavily forested areas around shallow ponds, rivers and marshes. Wood ducks are one of the few ducks that nest in the cavities of trees. These ducks eat acorns, beechnuts, wild grapes, berries and pond plants. With its vivid plumage, the wood duck is considered by many to be the handsomest of all ducks. The birds in this painting are departing from this secluded pond in southeastern Wisconsin.

STROLLING GOBBLERS • WILD TURKEYS

Native to northern Mexico and the eastern United States, the wild turkey is the species from which all domesticated breeds have been developed. The wild turkey made an excellent comeback in the mid-20th century after huge losses due to hunting and habitat destruction. Wild turkeys are found mainly in oak woodlands and pine-oak forests in the eastern and southwestern United States and Mexico.

LAST TO LEAVE • GREATER SCAUPS

The greater scaup weighs nearly twenty percent more than the lesser scaup and on average is 17 to 18.5 inches in length. They prefer bays and estuaries like the one depicted here, near the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. In such sites they assemble in groups, or rafts, some of which contain more than 50,000 birds. The greater scaup feeds in deeper water than most of the other diving ducks, favoring clams and mussels. They also eat aquatic plants and seeds. Entire flocks of greater scaups have been observed performing a strange ritual in unison that consists of rearing into the air, shaking their wings and then plunging into the water. Some remain underwater for as long as a full minute.