

# American Coot

*Fulica americana*

## Description

The American Coot is an adaptable waterbird that may look like a duck but is actually more closely related to rails. This dabbler is often found on golf courses waterways or city ponds eating cattails, water lilies, algae, grass, insects, small crustaceans, snails and small vertebrates. The American Coot has a small head with a white bill and a compact dark body.

Coots have distinct feet with broad lobes that aids this bird in walking on muddy ground. The lobes fold back when it lifts its foot allowing it to walk on land as easily as it walks on murky ground.

American Coots can be found in waterways across North America, migrating from their breeding grounds to the United States, Mexico and Central America.

If you find an injured or orphaned wild bird or animal in distress, please contact the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society hotline at **403-239-2488**, for tips, instructions and advice, or look at the website at **[www.calgarywildlife.org](http://www.calgarywildlife.org)** for more information.

## FUN FACTS

- > American Coots need to run on the water flapping furiously in order to take flight
- > Unlike ducks, American Coots do not have webbed feet, instead broad lobed feet
- > In the winter they can be found in large groups that may number in the thousands
- > American Coots build floating platforms for their nests out of stems and marsh plants



## Contact Us

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